



The Australian Early Development Census **2021 Queensland data report**



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Minister's foreword



The evidence is clear that a child's earliest experiences establish foundations for life. As Queenslanders, we have a shared duty to give our children what they need to flourish now and into the future.

The results of the 2021 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) indicate that Queensland is gaining ground in terms of improving the conditions needed to help our children thrive.

In one of our highest participation rates to date, more than 1,400 Queensland schools participated in the AEDC collection between May and July 2021. The data represents approximately 65,000 children, more than 98 per cent of all Queensland children enrolled in the Prep year.

Queensland consistently prioritises participation in this important data collection. We know that the higher the participation, the higher the quality of the dataset which is being used in communities and schools across the state to improve outcomes for children. It is through the dedication and commitment of Queensland government and non-government schools that the AEDC is such a success.

The 2021 AEDC reveals that of all jurisdictions, Queensland had the largest percentage reduction in developmental vulnerability on one or more domains. Furthermore, Queensland has seen a significant increase in the proportion of children who are starting school on track on all developmental domains.

Queensland should be proud of the efforts we have made in working together to reduce developmental vulnerability – but we can't stop here. While the gains made are worthy of celebration, vulnerability levels for our youngest citizens are still too high.

Queensland's Early Years Plan sets out the state's vision for children in the early years. Specifically, Queensland has committed to improving the wellbeing of all children prior to starting school by reducing the percentage of children vulnerable on one or more domains to 22 per cent by 2025.

A strong collaborative momentum between parents, families, the wider community and government is essential if we are to reach our 2025 target. Queensland has an exceptional opportunity to increase the gains we have made towards our vision of giving all children a great start. The time to capitalise on this progress is now.

The Hon Grace Grace MP
Minister for Education

Queensland's commitment to the early years

The first five years of a child's life, from conception to school age, is a widely acknowledged key period in their health and development, laying the groundwork for wellbeing throughout the life course.

The quality of relationships and early learning environments during this critical time are important to a child's healthy growth, development and learning outcomes (Roopnarine et al. 2018). This period also represents the most effective time for investment, due to the high impact of services and supports during early development.

Although the AEDC data collection takes place when a child begins their first year of full-time schooling, it reflects the quality of the experiences, interactions, and opportunities that child has been exposed to over their first five years of life. The AEDC can therefore provide an indication of what is working well and what needs to be improved or developed to support children and their families. The AEDC can also provide evidence to support health, education and community policy and planning.

[A Great Start for all Queensland Children: An Early Years Plan for Queensland](#) is a whole of-government early years plan for Queensland, setting out the state's vision for children in their early years and placing children at the centre of community responses. Queensland's Early Years Plan focuses on our youngest Queenslanders, from conception to eight years of age, and acknowledges parental health and wellbeing and perinatal care as key factors in supporting families to give their children a great start.

It recognises the role of the community in ensuring that all children, including vulnerable children, are in safe and supportive environments that allow them to thrive. The plan stipulates a commitment to give all Queensland children a great start to life by increasing the number of babies born healthier, the number of children fully immunised, and by improving children's wellbeing prior to school.

One of the notable initiatives that emerged under the Early Years Plan is the [Connect 4 Children strategy](#), implemented by the Queensland Department of Education in response to evidence showing that a reduction in vulnerability at a population level can only be achieved through a coordinated effort and a partnership approach. Connect 4 Children has mobilised communities across Queensland to develop unique plans to help improve the wellbeing of children prior to school (from birth to five years). Each Birth to five plan is created locally with people and organisations who are invested in, and care deeply about, the future of that community and its children. By implementing Birth to five plans and evidence-based programs, Connect 4 Children increases protective factors that support better outcomes for children, while reducing the risks that impact vulnerability.



Connect 4 Children has mobilised communities across Queensland to develop unique plans to help improve the wellbeing of children prior to school.



About the AEDC

What is the AEDC?

The AEDC is a nationwide census of early childhood development. It is considered to be a measure of how well children and families are supported from conception through to school age and provides a reliable snapshot of how children are developing as they transition to school.

National AEDC collections occur every three years. With five data sets (2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2021), results can be compared across time to identify trends in early childhood development at a community, state and national level.

Why is the AEDC important?

AEDC data provides a valuable evidence-base to inform early childhood policy and planning, highlighting what is working well and what needs to be improved or developed to support children and their families. By providing a common ground, AEDC data empowers communities to collaborate to shape the future wellbeing of children.

How is the data collected?

Prep teachers complete the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument online for each Prep child in their class. Based on their knowledge and observations, teachers respond to approximately 100 questions per child across the five domains of the AEDC. Participation is voluntary, with data collected through the cooperation of parents and the active involvement of Queensland Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors.



What are the AEDC domains?

The five domains are:



Physical health and wellbeing

Children's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills.



Social competence

Children's overall social competence, responsibility and respect, approach to learning and readiness to explore new things.



Emotional maturity

Children's pro-social and helping behaviours and absence of anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention.



Language and cognitive skills (school-based)

Children's basic literacy, advanced literacy, basic numeracy, and interest in literacy, numeracy and memory.



Communication skills and general knowledge

Children's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills.

Combined, these five domains provide a holistic picture of how children are developing and are predictors of later health, wellbeing and academic development.

How is AEDC data reported?

Children are allocated a score against the five AEDC domains. Using cut-off scores calculated in 2009, children are determined to be either developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable on each domain.

Developmentally on track

Developmentally at risk

Developmentally vulnerable

AEDC data is typically reported at local community, broader community, state and territory, and national levels. AEDC data is never reported for individual children as the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument is not an individual diagnostic tool. Publication rules are applied to prevent children from being identified in the data.

Domain information about children with special needs is not included in the AEDC dataset because of the already identified substantial developmental needs of this group. Demographic information on children with special needs is collected to enable communities to be responsive to all children in their community.

Is the AEDC reliable?

Studies in Canada, where the Early Development Instrument was developed, have confirmed the reliability of teacher reporting. Prior to implementation in Australia, a series of adaptation and [validation studies](#) were completed, including an [Indigenous adaptation study](#).

To ensure consistency, teachers undertake online training and are provided with detailed information to help them accurately complete the instrument for children in their class.



A Queensland snapshot of early childhood development in 2021

Queensland's child participation rate was at its highest in 2021, with 98.4% of eligible children represented in the dataset.

2021 AEDC data shows that just over half of Queensland children are developmentally on track as they transition to their first year of school. The proportion of Queensland children who are developmentally on track on all five AEDC domains has improved in each collection since 2009, and at a faster rate than the national trend.

While Queensland children continue to experience developmental vulnerability on one or more domain(s) at higher levels than the national average, since 2009 Queensland has had a greater reduction in developmental vulnerability than experienced nationally. Furthermore, in 2021 Queensland was the only jurisdiction to show a significant decline in developmental vulnerability on one or more domain(s).

Consequently, Queensland has improved its jurisdiction ranking on most domains. Both the social competence domain and communication skills and general knowledge domain saw the greatest reductions in developmental vulnerability rates, while smaller reductions were evident on the physical health and wellbeing domain, and emotional maturity domain.

Of the five domains, Queensland children are least likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain and most likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain.

The proportion of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children developmentally on track on all five domains did not increase significantly in 2021. The proportion of those developmentally vulnerable on one or more, or on two or more domains also did not see a significant change. However, domain-level data showed that in 2021 the proportion of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children developmentally on track increased significantly on all domains except emotional maturity, and language and cognitive skills (school-based) domains. Developmental vulnerability rates among these children decreased significantly on two of the five domains (social competence, and communication skills and general knowledge).

In 2021, developmental vulnerability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland children was slightly lower than the national average on all domains except communication skills and general knowledge.



Approximately **65,000 children** in Queensland participated in the 2021 AEDC collection, representing **98.4% of eligible children**. Around **3,500 teachers** from **1,405 schools** contributed to the results.



33,275 (51.2%)
male



31,708 (48.8%)
female

Mean age of students

5 years, 5 months

6,457 (9.9%)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children



3,489 (5.4%)
of children were born in another country



60,106 (92.9%)
children are English proficient

11,369 (17.5%)
children have a LBOTE

3,251 (5.0%)
identified as having special needs

11,339 (18.0%)
requiring further assessment

46,958 (72.5%)
adapting to school

46,850 (72.4%)
with a parent/carer actively engaged in their learning

50,633 (87.9%)
attended preschool¹

46,071 (70.9%)
attended a govt school



44,449 (68.7%)
regularly read to at home



¹ Preschool refers to the year prior to full-time schooling, known as kindergarten in Queensland

Queensland AEDC data

AEDC summary indicators

Queensland AEDC data follows for three AEDC summary indicators²:



Developmentally on track on five domains



Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)



Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

Children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) and developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains are at higher risk of poorer educational and wellbeing outcomes. More recently, a strengths-based indicator, developmentally on track on five domains (OT5), has been introduced. This indicator measures the percentage of children developmentally on track on all five domains and complements the developmentally vulnerable summary indicators to monitor changes in child development. Combining these three AEDC summary indicators provides a picture of how Queensland children are developing overall.

Developmentally on track on five domains

Since 2009 when the AEDC was first conducted in Australia, the proportion of Queensland children who are developmentally on track on all five developmental domains has increased at a faster rate than nationally. In 2009, only 40.9% of Queensland children started school developmentally on track on all five AEDC domains.

In 2021 this has increased to 51.4%, indicating an improvement of over 10 percentage points over the last four collection cycles. As a result, while the proportion of children developmentally on track is lower in Queensland than nationally, Queensland is gaining ground and the gap is narrowing.

Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)

The proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) in Queensland decreased significantly to 24.7% in 2021 from 25.9% in 2018. This is contrary to the national trend where the proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) increased significantly to 22.0% from 21.7% in 2018.

Though the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) has been consistently higher in Queensland than nationally, Queensland was the only jurisdiction in Australia to show a significant decline in developmental vulnerability in the 2021 collection relative to 2018.

Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

The proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains in Queensland decreased significantly from 13.9% in 2018 to 13.2% in 2021. This is in contrast with the national trend showing an increase in developmental vulnerability on two or more domains from 11.0% in 2018 to 11.4% in 2021. Consequently, the gap between Queensland and national results is narrowing.

² The 2009 figures referenced in the report exclude 2010 data, consistent with the 2009 data published in previous national reports.

State and national AEDC summary indicators

Figure 1: Percentage of children developmentally on track on five domains

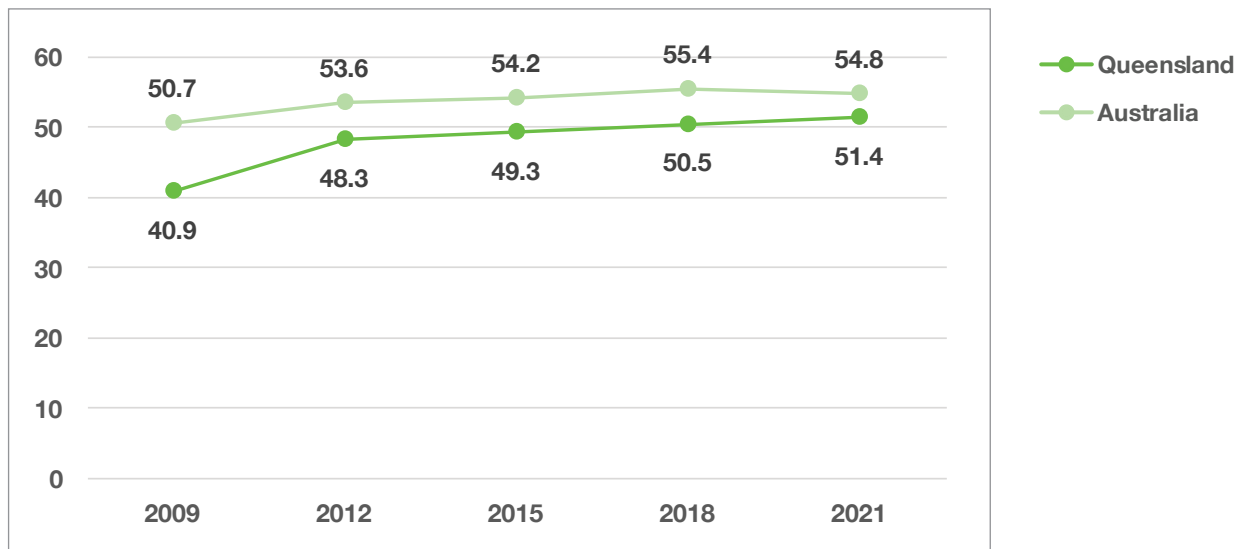


Figure 2: Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) and two or more domains

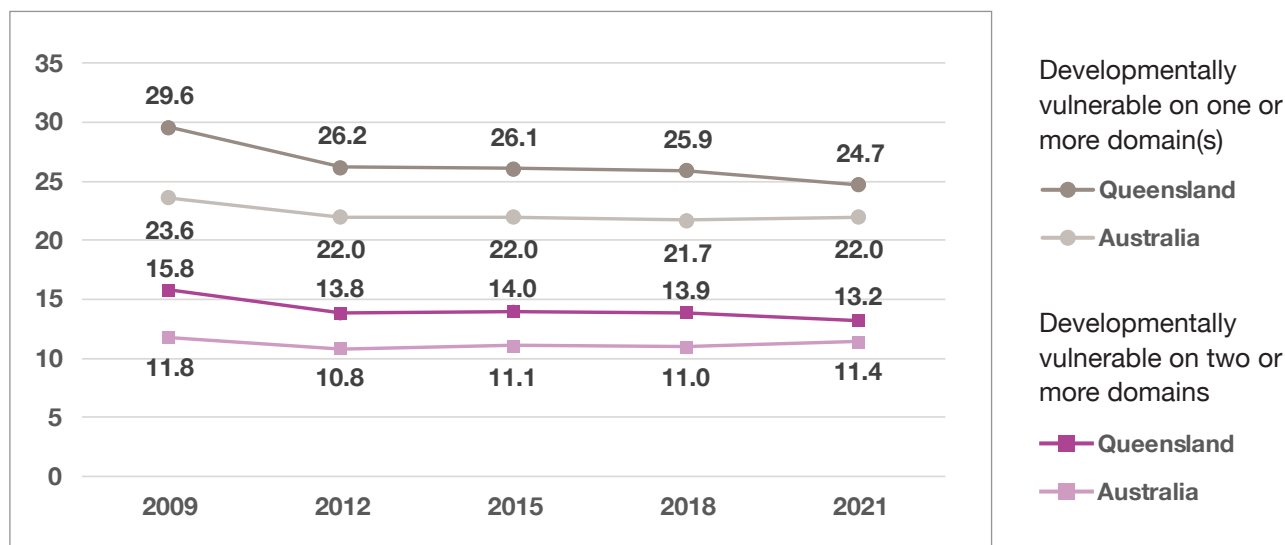


Table 1: Summary indicators by collection cycle

		2009		2012		2015		2018		2021		Critical difference 2018 vs 2021	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
OT5	Developmentally on track on five domains	Queensland	21,529	40.9	28,036	48.3	30,610	49.3	31,167	50.5	31,524	51.4	Significant increase
		Australia	125,130	50.7	146,362	53.6	155,238	54.2	162,440	55.4	157,436	54.8	Significant decrease
Vuln 1	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)	Queensland	15,593	29.6	15,217	26.2	16,220	26.1	15,954	25.9	15,143	24.7	Significant decrease
		Australia	58,036	23.6	59,933	22.0	62,960	22.0	63,448	21.7	63,264	22.0	Significant increase
Vuln 2	Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains	Queensland	8,307	15.8	8,001	13.8	8,713	14.0	8,576	13.9	8,088	13.2	Significant decrease
		Australia	29,227	11.8	29,543	10.8	31,754	11.1	32,434	11.0	32,718	11.4	Significant increase

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change.

Transition to school indicators

As part of the AEDC collection, teachers answer three questions known as transition indicators. These are:

- Would you say that this child is making good progress in adapting to the structure and learning environment of the school?
- Would you say that this child has parent(s)/ caregiver(s) who are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning?
- Would you say that this child is regularly read to/ encouraged in his/her reading at home as far as you can tell?

Teachers are asked to answer 'very true', 'somewhat true', 'not true' or 'don't know'.³

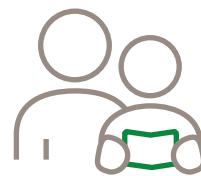
The 2021 AEDC transition indicator data tells us that the majority of children included in the 2021 collection were adapting well to school. Around seven out of 10 children have parents or caregivers who are engaged with their school, and who regularly read to or encourage their children to read at home.



72.5% children adapting to school*



72.4% parents actively engaged*



68.7% child read to at home*

Table 2: Child is adapting to school, Queensland

Teacher responses	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
% Very true	74.6	71.4	70.9	71.5	72.5
% Somewhat true	23.3	24.9	25.1	24.6	23.5
% Not true	1.9	3.4	3.8	3.7	3.7

Table 3: Parents are actively engaged with the school, Queensland

Teacher responses	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
% Very true	65.3	68.5	69.5	71.2	72.4
% Somewhat true	24.8	23.2	22.5	21.4	20.9
% Not true	8.7	7.5	7.3	6.8	6.2

Table 4: Child is regularly read to at home, Queensland

Teacher responses	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
% Very true	62.3	69.1	69.0	69.3	68.7
% Somewhat true	18.7	19.8	19.9	19.5	19.3
% Not true	3.8	6.1	7.2	7.5	7.5

³ In 2021, no answer was stated for around 0.4% of children in Queensland.

* Percentage of Queensland children whose teacher answered 'very true' (2021). Percentages may not add up to 100% as they are rounded to one decimal place.



Domains in focus

AEDC domains

The 2021 AEDC data indicates that at the domain level, the majority of children in Queensland continue to be developmentally on track. The proportion of children developmentally on track is highest on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain (80.7%), and lowest on the social competence domain (74.0%).

The proportion of children developmentally vulnerable was highest on the physical health and wellbeing domain (11.6%), and lowest on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain (8.4%).

The proportion of children developmentally at risk was highest on the emotional maturity domain (15.9%), and lowest on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain (10.9%).

Developmental vulnerability at the domain level was higher in Queensland than nationally in 2021. However, Queensland was the only jurisdiction to show significant decreases in developmental vulnerability across most domains.

Table 5: Percentage of Queensland children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by domain

Queensland	2021 Developmentally on track	2021 Developmentally at risk	2021 Developmentally vulnerable
Physical health and wellbeing domain	76.5% ▲	11.9% ▼	11.6% ▼
Social competence domain	74.0% ▲	15.4% ▼	10.6% ▼
Emotional maturity domain	74.1% ▲	15.9% ▼	10.0% ▼
Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain	80.7% ▼	10.9% ▲	8.4% ▲
Communication skills and general knowledge domain	76.1% ▲	14.8% ▼	9.1% ▼

Table 6: Percentage of Australian children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by domain

Australia	2021 Developmentally on track	2021 Developmentally at risk	2021 Developmentally vulnerable
Physical health and wellbeing domain	78.5% ▲	11.7% ▼	9.8% ▲
Social competence domain	75.9% ▲	14.4% ■	9.6% ▼
Emotional maturity domain	77.0% ■	14.5% ■	8.5% ■
Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain	82.6% ▼	10.1% ▲	7.3% ▲
Communication skills and general knowledge domain	77.1% ▼	14.5% ■	8.4% ▲

▲ Significant increase ▼ Significant decrease ■ No significant change

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change. At risk has not been colour coded as any changes should be interpreted in context with changes in the percentage of children who are vulnerable and on track.

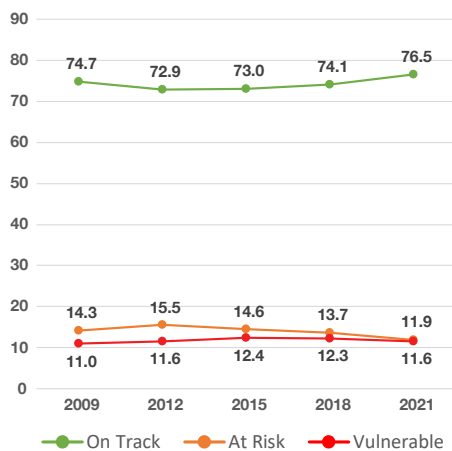


Physical health and wellbeing

This domain measures a child's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills.

The Queensland trend shows a decreasing percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain across the last three collection cycles, from 12.4% in 2015 to 11.6% in 2021. This reduction in developmental vulnerability was accompanied by a significant increase in the percentage of children developmentally on track (from 73.0% in 2015 to 76.5% in 2021), as well as a decrease in the percentage of children developmentally at risk (from 14.6% in 2015 to 11.9% in 2021). Despite the gains made over the last three collection cycles, the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on this domain remains higher than baseline (11.6% in 2021 compared with 11.0% in 2009).

Figure 3: Percentage of Queensland children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain

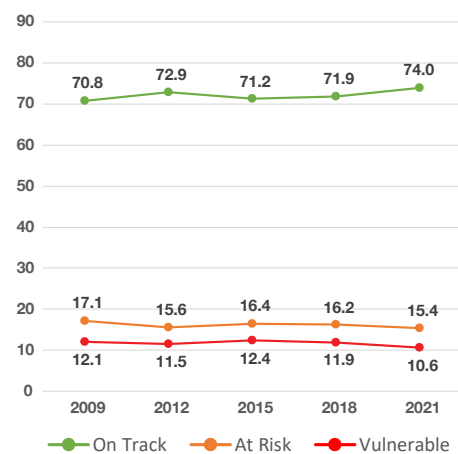


Social competence

This domain measures overall social competence, responsibility, respect, approach to learning and readiness to explore new things. Social competence refers to a child's ability to get along with and relate to others.

Developmental vulnerability on the social competence domain increased from 11.5% in 2012 to 12.4% in 2015, and then decreased to 11.9% in 2018. In 2021, this decreased significantly to 10.6%. In Queensland, developmental vulnerability decreased more on the social competence domain than on any other domain between 2018 and 2021. At the same time, the proportion of children developmentally on track on this domain increased significantly from 71.9% in 2018 to 74.0% in 2021.

Figure 4: Percentage of Queensland children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable on the social competence domain



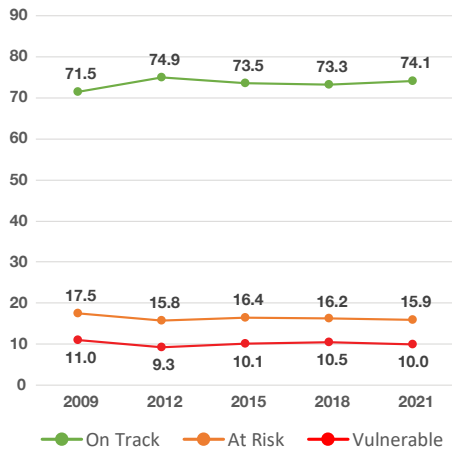


Emotional maturity

This domain measures four areas of emotional maturity: pro-social and helping behaviours, anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour, hyperactivity and inattention.

The 2021 AEDC data shows that after a significant decrease in developmental vulnerability between 2009 and 2012, the proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on the emotional maturity domain increased from 9.3% in 2012 to 10.1% in 2015 and then to 10.5% in 2018. In 2021, there was a small yet significant decrease in developmental vulnerability to 10%.

Figure 5: Percentage of Queensland children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable on the emotional maturity domain

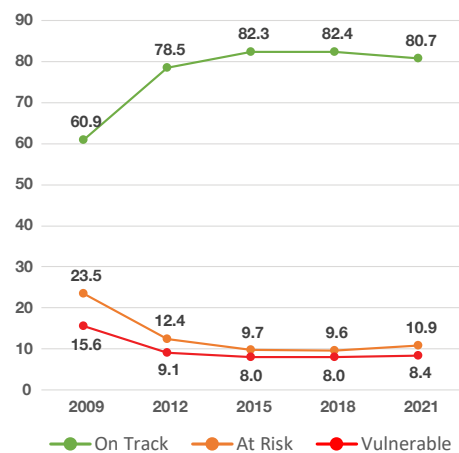


Language and cognitive skills (school-based)

This domain measures children's basic literacy, advanced literacy, basic numeracy, and interest in literacy, numeracy and memory.

Since the dramatic improvements made between 2009 and 2012, the proportion of Queensland children developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain has remained relatively stable. Following a decrease from 9.1% in 2012 to 8.0% in 2015, no change was seen in 2018. Mirroring the national trend, in 2021 Queensland saw significant increases in the developmentally vulnerable (0.3 percentage points) and at risk categories (1.3 percentage points). Consequently, the proportion of children developmentally on track decreased significantly from 82.4% in 2018 to 80.7% in 2021. That said, developmental vulnerability in the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain remains lower than on any other, with only 8.4% of Queensland children experiencing developmental vulnerability on this domain.

Figure 6: Percentage of Queensland children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain



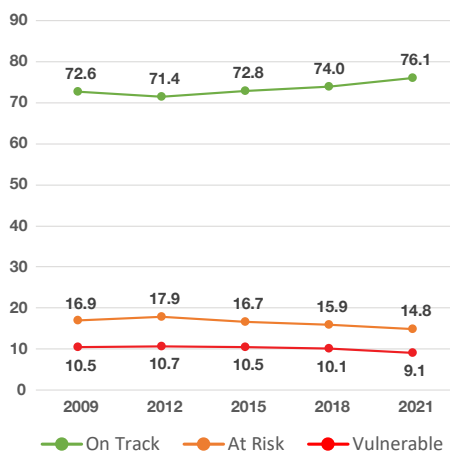


Communication skills and general knowledge

This domain measures a child's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills measured in the school context. General knowledge refers to basic knowledge about the world.

Developmental vulnerability in Queensland on the communication skills and general knowledge domain improved significantly in 2021, dropping by one percentage point since 2018 to 9.1%. This represents the second largest reduction in domain-level developmental vulnerability rates after the social competence domain. Furthermore, there was a significant increase of 2.1 percentage points in the proportion of children developmentally on track on this domain.

Figure 7: Percentage of Queensland children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable on the communication skills and general knowledge domain



Impact of COVID-19

Fortunately, in Australia the direct impacts of COVID-19 on young children's development have not been severe. Despite climbing infection rates following the reduction of public health measures in 2021, severe illness in children is still rare (AEDC National Report 2021). Of greater concern for children aged zero to five years are the indirect impacts of COVID-19.

Indirect impacts are those that affect the stability and security that children need for healthy growth and development, and include public health measures such as lockdowns, isolation from friends and family, and reduced access to schools and Early Childhood Education and Care services.

Additional factors such as job losses, financial instability, and fears of contracting COVID-19 have led to higher stress levels and poorer mental health for many Australian parents, and could therefore adversely influence family functioning and children's development (Goldfeld et al. 2022).

At a national level, COVID-19 does not appear to have had a substantial negative impact on children's development. That said, the impact was not evenly felt, with larger increases in developmental vulnerability seen for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children living in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia.

In Queensland, the 2021 AEDC data tells us that the impact of COVID-19 on children's developmental vulnerability was minimal at a broad jurisdictional level. We know that children's development begins in the pre-natal stage with evidence pointing to the most critical period being the first 1,000 days. Significantly, the children who are represented in the 2021 AEDC data experienced the effects of COVID-19 for just over one year – the year before full-time schooling, when the data collection took place.

Given the complex network of interrelated factors that influence children's wellbeing during their first five years of life, it is understandable that the impact of COVID-19 on the cohort of Queensland children who are represented in the 2021 AEDC was minor. However, this knowledge also highlights the importance of ensuring that younger cohorts are well supported in the years to come in order to mitigate the impacts for families most affected in their access to employment, social support, and early childhood education and care.



Focus on equity groups

It is critical for the health and wellbeing of our future communities that all children have access to the same opportunities to thrive in their growth and development. However, the social, demographic, and economic circumstances under which children are conceived, live, develop, and grow shape their development and life chances. This results in children experiencing the most disadvantage having the highest risk of poorer health and developmental outcomes (Pearce et al. 2019).

The 2021 AEDC data shows that developmental vulnerability is not uniformly distributed across Queensland. A child's likelihood of experiencing developmental vulnerability depends on various sociodemographic factors. Historical disadvantage persists among communities where families have reduced access to resources for raising children, for families whose first language is not English, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Socioeconomic disadvantage

AEDC data was compared to Socio-Economic Indexes for Area (SEIFA) data. SEIFA is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage.

The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing.

SEIFA scores are divided into quintiles, where Quintile 1 contains the lowest 20% of scores and reflects the highest levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and Quintile 5 contains the highest 20% of scores and reflects the lowest levels of socioeconomic disadvantage. Overlapping SEIFA with AEDC data provides valuable insight into the relationship between socioeconomic disadvantage and children's developmental vulnerability.

2021 AEDC data shows that 41.6% of Queensland children live in communities experiencing high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage (SEIFA Quintiles 1 or 2). Children in the most disadvantaged locations (Quintile 1) were twice as likely as those from communities experiencing the least disadvantage (Quintile 5) to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains; they were almost three times as likely to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains than their more socioeconomically advantaged peers. Nevertheless, developmental vulnerability has been decreasing for children in Queensland irrespective of socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage.

Table 7: Relationship between SEIFA data and developmental vulnerability in QLD (2021)

SEIFA Quintile	Vuln 1		Vuln 2	
	Number	%	Number	%
Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	4,153	34.9 ▼	2,422	20.3 ▼
Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	1,653	16.6 ▼	796	8.0 ■

▲ Significant increase ▼ Significant decrease ■ No significant change

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change. At risk has not been colour coded as any changes should be interpreted in context with changes in the percentage of children who are vulnerable and on track.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

In 2021, 6,457 Queensland children included in the AEDC identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This is a population increase from 8.9% in 2018 to 9.9% in 2021. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children live and attend school across all Queensland regions, with major cities having the highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children included in the AEDC (37.0%), and remote or very remote areas having the lowest (12.3%). The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (70.2%) live in locations with high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage (SEIFA Quintiles 1 and 2), while only 4% live in the least disadvantaged areas.

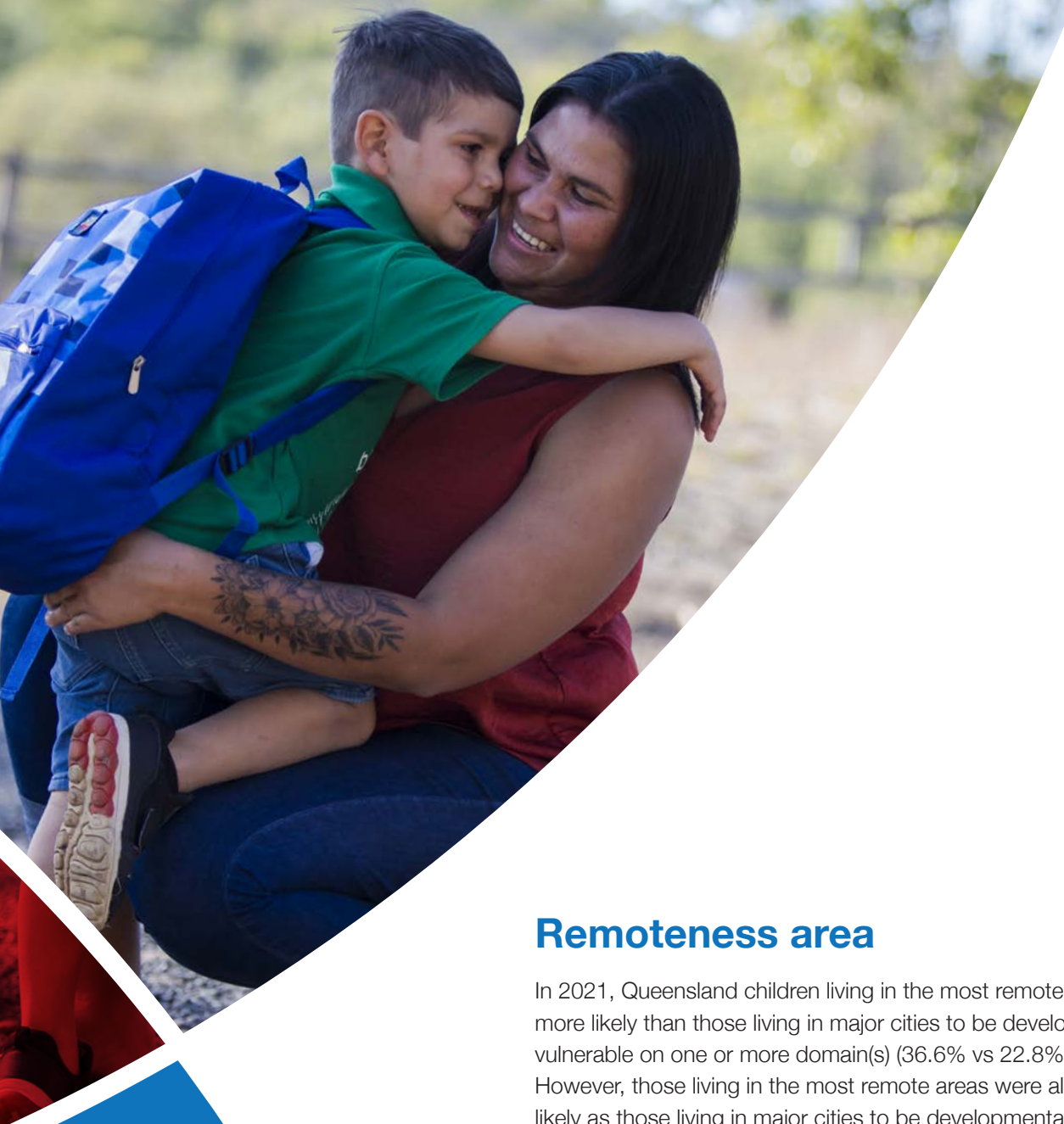
The 2021 AEDC data shows that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland attended preschool (79.6%) and over half are adapting to school (57.2%). Fewer than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland have parents or caregivers who are actively engaged with their child's school to support their learning (47.5%), and only two in five are read to at home (40.3%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were almost twice as likely as non-Indigenous children to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (42.1% and 22.9%, respectively), and 2.3 times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains than non-Indigenous children (26.9% and 11.7%, respectively). While the proportion of non-Indigenous children developmentally vulnerable on one or more and on two or more domains decreased significantly in 2021, no significant change in developmental vulnerability was seen for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Only 33.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were developmentally on track on all five domains, relative to 53.2% of non-Indigenous children. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children has not narrowed significantly in 2021.

In 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were most likely to be developmentally on track on the physical health and wellbeing domain (64.1%), and most likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain (21.6%), experiencing a significant increase in developmental vulnerability in this domain in 2021.

Table 8: Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children developmentally vulnerable in QLD (2021)

Domain	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Physical health and wellbeing	19.8	19.1	21.8	21.2	21.3
Social competence	20.2	19.1	21.8	20.5	18.8
Emotional maturity	17.3	14.8	17.2	16.9	16.3
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	35.6	21.8	19.6	20.8	21.6
Communication skills and general knowledge	21.5	20.8	21.6	20.6	19.1
Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)	50.5	43.0	43.9	42.5	42.1
Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains	31.3	25.8	27.5	27.0	26.9



Remoteness area

In 2021, Queensland children living in the most remote areas were more likely than those living in major cities to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (36.6% vs 22.8%, respectively). However, those living in the most remote areas were almost twice as likely as those living in major cities to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (22.6% vs. 11.8%, respectively). That said, the proportion of Queensland children developmentally vulnerable on one or more or two or more domains decreased significantly in 2021, regardless of remoteness.

Table 9: Relationship between remoteness and developmental vulnerability in QLD (2021)

SEIFA Quintile	Vuln 1		Vuln 2	
	Number	%	Number	%
Major cities	9,019	22.8 ▼	4,674	11.8 ▼
Very remote	274	36.6 ▼	171	22.6 ▼

▲ Significant increase ▼ Significant decrease ■ No significant change

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change. At risk has not been colour coded as any changes should be interpreted in context with changes in the percentage of children who are vulnerable and on track.

Children with a language background other than English

The AEDC considers children to have English as a second language (ESL) where English is not their first language and they need additional instruction in English, or where English is not their first language and they have conversational English but are not yet proficient in English. Children are considered to have a language background other than English (LBOTE) if they speak a language other than English at home, or if they speak English at home but are still considered to have ESL status. Children considered to be proficient in English have proficiency equivalent to that expected of the average monolingual English speaker in a similar phase of development.

The proportion of Queensland children included in the AEDC with a LBOTE has been steadily increasing over time, from 10.0% in 2009 to 17.5 % in 2021. Over this time, the proportion of Queensland children with a LBOTE who are proficient in English has steadily increased also, from 77.6% in 2009 to 85.7% in 2021.

Correspondingly, the proportion of children with a LBOTE who are developmentally vulnerable on the communication skills and general knowledge domain has decreased over time, from 25.0% in 2009 to 16.4% in 2021.

In 2021 there were significant decreases in developmental vulnerability for Queensland children with a LBOTE across most domains. The only domain for which no significant change was seen was the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain.

For Queensland children with a LBOTE who are not proficient in English, developmental vulnerability rates across all domains are much higher, with over 90% of these children experiencing developmental vulnerability in the communication skills and general knowledge domain. The only domain in which developmental vulnerability decreased significantly for children with a LBOTE who lack English proficiency was the social competence domain, from 39.2% in 2018 to 35.2% in 2021.

Table 10: Percentage of children with a LBOTE developmentally vulnerable in Queensland

Domain indicator	%				
	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Physical health and wellbeing	13.1	11.8	12.2	11.5	10.7 ▼
Social competence	14.6	13.0	13.9	12.2	10.3 ▼
Emotional maturity	12.1	9.7	10.2	9.7	8.7 ▼
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	24.4	13.7	11.1	10.0	10.0 ■
Communication skills and general knowledge	25.0	22.5	20.4	18.2	16.4 ▼
Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)	42.1	34.9	32.9	30.3	28.1 ▼
Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains	24.8	18.6	17.7	15.8	14.4 ▼

Table 11: Percentage of children with a LBOTE by English proficiency developmentally vulnerable in Queensland

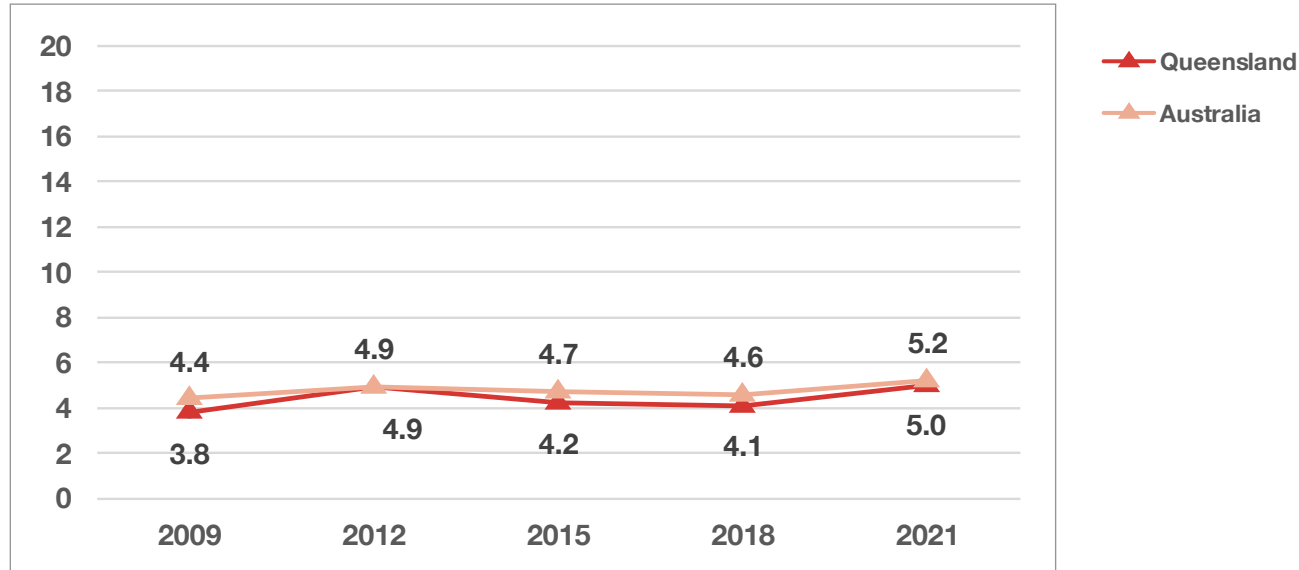
Domain indicator	Proficient					Non-Proficient				
	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Physical health and wellbeing	9.4	8.6	8.6	8.3	7.4 ▼	29.5	28.6	33.0	33.4	35.0 ■
Social competence	9.8	9.0	9.5	8.3	6.9 ▼	36.0	34.1	39.4	39.2	35.2 ▼
Emotional maturity	9.4	7.0	7.7	7.2	6.4 ▼	24.2	23.9	24.2	26.7	25.8 ■
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	16.9	8.2	6.1	6.1	5.8 ■	58.1	42.8	40.0	37.1	41.1 ▲
Communication skills and general knowledge	10.7	9.3	7.7	7.4	6.0 ▼	88.8	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0 ■
Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)	30.5	23.7	22.2	21.0	19.0 ▼	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0 ■
Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains	14.6	10.5	10.3	9.5	8.1 ▼	70.5	61.0	60.8	59.1	61.0 ▲

Children with special needs

Children with special needs status are those who have chronic medical, physical or intellectual disabilities that require special assistance, based on medical diagnosis. The number of children with special needs is recorded by the AEDC but these children are not included in calculations of domain scores. The purpose of collecting this demographic information is to enable communities to be responsive to all children in the community.

The 2021 AEDC data shows that the percentage of children in Queensland with special needs increased by 0.9% compared to 2018, and by 1.2% since 2009. The percentage of children with special needs in Queensland (5.0%) is similar to the national figure (5.2%) and Queensland's increasing figures parallel the national trend.

Figure 8: Percentage of children with special needs in Queensland and Australia

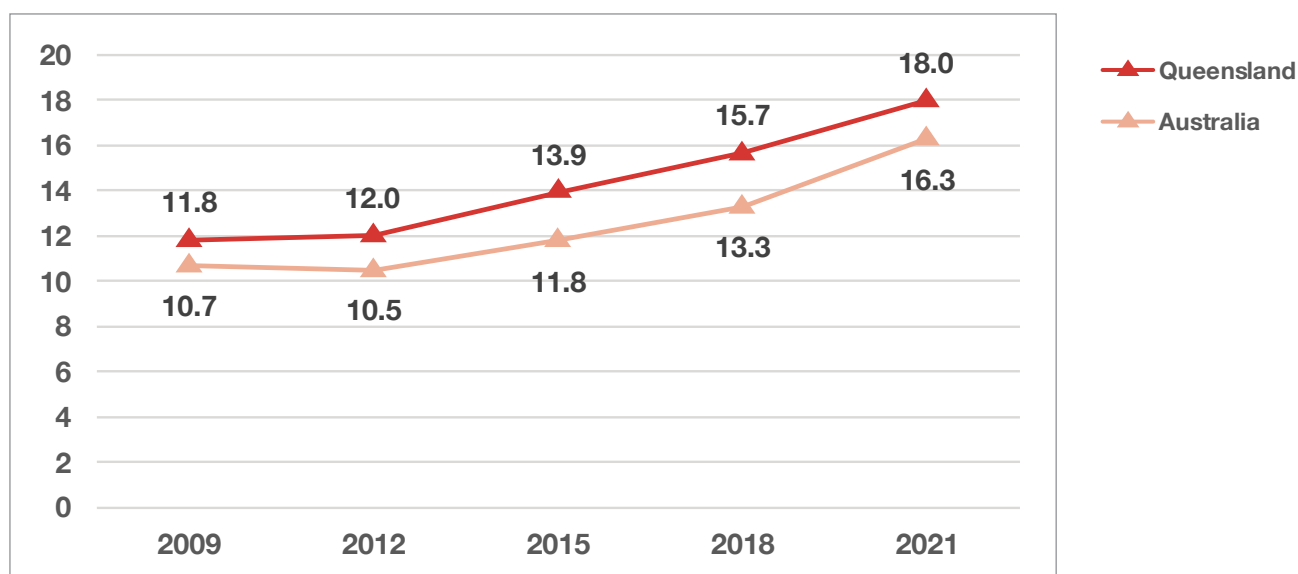


Children needing further assessment

Children identified by teachers as 'needing further assessment' are those who are currently being assessed or need further assessment (for example, medical and physical, behavior management, emotional and cognitive development) based on information provided to the teacher by a parent/guardian, professional or through teacher observation. Children identified as needing further assessment who do not have a special needs diagnosis are included in the calculation of developmental vulnerability for Queensland.

As can be seen, in 2021 the percentage of Queensland children needing further assessment increased by 2.3% since 2018, and by 6.2% since 2009. The percentage of children requiring further assessment in 2021 was also higher in Queensland (18%) than nationally (16.3%), and our increasing trend mirrors that seen across Australia.

Figure 9: Percentage of children needing further assessment in Queensland and Australia



In 2021, about 7 in 10 Queensland children who were identified as needing further assessment (and who did not already have a special needs diagnosis) were found to be developmentally vulnerable in one or more domain(s) (67.2%), and almost half were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (46.9%).

Overall, this data could be indicative of underdiagnosis of special needs before a child reaches their first year of full-time school in Queensland compared to previous AEDC cycles and other states and territories. This data could also reflect an increasing awareness among teachers of the benefits of diagnosis and support for children who are developmentally vulnerable.

Responding to AEDC data

The value of AEDC data

Together with other demographic and community data, the AEDC provides a rich source of information for influencing programs, policies and planning to support healthy early childhood development and children's successful transition to school.

Ecological models of childhood development tell us that during the early years, children are influenced by their environments, and the people and experiences that surround them as they grow. This means that where children live, their early environments and experiences affect their chances to thrive in life. Parents and communities alike play a vital role in minimising factors that pose a risk to healthy development, and maximizing protective factors such as a healthy birth weight, secure attachment, access to quality early learning and play environments, and a connection to culture and community.

Since the release of the first national AEDC data in 2009, early childhood settings such as Early Childhood Education and Care services, schools, communities and government and non-government agencies have used the data to inform their efforts to ensure the next generation of Queenslanders is healthy, resilient, and ready to be productive members of society.

Queensland communities leading positive change

[The Rocklea-Acacia Ridge community](#) experiences a number of challenges, including high unemployment and poverty rates. Families in the community do not have immediate access to services which can provide protective factors to child development, such as a local library.

The community has worked to address these gaps in services and help alleviate the need to travel to surrounding suburbs in order to access supports.

In 2010, a Community Hub was established at the Acacia Ridge Early Years Centre and Kindergarten to provide free child health services, playgroups, toy library and parenting support programs. This provides a soft-entry approach to support services for families to access health, wellbeing, parenting and early childhood development services by building connections, engagement and trust with families.

The strong relationships and connections across all Early Years Place services have allowed for more effective referrals between services and resulted in the development of various joint initiatives, a shared understanding and common goals. A range of additional programs and initiatives implemented in the community has led to the development of strong partnerships across various community organisations.

AEDC data shows that the level of developmental vulnerability in this community has decreased considerably since 2009. The 2009 community AEDC data showed 59.3% of children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s); this figure has more than halved over the past decade to 25.4% in 2021. Moreover, the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains has decreased from 43.9% in 2009 to 13.5% in 2021. This data demonstrates the benefits of taking a collective approach to building trust and providing support to families living with adversity.

Queensland's Early Childhood Development Story

Early experiences can lay a strong or weak foundation on which all further development is built, both physically and psychologically (Winter & Luddy 2010). Science highlights why it can be so difficult to alter a child's developmental trajectory, for once formed, the neural connections that underpin a child's competencies can be difficult to modify (Moore et al. 2017).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Theobald 2019) requires that children, including infants, be respected as persons in their own right. To exercise their rights, children have particular requirements for physical nurturance (adequate nutrition, sleep, rest), emotional care (loving, secure relationships), sensitive guidance (language and cognitive stimulation, connection, responsiveness), as well as time and space for social play, exploration and learning, with and without the gaze of adults (McCain et al. n.d.; Moore et al. 2017).

When parents are confident, engaged and able to meet their children's needs, children thrive (Baker & Harris 2020). While parenting has been identified as the most potent influence on the learning and development of young children, it is what they do with their children, not who they are, that matters most (Baker & Harris, 2020). Effective parent engagement not only supports children's development and eventual transition to school, it has also been shown to reduce the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on later educational outcomes (Barker & Harris 2020).

In response to Queensland's AEDC data and recognising the critical role families play in supporting children's development, the [Queensland Early Childhood Development Story](#) was developed to help parents and families understand what children need to thrive in their early years.

The Queensland Early Childhood Development Story has been built around five key messages about what children need in order to grow and develop well in the years before they enter full-time schooling:

Loving relationships – Children feel loved and secure in warm, caring relationships

Healthy environments – Children thrive in safe, healthy and positive environments

Learning everywhere – Children are learning everywhere, every day

Strong connections – Children's sense of belonging is built through strong connections to family, culture and community

Supportive communities – Children and families thrive when communities and services are supportive and meet their needs

These messages acknowledge the importance of the home as a child's first and most influential learning environment, while providing practical strategies for parents and carers to promote their child's healthy growth and development in a holistic way.



Queensland – a place for all children to thrive

It is widely recognised that a significant change to developmental vulnerability at the community level can only be realised through a collective, coherent and strategic effort (OECD, 2018). Through the combined efforts of government and non-government agencies, community groups and health professionals across Queensland, the 2021 AEDC data demonstrates that positive steps have been made towards our goal of reducing childhood developmental vulnerability. Indeed, most of our children are tracking well towards healthy development throughout childhood and success into later adult life. However, roughly one in four Queensland children continue to experience developmental vulnerability upon entry to school, and most of these children live in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

Children are especially vulnerable to the impact of social disadvantage and inequities, which are evident from birth and have a profound effect on health and wellbeing across the life course. While inequities are greatest in the world's poorest countries, even in rich nations children with socioeconomic disadvantaged backgrounds have poorer health and developmental outcomes.

From birth through childhood to adolescence, morbidity, mortality, growth and development are socially determined, resulting in the most disadvantaged having the highest risk of poor health outcomes (Spencer et al. 2019). International research has consistently shown that social inequalities in early development persevere into adolescence and adulthood, resulting in a socioeconomic divide in labour market outcomes, as well as social outcomes related to crime, substance abuse and physical and mental health (Collier et al. 2020).

Socioeconomic inequalities in developmental outcomes have been well documented in Australia, with studies using the AEDC data demonstrating substantial disparities in the developmental outcomes of Australian children belonging to different socioeconomic groups (Brinkman et al. 2012; Collier et al. 2020).

Overall, it is clear that the social circumstances in which children are conceived, born, live, develop and grow are not uniform across our nation or across our state. As such, opportunities for optimal early childhood development are not afforded equally to all (Bradley & Corwyn 2002; Heckman 2008). Barriers to relevant health and social supports have been identified as contributing to inequities in health and wellbeing among children in different socioeconomic groups. These include:

Accessibility: Physical access to health services is frequently difficult for people living in areas with limited transport infrastructure.

Affordability: Out-of-pocket payments at the point of use of health services deter those who are experiencing financial hardship.

Acceptability: Health services which do not take account of cultural and religious sensitivities are a barrier to use, especially by women in low-socioeconomic status (SES) communities.

Utilisation: Cultural and religious norms may prevent people, and particularly women, from using available services.

Quality and continuity of care: Quality and continuity across time and services is not frequently experienced by those most in need.

In a context of widening inequalities, immediate action is required. The importance of the early years for population health and society as a whole is undeniable and actions to tackle inequalities must start before conception and continue throughout childhood.

The decline in developmental vulnerability seen in Queensland's 2021 AEDC data has been the most significant in almost a decade. This result stems from a coordinated approach between government and non-government agencies who are seeking to embed equity at a local level through implementing:

- A service system that is proportionate. Proportionate universalism entails providing a combination of universal services and targeted programs which change in nature and intensity according to need, and has become a favoured recommendation for inequality reduction across the entire social gradient.
- Child-friendly communities and cities that support early childhood development and can reduce inequity. A child-friendly community is one that aims to create equal opportunities for all children, including identifying and removing barriers for the most vulnerable children. This model places value on the voice of the child being heard throughout community and service planning.
- An accessible service system that meets families where they are at. Services need to consider: access (services that are accessible to all families, services that are child and family friendly, services that are engaging and designed with children and families, digital pathways), reach (services that reach all families, including the most vulnerable, mixed modality of service delivery including innovative outreach models, flexible opening times), and coordination (services that work effectively together in an integrated, easy to navigate and supportive way).

- Services that seek to build positive relationships – positive attributes or qualities of services that are considered child and family friendly along with being culturally thoughtful have been highlighted as engendering trust and as such being a significant 'pull factor' to service utilisation and sustainability across all ages.

The time has come to take confidence in the steps we have made so far towards improving outcomes for Queensland children, and ensuring that efforts are strengthened and momentum is not lost. Making Queensland a place for all children to thrive requires long-term vision, investment and commitment. It remains our economic and social imperative to adopt policies that reduce financial hardship, health inequalities and protect families and children from risk. Every Queensland child, irrespective of socioeconomic status or race, deserves a great start in life – to feel safe, valued, respected and know that they belong. This is our opportunity to make this happen.



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Further information

Links referenced in this report

A Great Start for all Queensland Children: An Early Years Plan for Queensland

alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/programs-initiatives/education/early-years-plan

Connect 4 Children strategy

earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/early-years/connect-4-children

Validation studies on the AEDC

aedc.gov.au/about-the-aedc/history/validation-and-trial-of-the-aedi

The Rocklea-Acacia Ridge community

education.qld.gov.au/about-us/reporting-data-research/data/aus-early-development-census/community-stories

Queensland's Early Childhood Development Story

earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/early-years/early-childhood-development-story

Accessing AEDC data

AEDC Data Explorer

To search for data for Queensland communities, use the data tab on the AEDC website and search by suburbs or community.

The data is available as maps, tables and graphs, and a detailed community profile.

Select 'compare years' to determine whether any changes between the five collections are significant.

aedc.gov.au/data-explorer

Queensland Government regional profiles

Review AEDC data alongside demographic, social and economic data for Queensland communities through Queensland Regional Profiles. Community regions can be selected individually, or easily combined to create customised regions or catchments for profiling.

statistics.qgso.qld.gov.au/qld-regional-profiles

Using AEDC in policy, programming and planning

Queensland AEDC resources

A suite of resources providing information, practical ideas and case studies to support schools and early childhood education and care services with the use of the AEDC in programming, planning and continuity of learning.

earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/about-us/publications-and-research/australian-early-development-census/AEDC-resources

Supporting successful transitions

A range of online resources are available to support families, schools and early childhood services to ensure all Queensland children enjoy a great start to school.

qld.gov.au/transitiontoschool

AEDC website

Visit the AEDC website for resources for all stages of the AEDC data collection and reporting including community and school stories, fact sheets, user guides and research snapshots.

aedc.gov.au/resources



Data appendix

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Demographics of children included in the AEDC – Queensland only

	Number of children					Percentage of children (%)				
	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Children with additional or special needs										
Children with special needs status	2,081	3,047	2,762	2,680	3,251	3.8	4.9	4.2	4.1	5.0
Children needing further assessment (e.g. medical and physical, behaviour management, emotional and cognitive development)	6,382	7,235	8,802	9,845	11,339	11.8	12.0	13.9	15.7	18.0
Language diversity of children in the AEDC										
LBOTE - Total¹	5,543	6,549	8,104	10,520	11,369	10.0	10.6	12.4	16.3	17.5
LBOTE - Not proficient in English	1,086	1,136	1,267	1,427	1,523	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.4
LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,300	5,333	6,762	9,013	9,745	7.8	8.7	10.4	14.0	15.1
English Only - Total ²	49,905	55,044	57,096	54,180	53,614	90.0	89.4	87.6	83.7	82.5
English Only - Not proficient in English	2,915	3,342	3,391	2,781	3,056	5.3	5.5	5.2	4.3	4.7
English Only - Proficient in English	46,563	51,399	53,469	51,248	50,361	84.9	84.0	82.4	79.5	77.9
Demographic profile of children in the AEDC										
Sex – Male children										
Sex – Male children	28,460	31,928	33,248	33,418	33,275	51.3	51.8	51.0	51.7	51.2
Sex – Female children										
Sex – Female children	26,988	29,665	31,952	31,282	31,708	48.7	48.2	49.0	48.3	48.8
Indigenous children										
Indigenous children	3,695	4,513	5,332	5,776	6,457	6.7	7.3	8.2	8.9	9.9
Children born in another country										
Children born in another country	3,590	4,689	4,123	3,901	3,489	6.5	7.6	6.3	6.0	5.4
Children with English as a second language										
Children with English as a second language	3,925	5,117	6,239	8,199	8,490	7.1	8.3	9.6	12.7	13.1

¹ Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

² Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

Summary indicator data

OT5

Developmentally on track on five domains

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children with valid scores										%		
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2015	2021	
Overall	Overall	52,685	58,087	62,094	61,751	61,364	40.9	48.3	49.3	50.5	51.4	49.3	50.5	51.4
Socioeconomic status ³	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	12,152	12,946	13,679	13,011	11,935	31.8	39.0	38.2	39.5	40.2	38.2	39.5	40.2
	Quintile 2	10,961	12,260	13,094	13,207	13,141	39.1	45.5	46.9	48.3	48.1	46.9	48.3	48.1
	Quintile 3	10,464	11,728	12,794	12,915	13,046	41.8	49.0	51.0	51.8	52.8	51.0	51.8	52.8
	Quintile 4	10,330	11,447	12,428	12,806	13,028	44.9	52.8	54.6	55.5	56.0	54.6	55.5	56.0
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	8,407	9,515	10,008	9,707	9,986	50.4	58.0	59.0	59.8	61.2	59.0	59.8	61.2
Geographic location	Major Cities	31,816	35,096	37,915	39,203	39,540	42.3	49.4	50.8	51.4	53.4	50.8	51.4	53.4
	Inner Regional	10,725	11,825	12,522	12,009	11,492	39.4	46.8	47.1	48.8	48.3	47.1	48.8	48.3
	Outer Regional	8,184	9,102	9,611	8,688	8,574	38.9	46.3	47.7	49.5	47.5	47.7	49.5	47.5
	Remote	1,059	1,175	1,116	1,017	1,005	39.1	51.0	44.8	51.5	49.6	44.8	51.5	49.6
	Very Remote	901	889	930	834	753	28.0	39.3	37.2	37.5	39.7	37.2	37.5	39.7
Sex	Male	26,635	29,549	31,165	31,400	30,835	30.8	39.1	39.5	41.4	42.5	39.5	41.4	42.5
	Female	26,050	28,538	30,929	30,351	30,529	51.2	57.8	59.1	59.9	60.4	59.1	59.9	60.4
Indigenous background	Indigenous	3,393	4,161	4,976	5,414	5,861	21.7	32.3	31.6	33.5	33.8	31.6	33.5	33.8
	Non-Indigenous	49,292	53,926	57,118	56,337	55,503	42.2	49.5	50.8	52.1	53.2	50.8	52.1	53.2
Language diversity	LBOTE - Total ¹	5,199	6,179	7,788	10,154	10,667	29.6	39.5	41.9	44.8	47.1	41.9	44.8	47.1
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	950	994	1,154	1,272	1,307	1.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.3
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,227	5,178	6,626	8,871	9,556	36.0	47.0	49.1	51.2	53.5	49.1	51.2	53.5
	English Only - Total ²	47,486	51,908	54,306	51,597	50,497	42.1	49.3	50.4	51.6	52.3	50.4	51.6	52.3
	English Only - Not proficient in English	1,952	2,200	2,472	2,040	2,139	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.6
English Only - Proficient in English	45,506	49,666	51,821	49,530	48,350	43.9	51.5	52.7	53.7	54.6	52.7	53.7	54.6	

¹ Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

² Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

³ Figures may differ from earlier publications as SEIFA and Remoteness Areas in this report are based on the updated 2016 version of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children with valid scores										%	
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2021
Overall	Overall	52,603	57,994	62,027	61,673	61,279	29.6	26.2	26.1	25.9	24.7	26.1	24.7
Socioeconomic status ³	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	12,126	12,932	13,663	12,995	11,915	39.7	35.5	36.7	36.0	34.9	36.7	34.9
	Quintile 2	10,942	12,236	13,084	13,193	13,128	30.3	28.3	28.6	27.7	27.3	28.6	27.3
	Quintile 3	10,453	11,703	12,780	12,896	13,025	28.2	25.0	23.6	24.5	23.3	23.6	23.3
	Quintile 4	10,314	11,433	12,414	12,790	13,016	25.4	21.9	21.1	21.2	20.4	21.1	20.4
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	8,397	9,499	9,996	9,695	9,970	21.1	17.7	18.0	17.7	16.6	18.0	16.6
Geographic location	Major Cities	31,783	35,048	37,877	39,142	39,483	28.4	25.2	24.9	24.8	22.8	24.9	22.8
	Inner Regional	10,712	11,808	12,517	12,004	11,480	30.5	27.4	27.3	27.7	27.5	27.3	27.5
	Outer Regional	8,158	9,082	9,605	8,680	8,563	31.3	27.7	27.7	26.9	28.2	27.7	26.9
	Remote	1,053	1,173	1,112	1,017	1,004	31.9	25.8	30.8	26.8	27.6	30.8	27.6
	Very Remote	897	883	916	830	749	46.7	35.9	40.4	40.5	36.6	40.4	36.6
Sex	Male	26,587	29,491	31,127	31,354	30,791	38.2	33.7	33.8	33.0	31.5	33.8	31.5
	Female	26,016	28,503	30,900	30,319	30,488	20.9	18.5	18.4	18.5	17.8	18.4	17.8
Indigenous background	Indigenous	3,383	4,152	4,971	5,407	5,852	50.5	43.0	43.9	42.5	42.1	43.9	42.1
	Non-Indigenous	49,220	53,842	57,056	56,266	55,427	28.2	24.9	24.6	24.3	22.9	24.6	22.9
Language diversity	LBOTE - Total ¹	5,191	6,168	7,772	10,133	10,844	42.1	34.9	32.9	30.3	28.1	32.9	28.1
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	949	993	1,152	1,271	1,307	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,221	5,168	6,612	8,851	9,534	30.5	23.7	22.2	21.0	19.0	22.2	19.0
	English Only - Total ²	47,412	51,826	54,255	51,540	50,435	28.3	25.2	25.2	25.0	24.0	25.2	24.0
	English Only - Not proficient in English	1,952	2,200	2,472	2,040	2,138	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0
	English Only - Proficient in English	45,433	49,593	51,773	49,478	48,292	25.4	22.1	21.8	22.1	20.9	21.8	20.9

1 Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

2 Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

3 Figures may differ from earlier publications as SEIFA and Remoteness Areas in this report are based on the updated 2016 version of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children with valid scores						%					
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021		
Overall	Overall	52,670	58,107	62,103	61,781	61,385	15.8	13.8	14.0	13.9	13.2		
Socioeconomic status ³	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	12,144	12,940	13,670	13,010	11,929	22.9	20.3	22.0	21.6	20.3		
	Quintile 2	10,962	12,246	13,097	13,225	13,148	16.1	15.1	15.8	15.2	14.9		
	Quintile 3	10,471	11,739	12,798	12,916	13,047	14.3	12.9	12.2	12.2	12.1		
	Quintile 4	10,315	11,460	12,442	12,811	13,033	13.2	10.5	10.2	10.5	10.0		
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	8,407	9,531	10,006	9,715	10,000	9.8	8.1	8.0	8.4	8.0		
Geographic location	Major Cities	31,810	35,099	37,928	39,205	39,552	14.9	13.1	13.1	13.0	11.8		
	Inner Regional	10,721	11,836	12,521	12,022	11,502	16.4	14.6	15.2	15.3	15.3		
	Outer Regional	8,184	9,111	9,611	8,694	8,569	16.5	14.9	15.0	15.0	15.6		
	Remote	1,055	1,175	1,118	1,019	1,005	18.2	13.4	17.2	13.4	14.6		
	Very Remote	900	886	925	841	757	28.9	20.2	24.5	25.2	22.6		
	Male	26,620	29,536	31,160	31,413	30,826	21.7	18.8	19.3	19.0	17.9		
Indigenous background	Female	26,050	28,571	30,943	30,368	30,559	9.7	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.4		
	Indigenous	3,386	4,153	4,972	5,412	5,855	31.3	25.8	27.5	27.0	26.9		
	Non-Indigenous	49,284	53,954	57,131	56,369	55,530	14.7	12.8	12.9	12.6	11.7		
Language diversity	LBOTE - Total ¹	5,185	6,168	7,790	10,152	10,866	24.8	18.6	17.7	15.8	14.4		
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	938	984	1,144	1,266	1,302	70.5	61.0	60.8	59.1	61.0		
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,227	5,177	6,636	8,874	9,560	14.6	10.5	10.3	9.5	8.1		
	English Only - Total ²	47,485	51,939	54,313	51,629	50,519	14.8	13.2	13.5	13.5	12.9		
English Only - Not proficient in English	1,945	2,189	2,468	2,036	2,134	79.9	76.2	77.3	78.5	76.5			
English Only - Proficient in English	45,515	49,715	51,834	49,568	48,377	12.0	10.4	10.5	10.8	10.1			

1 Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

2 Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

3 Figures may differ from earlier publications as SEIFA and Remoteness Areas in this report are based on the updated 2016 version of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).



Physical health and wellbeing domain

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children					Developmentally on track %					Developmentally at risk %					Developmentally vulnerable %				
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Overall	Overall	52,761	58,209	62,161	61,844	61,441	74.7	72.9	73.0	74.1	76.5	14.3	15.5	14.6	13.7	11.9	11.0	11.6	12.4	12.3	11.6
Socioeconomic status ³	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	12,168	12,973	13,690	13,029	11,942	68.7	66.0	64.3	65.7	67.9	15.7	17.5	16.9	16.1	14.4	15.6	16.4	18.9	18.2	17.7
	Quintile 2	10,977	12,276	13,109	13,234	13,156	73.9	71.2	71.4	72.9	74.5	15.0	16.5	15.0	14.0	12.5	11.1	12.4	13.6	13.1	13.1
	Quintile 3	10,489	11,751	12,804	12,931	13,059	76.0	73.7	75.4	75.2	77.7	14.3	15.5	13.7	13.5	11.6	9.7	10.8	10.8	11.3	10.7
	Quintile 4	10,340	11,477	12,452	12,824	13,048	77.0	75.7	76.7	78.2	80.2	13.5	14.9	13.9	12.3	10.7	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.5	9.1
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	8,415	9,541	10,015	9,721	10,008	80.2	80.0	79.5	80.0	82.8	12.1	12.3	12.8	12.0	10.1	7.8	7.7	7.7	8.0	7.1
Geographic location	Major Cities	31,850	35,151	37,947	39,254	39,589	75.2	73.4	74.2	75.2	78.3	14.3	15.4	14.2	13.6	11.3	10.5	11.1	11.6	11.2	10.3
	Inner Regional	10,743	11,852	12,532	12,024	11,510	74.8	72.2	71.1	71.7	73.4	13.9	15.6	15.1	14.2	12.7	11.3	12.2	13.9	14.1	13.9
	Outer Regional	8,205	9,134	9,618	8,703	8,579	73.9	71.8	71.6	72.4	72.4	14.4	15.9	15.8	14.1	13.7	11.7	12.3	12.6	13.5	13.9
	Remote	1,060	1,176	1,122	1,020	1,005	73.8	76.9	72.0	75.1	78.4	13.0	12.6	13.5	11.1	9.3	13.2	10.5	14.4	13.8	12.3
	Very Remote	903	896	942	843	758	64.5	67.0	65.8	68.2	69.8	16.7	15.6	14.9	11.4	12.3	18.8	17.4	19.3	20.4	17.9
Sex	Male	26,673	29,599	31,192	31,444	30,867	69.8	68.4	67.8	69.2	71.9	16.0	16.7	16.2	15.1	13.2	14.2	14.9	16.0	15.7	14.9
	Female	26,088	28,610	30,969	30,400	30,574	79.8	77.5	78.3	79.1	81.1	12.5	14.3	12.9	12.2	10.6	7.7	8.2	8.8	8.7	8.3
Indigenous background	Indigenous	3,400	4,168	4,977	5,421	5,865	62.5	62.7	61.4	61.8	64.1	17.7	18.2	16.8	16.9	14.5	19.8	19.1	21.8	21.2	21.3
	Non-Indigenous	49,361	54,041	57,184	56,423	55,576	75.6	73.7	74.0	75.2	77.8	14.0	15.3	14.4	13.4	11.6	10.4	11.0	11.6	11.4	10.6
Language diversity	LBOTE - Total ¹	5,208	6,189	7,803	10,176	10,879	71.7	73.1	73.5	75.5	78.3	15.3	15.1	14.3	13.0	11.0	13.1	11.8	12.2	11.5	10.7
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	951	994	1,154	1,272	1,307	46.9	49.1	46.7	44.7	46.7	23.6	22.3	20.3	21.9	18.3	29.5	28.6	33.0	33.4	35.0
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,234	5,187	6,640	8,890	9,588	77.2	77.7	78.1	79.9	82.6	13.3	13.7	13.3	11.8	10.0	9.4	8.6	8.6	8.3	7.4
	English Only - Total ²	47,553	52,020	54,358	51,668	50,562	75.1	72.9	72.9	73.8	76.1	14.2	15.6	14.6	13.8	12.1	10.8	11.6	12.4	12.4	11.8
	English Only - Not proficient in English	1,952	2,197	2,467	2,040	2,138	26.5	24.4	23.3	22.1	25.1	22.2	22.5	19.3	18.0	18.7	51.2	53.1	57.4	59.9	56.2
	English Only - Proficient in English	45,573	49,775	51,879	49,600	48,413	77.2	75.0	75.3	75.9	78.3	13.8	15.2	14.4	13.6	11.8	9.0	9.7	10.3	10.4	9.9

1 Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

2 Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

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Social competence domain

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children					Developmentally on track %					Developmentally at risk %					Developmentally vulnerable %				
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Overall		52,755	58,186	62,136	61,838	61,435	70.8	72.9	71.2	71.9	74.0	17.1	15.6	16.4	16.2	15.4	12.1	11.5	12.4	11.9	10.6
Socioeconomic status ³		12,165	12,968	13,682	13,027	11,936	63.7	66.6	63.2	64.1	67.0	19.5	17.8	18.9	18.8	18.1	16.8	15.6	18.0	17.0	14.8
	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	10,977	12,274	13,105	13,232	13,157	70.4	71.4	68.9	70.8	71.8	17.4	16.0	17.0	16.4	16.1	12.2	12.6	14.0	12.9	12.1
	Quintile 2	10,488	11,748	12,801	12,929	13,060	71.4	73.4	72.7	72.7	75.0	17.2	15.6	16.2	16.0	15.0	11.4	11.0	11.1	11.3	10.0
	Quintile 3	10,338	11,465	12,447	12,824	13,046	73.4	75.9	75.3	75.2	77.3	16.0	14.6	15.0	15.2	14.4	10.5	9.5	9.7	9.6	8.3
	Quintile 4	8,415	9,540	10,011	9,721	10,008	77.5	78.9	78.0	78.2	79.6	14.3	13.3	14.2	13.9	12.9	8.2	7.7	7.9	7.9	7.5
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	31,851	35,148	37,941	39,250	39,589	71.7	73.4	72.6	72.7	75.3	16.5	15.3	15.8	15.7	14.8	11.7	11.3	11.7	11.6	9.8
Geographic location		10,741	11,844	12,530	12,024	11,509	69.5	72.4	69.6	70.4	71.8	18.3	16.4	17.3	17.1	16.3	12.3	11.2	13.1	12.5	11.9
	Inner Regional	8,200	9,125	9,614	8,702	8,575	70.3	71.5	68.9	71.1	71.3	16.9	15.7	17.5	16.5	16.5	12.8	12.8	13.7	12.5	12.2
	Outer Regional	1,061	1,175	1,122	1,020	1,005	67.5	74.1	68.8	73.4	75.3	20.2	14.8	18.2	16.3	14.0	12.3	11.1	13.0	10.3	10.6
	Remote	902	894	929	842	757	60.8	67.4	60.9	60.5	65.0	20.7	17.3	19.2	21.5	19.0	18.5	15.2	19.9	18.1	16.0
	Very Remote	26,671	29,586	31,187	31,443	30,865	62.3	64.9	62.6	63.9	66.1	21.1	19.3	20.3	19.5	18.9	16.6	15.7	17.1	16.5	15.0
Sex		26,084	28,600	30,949	30,395	30,570	79.5	81.0	79.8	80.1	82.0	13.0	11.8	12.5	12.7	11.8	7.5	7.2	7.8	7.2	6.2
	Female	3,395	4,164	4,975	5,420	5,862	57.5	61.4	57.5	59.6	61.2	22.3	19.5	20.7	19.9	19.9	20.2	19.1	21.8	20.5	18.8
Indigenous background		49,360	54,022	57,161	56,418	55,573	71.7	73.7	72.3	73.1	75.3	16.7	15.3	16.0	15.8	14.9	11.6	11.0	11.6	11.1	9.8
	Non-Indigenous	5,205	6,185	7,800	10,174	10,876	67.4	70.1	70.0	71.5	74.5	18.0	16.9	16.0	16.3	15.2	14.6	13.0	13.9	12.2	10.3
Language diversity		950	990	1,151	1,271	1,304	37.7	38.8	36.2	32.1	35.1	26.3	27.1	24.3	28.7	29.7	36.0	34.1	39.4	39.2	35.2
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	4,232	5,187	6,640	8,889	9,568	74.1	76.0	75.9	77.2	79.9	16.2	15.0	14.6	14.5	13.2	9.8	9.0	9.5	8.3	6.9
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	47,550	52,001	54,336	51,664	50,559	71.2	73.2	71.3	71.9	73.9	17.0	15.4	16.5	16.2	15.4	11.9	11.4	12.2	11.9	10.7
	English Only - Total ²	1,952	2,194	2,464	2,039	2,137	24.8	27.2	22.9	21.4	27.2	27.8	24.0	25.7	26.2	25.3	47.4	48.8	51.4	52.4	47.5
	English Only - Not proficient in English	45,571	49,762	51,859	49,597	48,412	73.1	75.2	73.6	74.0	75.9	16.5	15.1	16.0	15.7	15.0	10.3	9.7	10.3	10.2	9.1
	English Only - Proficient in English																				

1 Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

2 Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

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Emotional maturity domain

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children					Developmentally on track %					Developmentally at risk %					Developmentally vulnerable %				
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Overall	Overall	52,588	57,988	61,959	61,628	61,244	71.5	74.9	73.5	73.3	74.1	17.5	15.8	16.4	16.2	15.9	11.0	9.3	10.1	10.5	10.0
Socioeconomic status ¹	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	12,114	12,909	13,637	12,965	11,903	65.8	69.9	66.4	66.8	67.7	19.7	18.0	19.4	18.7	18.6	14.5	12.1	14.2	14.4	13.6
	Quintile 2	10,933	12,222	13,075	13,189	13,116	70.8	73.4	71.8	72.1	72.0	18.2	16.4	17.1	16.9	17.2	11.0	10.2	11.1	11.0	10.8
	Quintile 3	10,455	11,711	12,770	12,882	13,015	72.0	75.4	74.6	74.4	74.8	17.4	15.7	16.4	16.0	15.7	10.6	8.8	9.0	9.6	9.5
	Quintile 4	10,312	11,441	12,395	12,783	13,003	73.8	77.6	77.1	76.1	77.0	16.2	14.6	14.7	15.0	14.8	9.9	7.8	8.2	8.9	8.2
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	8,402	9,514	9,993	9,705	9,982	77.1	80.1	79.5	78.7	79.8	15.1	13.5	13.3	13.6	12.9	7.9	6.4	7.2	7.7	7.4
Geographic location	Major Cities	31,793	35,021	37,893	39,100	39,454	72.0	75.8	74.3	73.9	75.2	17.3	15.3	16.0	16.0	15.5	10.6	8.9	9.7	10.2	9.3
	Inner Regional	10,711	11,815	12,514	12,003	11,485	71.1	73.2	72.6	72.2	72.6	17.5	16.8	17.1	16.6	16.6	11.3	10.0	10.4	11.2	10.8
	Outer Regional	8,145	9,106	9,598	8,684	8,551	71.0	74.1	73.1	73.5	71.4	17.6	16.5	16.7	16.3	16.9	11.4	9.5	10.3	10.2	11.6
	Remote	1,048	1,175	1,107	1,016	1,004	68.1	77.0	70.7	74.6	74.9	19.6	14.0	17.5	15.2	15.5	12.3	9.0	11.7	10.2	9.6
	Very Remote	891	871	907	825	750	63.4	69.3	61.3	61.8	68.7	19.8	18.6	19.8	21.8	17.9	16.8	12.1	18.9	16.4	13.5
Sex	Male	26,567	29,471	31,078	31,315	30,742	61.3	65.6	63.5	63.6	64.4	22.0	20.3	21.0	20.5	20.5	16.7	14.1	15.5	15.9	15.1
	Female	26,021	28,517	30,881	30,313	30,502	81.8	84.6	83.6	83.3	83.9	12.9	11.1	11.8	11.8	11.3	5.3	4.2	4.7	4.9	4.8
Indigenous background	Indigenous	3,375	4,140	4,965	5,392	5,843	60.5	65.4	61.1	63.1	63.8	22.2	19.8	21.7	20.0	19.8	17.3	14.8	17.2	16.9	16.3
	Non-Indigenous	49,213	53,848	56,994	56,236	55,401	72.2	75.7	74.6	74.3	75.2	17.2	15.5	15.9	15.8	15.5	10.6	8.8	9.5	9.8	9.3
Language diversity	LBOTE - Total ²	5,177	6,161	7,754	10,111	10,824	66.9	72.4	71.5	72.7	74.2	21.0	17.9	18.3	17.6	17.1	12.1	9.7	10.2	9.7	8.7
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	935	984	1,139	1,256	1,295	44.5	46.2	41.4	41.4	43.5	31.3	29.9	34.4	31.9	30.7	24.2	23.9	24.2	26.7	25.8
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,220	5,169	6,605	8,842	9,525	71.9	77.3	76.7	77.1	78.4	18.7	15.7	15.5	15.6	15.2	9.4	7.0	7.7	7.2	6.4
	English Only - Total ³	47,411	51,827	54,205	51,517	50,420	72.0	75.3	73.8	73.5	74.1	17.1	15.5	16.1	15.9	15.7	10.9	9.2	10.1	10.6	10.3
	English Only - Not proficient in English	1,932	2,180	2,452	2,028	2,127	34.0	38.6	33.4	32.0	35.1	30.2	30.0	31.4	30.1	29.7	35.8	31.4	35.1	37.9	35.2
	English Only - Proficient in English	45,452	49,588	51,740	49,461	48,283	73.6	76.9	75.7	75.2	75.8	16.6	14.9	15.4	15.3	15.0	9.9	8.2	8.9	9.5	9.2

1 Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

2 Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

3 Figures may differ from earlier publications as SEIFA and Remoteness Areas in this report are based on the updated 2016 version of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).



Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children					Developmentally on track %					Developmentally at risk %					Developmentally vulnerable %				
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Overall	Overall	52,590	58,122	62,126	61,781	61,387	60.9	78.5	82.3	82.4	80.7	23.5	12.4	9.7	9.6	10.9	15.6	9.1	8.0	8.0	8.4
Socioeconomic status ¹	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	12,124	12,942	13,677	13,020	11,931	49.9	68.8	72.0	72.1	69.6	26.3	16.1	13.6	13.6	15.9	23.9	15.1	14.4	14.3	14.5
	Quintile 2	10,945	12,247	13,099	13,223	13,148	59.1	76.8	80.1	79.7	77.6	24.3	12.9	10.6	11.0	12.4	16.6	10.2	9.4	9.3	10.0
	Quintile 3	10,449	11,745	12,800	12,921	13,055	62.4	79.7	84.5	84.4	82.4	23.8	12.0	9.0	8.9	10.6	13.8	8.3	6.6	6.8	7.0
	Quintile 4	10,307	11,460	12,446	12,814	13,039	66.3	83.2	87.1	87.5	85.5	21.8	10.7	7.8	7.4	8.7	11.9	6.1	5.1	5.0	5.8
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	8,395	9,537	10,013	9,699	9,986	71.1	86.7	90.3	90.6	89.7	20.1	9.0	6.6	6.1	6.5	8.8	4.3	3.1	3.3	3.7
Geographic location	Major Cities	31,763	35,100	37,995	39,217	39,560	63.6	80.2	83.7	84.3	82.9	22.5	11.8	9.0	8.9	10.0	13.9	8.0	7.2	6.8	7.1
	Inner Regional	10,706	11,841	12,525	12,017	11,490	57.4	75.6	80.2	79.1	77.3	25.1	13.4	10.9	11.4	12.7	17.5	11.0	8.9	9.5	10.0
	Outer Regional	8,166	9,116	9,611	8,687	8,571	57.4	77.1	81.3	80.3	77.8	25.0	12.6	9.9	9.9	11.9	17.6	10.2	8.8	9.8	10.3
	Remote	1,054	1,174	1,120	1,020	1,006	59.4	76.2	73.8	78.3	71.0	22.5	12.7	14.1	9.9	14.0	18.1	11.1	12.1	11.8	15.0
	Very Remote	901	891	935	840	760	43.0	68.7	70.6	65.1	64.9	27.0	15.8	13.5	13.5	16.4	30.1	15.5	15.9	21.4	18.7
Sex	Male	26,582	29,549	31,180	31,418	30,843	53.0	74.0	78.4	79.3	77.8	26.8	14.4	11.5	10.9	12.2	20.2	11.5	10.1	9.8	10.0
	Female	26,008	28,573	30,946	30,363	30,544	69.1	83.2	86.1	85.6	83.6	20.1	10.2	7.9	8.2	9.7	10.8	6.6	6.0	6.2	6.7
Indigenous background	Indigenous	3,377	4,147	4,968	5,414	5,852	36.5	59.0	63.5	62.2	59.5	28.0	19.2	16.9	16.9	18.9	35.6	21.8	19.6	20.8	21.6
	Non-Indigenous	49,213	53,975	57,158	56,367	55,535	62.6	80.0	83.9	84.3	82.9	23.2	11.8	9.1	8.9	10.1	14.2	8.2	7.0	6.8	7.0
Language diversity	LBOTE - Total ¹	5,177	6,166	7,798	10,160	10,870	49.8	72.0	77.6	79.8	78.8	25.8	14.3	11.3	10.2	11.2	24.4	13.7	11.1	10.0	10.0
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	934	983	1,149	1,270	1,304	17.6	32.0	37.1	39.2	35.3	24.3	25.1	22.9	23.7	23.6	58.1	42.8	40.0	37.1	41.1
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,223	5,177	6,639	8,877	9,562	57.0	79.6	84.6	85.6	84.7	26.2	12.3	9.3	8.3	9.5	16.9	8.2	6.1	6.1	5.8
	English Only - Total ²	47,413	51,956	54,328	51,621	50,517	62.2	79.3	82.9	82.9	81.1	23.2	12.1	9.5	9.5	10.9	14.6	8.6	7.6	7.6	8.0
	English Only - Not proficient in English	1,937	2,187	2,463	2,036	2,130	12.6	23.4	26.4	23.1	23.0	21.3	23.2	22.0	22.1	22.5	66.0	53.4	51.6	54.9	54.6
	English Only - Proficient in English	45,452	49,707	51,853	49,560	48,375	64.3	81.7	85.6	85.4	83.7	23.3	11.6	8.9	9.0	10.4	12.4	6.6	5.5	5.7	5.9

¹ Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

² Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

³ Figures may differ from earlier publications as SEIFA and Remoteness Areas in this report are based on the updated 2016 version of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).



Communication skills and general knowledge domain

Category name	Subcategory code	Number of children					Developmentally on track %					Developmentally at risk %					Developmentally vulnerable %				
		2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021	2009	2012	2015	2018	2021
Overall	Overall	52,754	58,203	62,163	61,833	61,450	72.6	71.4	72.8	74.0	76.1	16.9	17.9	16.7	15.9	14.8	10.5	10.7	10.5	10.1	9.1
Socioeconomic status ¹	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)	12,165	12,971	13,689	13,028	11,943	64.7	63.3	63.0	64.4	67.4	19.9	20.5	20.1	19.5	18.3	15.5	16.3	16.8	16.1	14.3
	Quintile 2	10,975	12,273	13,107	13,227	13,155	71.5	69.2	70.4	72.3	73.9	17.6	19.1	17.7	16.5	15.8	11.0	11.8	11.8	11.2	10.3
	Quintile 3	10,489	11,753	12,808	12,930	13,084	73.9	72.0	74.6	75.8	77.4	16.4	17.9	16.4	15.1	14.4	9.7	10.1	9.0	9.1	8.1
	Quintile 4	10,339	11,474	12,453	12,822	13,051	76.0	75.0	77.5	78.5	79.8	15.5	16.8	14.9	14.1	13.3	8.5	8.2	7.7	7.4	6.9
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)	8,415	9,541	10,015	9,721	10,009	79.9	80.0	80.9	80.9	82.7	14.2	14.3	13.4	13.6	12.0	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.3
Geographic location	Major Cities	31,851	35,150	37,951	39,248	39,586	73.0	72.0	74.1	74.6	77.5	16.8	17.7	16.0	15.9	14.2	10.2	10.3	9.9	9.5	8.3
	Inner Regional	10,739	11,853	12,529	12,021	11,517	72.5	70.7	71.7	73.2	73.9	16.8	18.3	17.3	16.1	15.9	10.6	10.9	10.9	10.6	10.2
	Outer Regional	8,202	9,128	9,617	8,702	8,579	72.8	70.7	70.1	73.2	73.0	16.8	17.8	18.3	15.9	16.4	10.3	11.5	11.6	10.9	10.7
	Remote	1,059	1,176	1,122	1,020	1,007	71.7	71.4	69.4	76.3	77.9	16.9	18.3	16.0	13.1	11.7	11.4	10.3	14.6	10.6	10.4
	Very Remote	903	896	944	842	761	58.3	64.2	64.9	63.2	66.2	22.0	20.8	21.2	15.8	17.6	19.7	15.1	13.9	21.0	16.2
Sex	Male	26,669	29,599	31,194	31,438	30,872	66.5	65.8	67.2	68.9	71.6	19.7	20.4	19.3	18.1	16.9	13.8	13.8	13.5	13.0	11.5
	Female	26,085	28,604	30,969	30,395	30,578	78.9	77.1	78.4	79.3	80.6	14.0	15.3	14.1	13.6	12.8	7.1	7.5	7.5	7.1	6.7
Indigenous background	Indigenous	3,397	4,168	4,976	5,417	5,864	55.2	56.4	56.2	59.5	62.0	23.3	22.8	22.2	19.9	18.8	21.5	20.8	21.6	20.6	19.1
	Non-Indigenous	49,357	54,035	57,187	56,416	55,586	73.8	72.5	74.2	75.4	77.5	16.5	17.5	16.2	15.5	14.4	9.7	9.9	9.5	9.1	8.0
Language diversity	LBOTE - Total ²	5,202	6,191	7,801	10,171	10,878	53.6	56.2	58.3	61.5	64.9	21.4	21.3	21.3	20.2	18.7	25.0	22.5	20.4	18.2	16.4
	LBOTE - Not proficient in English	950	990	1,154	1,271	1,306	2.8	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	8.3	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	88.8	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0
	LBOTE - Proficient in English	4,232	5,194	6,642	8,890	9,569	65.1	66.7	68.3	70.2	73.7	24.2	24.0	24.0	22.3	20.3	10.7	9.3	7.7	7.4	6.0
	English Only - Total ³	47,552	52,012	54,362	51,662	50,572	74.7	73.2	74.8	76.4	78.4	16.4	17.5	16.1	15.1	14.0	8.9	9.3	9.1	8.5	7.5
	English Only - Not proficient in English	1,952	2,199	2,471	2,039	2,138	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	1.2	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	<10.0	9.5	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	≥90.0	89.3
	English Only - Proficient in English	45,576	49,783	51,884	49,600	48,429	77.9	76.4	78.4	79.6	81.9	16.8	18.0	16.5	15.4	14.2	5.3	5.6	5.1	5.0	3.9

1 Total for LBOTE includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

2 Total children who speak only English at home includes children that are NOT proficient in English, ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency is unknown.

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