

**Australian Early Development Census
(AEDC)**

Data Guidelines

April 2025



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List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AEDC DLU	AEDC Approved Data Linkage Unit
AEDI	Australian Early Development Index
APPs	Australian Privacy Principles
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
AvEDI	Australian version of the Early Development Instrument
DAT Act	Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022
DLU	Data Linkage Unit
DMA	Data Management Agency
DV1	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains
DV2	Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains
EDI	Early Development Instrument
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
ESL	English as a Second Language
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
LGA	Local Government Area
MADIP	Multi-Agency Data Integration Project
MSI	Multiple Strength Indicator
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
OT5	Developmentally on track on five domains
PLIDA	Person-Level Integrated Data Asset
SA#	Statistical Area Level #
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas

1. About the Data Guidelines

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) Data Guidelines (the Guidelines) set out the principles and protocols governing the management, access, use, disclosure and dissemination of AEDC Data in all their forms.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to clarify the proper use and management of the AEDC Data by relevant stakeholders. These Guidelines apply to all AEDC Data obtained during the operational life of the program. For more information and to access the relevant forms, visit the AEDC website www.aedc.gov.au. A glossary of relevant terms can be found at section 0.

The information contained in these Guidelines is provided for guidance only and does not constitute legal advice, nor should it be treated as a substitute for legal or professional advice, particularly in relation to subjects such as human research ethical approval requirements, privacy and the use and storage of Personal Information.

Should you have any questions in relation to these Guidelines, contact the Data Management Agency at support@aedc.gov.au or by calling 1800 092 548.

1.1 Amendments

In accordance with its portfolio responsibilities, and those contained within the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#), the Australian Government Department of Education (the Department) reserves the right to amend these Guidelines from time to time at its discretion.

These amendments may be required to reflect Australian Government priorities. Any changes will be published on the AEDC website www.aedc.gov.au.

1.2 Version

Version	Published	Summary of changes
1.0	January 2012	Covering the period 2012-2014
1.1	August 2014	Covering the period 2015-2017
2.0	October 2015	Revision to incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• additional operational requirements, information and guidelines• information previously contained in the AEDC's microdata, macrodata, Data Linkage and School Systems policy documents and AEDC Data User guide• wording from previously separate Deeds of Licence and confidentiality.
2.1	November 2015	Amendment to section 7.5.1 to include the provision of deidentified datasets
3.0	February 2017	Revision to incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enhanced publishing rules (previously section 7.5 <i>Publishing and Reporting</i>)• additional information about accessing AEDC Data via an agreement• clarification of the data application process• clarification of the different types of AEDC Data Users• additional information on Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) process• numerous layout and editorial changes to improve readability.
3.1	March 2017	Revision to incorporate information about the Multiple Strength Indicator (MSI).
3.2	June 2017	Revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorporation of information about the use of AEDC raw scores to develop new constructs and variables using AEDC Data to section 3.1.4• amendment to section 6.8.3 regarding addition of Permitted Data Users.
3.3	March 2019	Revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updates to reflect the 2018 data release• Additional section on Research Snapshots to section 7.5

3.4	March 2022	Revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of on track on five Summary indicator in 2021 (section 3) • Introduction of the Preliminary School Snapshot in 2021 • Links to the Guide to Data Integration Projects involving Commonwealth Data for • <i>Research and Statistical Purposes</i> updated due to the role of the National Statistical Service being absorbed by the ABS • Updated Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) definitions as used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
4.0	November 2023	Major revisions made, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the structure of the Guidelines • Deletion of auxiliary information determined not to be in scope • Introduction of new operational rules for publication of AEDC Data • Changes to confidentiality and interpretability rules • Introduction of new data storage and handling requirements • Changes to definition, nomination, approval and responsibilities of Data Users
4.1	February 2025	Revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor changes to the data storage, disclosure, and destruction requirements • New references to integrated data repositories introduced
4.2	April 2025	Revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weblinks updated throughout document to align to new AEDC website

1.3 AEDC Data Values and Principles

The following principles govern the collection, access, use, and dissemination of all AEDC Data:

Principle/value	Description
Privacy, confidentiality and legal conformity	<p>The Department is committed to the protection of privacy and must comply with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) and any relevant legislation, across the data use lifecycle when handling any Personal Information. This is especially relevant as it is a key feature of the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022 (DAT Act).</p> <p>At all stages of the AEDC Data collection and reporting processes, it is the responsibility of the Department, contracted agencies, and Data Users to ensure that the privacy of individuals involved either as data collectors (teachers and AEDC Cultural Consultants) or as data sources (children and parents/guardians) must be maintained in accordance with the APPs and/or applicable state and territory privacy legislation and policies. Additionally, all data use, storage and security procedures must be reviewed to ensure they are accurate, compliant, and up to date with all relevant legislations. Use and disclosure of AEDC Data, in any form, must be in accordance with the APPs and/or any applicable state and territory privacy legislation and policy. Further information on privacy is available at www.aedc.gov.au /what-is-the-aedc/privacy-statement .</p>
Formal responsibility	<p>The Australian Government, as represented by the Department, is the Data Custodian of all data collected for the AEDC program. The Australian Government works in close partnership with state and territory government agencies to deliver the AEDC.</p>
Quality	<p>Service providers contracted to undertake elements of the national implementation of the AEDC must ensure that the collection and subsequent composition of AEDC Datasets are to the highest possible standards. Every effort must be made to ensure that AEDC Data are collected in a consistent way and are as complete and as accurate as possible. Drawing on the ABS Data Quality Framework, AEDC Data collection, use and reporting processes must also ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretability of data: availability of information to help provide insight into the data, such as the variables used, the availability of metadata, including concepts, classifications, and measures of accuracy. • Timeliness of data: (i) time lag between the reference period and when the data actually become available should be optimised to the best possible extent (including the time lag between the advertised and actual date of release); and (ii) including information about the proposed frequency of repeated collections and when data will be released for subsequent reference periods.

Security	<p>The data collection techniques, storage and reporting technologies must ensure the integrity and security of the AEDC Data. Security protocols agreed between the Department and all contracted agencies require protection against unauthorised access, use, disclosure, modification and accidental destruction of AEDC Data.</p> <p>Data Users must comply with the security requirements determined by the Department for embargoed information and the storage and use of not publicly released AEDC Data.</p>
Appropriate feedback to data providers	<p>High-level (aggregate) AEDC Data will be available publicly at www.aedc.gov.au. Additional data may be accessed by the application process outlined in section 4.</p> <p>While the AEDC is not a tool for individual diagnostic testing, it is desirable that school principals receive a confidential school report that provides aggregated information about the children in their schools.</p> <p>Similarly, the relevant education systems will have access to unreleased aggregated AEDC Data for children attending schools within their system, subject to privacy considerations. They may also receive microdata and other data products under agreement with the Department.</p>
Analysis and reporting of AEDC Data and results	<p>The reporting, publication and/or analysis of AEDC Data and results must be in accordance with these Data Guidelines.</p>
Analysis and dissemination	<p>National and international users of the AEDC, across both government and non-government sectors, will be encouraged to use AEDC Data to expand shared understanding of early childhood development outcomes for children in Australia.</p> <p>Two key benefits of the AEDC are the potential to analyse the results to inform government policy development and reporting back to the communities involved.</p>
Prohibited usage	<p>In accordance with the licensing arrangements in place between McMaster University, Canada and the Australian Government (as represented by the Department), AEDC Data will only be used at a population level in any and all analysis that will be carried out. Diagnosis or identification of individual children is not allowed. Unpublished AEDC Data cannot be requested for purposes other than the ones specified in section 3.1.</p>
Culturally sensitive data practices	<p>Reporting of AEDC findings should take proper account of specific cultural and communication requirements, especially when reporting findings on communities with a high proportion of First Nations children and children with language backgrounds other than English. Refer to the NHMRC Guidelines; Keeping Research on track II and Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders for further information.</p>
Data linkage	<p>The Department uses the best practice advice detailed in the Guide to Data Integration Projects involving Commonwealth Data for Research and Statistical Purposes as published and administered by the Cross Portfolio Data Integration Oversight Board, an Australian Government initiative to support the administration of data linkage activities involving Commonwealth data.</p>
Accountability	<p>All parties using AEDC Data are accountable for how the data are used, which must be in accordance with these Data Guidelines. The use of AEDC Data must not breach the privacy of participants and/or jeopardise future data collections.</p>
Ongoing review	<p>The Guidelines and any accompanying documentation will be regularly reviewed and updated, at least with each data AEDC Cycle (i.e. every three years), to ensure that they remain contemporary and relevant to the emerging data and planning needs of all stakeholders. The Guidelines must also reflect ongoing best practices in managing, using, and sharing data.</p>
Transparency	<p>Clear documentation describing the collection, management, access, use, and dissemination of AEDC Data is available.</p>
Efficiency	<p>Access, use and publication of data should be governed by efficient processes. Data should be accessed with ease, in a suitable form or medium, and data access protocols are not unnecessarily restrictive or inefficient. Efficiency also involves encouraging prompt and accurate publication/dissemination of data for various stakeholders and interested parties.</p>

Complaints handling	<p>Complaints regarding the AEDC, its data or use will be handled professionally and in accordance with expected Australian Government best practice standards. Any complaints should be referred in the first instance to:</p> <p>AEDC Data Management Collections and Analytics Data and Delivery Support Branch Australian Government Department of Education GPO Box 9880 Canberra ACT 2601 AEDC@education.gov.au</p>
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1.4 Glossary

Term/Phrase	Definition/Meaning
Accredited Integrating Authority	See Commonwealth Accredited Integrating Authority.
Adverse Event	Any event that results in negative impacts on key stakeholders of the AEDC, including but not limited to: the Department, State and Territory governments, and children, teachers and schools that participate in the collection. Adverse events commonly result in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher than expected probability of risk linked to the research • higher than expected negative or serious impacts on AEDC children or teachers • a breach of HREC approval for the project • a breach of the AEDC Data Guidelines. • Adverse events may include but are not limited to: the re-identification of children, teachers, and schools and/or the disclosure of sensitive information about people and communities, inappropriate data handling or sharing practices.
AEDC Approved Data Linkage Unit	Data Linkage Units that have been approved to undertake data linkage for Data Users requesting AEDC Data via the application process. A list of AEDC Data Linkage Units can be found on the AEDC website.
AEDC Community	Geographic area, usually equivalent to a Local Government Area and made up of AEDC Local Communities.
AEDC Cultural Consultant	First Nation person that provides cultural advice to teachers and/or assists teachers in completing the AEDC Instrument for First Nations children.
AEDC Cycle	The operational lifetime of each AEDC Data collection. Each AEDC Cycle has a duration of three years, with the first AEDC Cycle conducted nationally in 2009.
AEDC Data	Any of the following data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all pertinent data collected, stored, aggregated and disseminated during the national implementation of the AEDC, including data provided by other Australian Government and state and territory government agencies or departments (either directly or through their respective school/educational systems), non-government school systems and schools and teachers before, during and after each triennial collection via the AEDC online data collection system and/or other approved mechanisms; • any subset of the above data, including published data, unpublished data and/or data approved for web release by the Department; • data derived by aggregation, transformation, analysis, or otherwise obtained from the abovementioned data. By extension, any datasets and/or materials including the abovementioned data.
AEDC Data Dictionary	Document that provides technical reference information about the AEDC, including a complete reference to AEDC variables. This dictionary is intended for use by researchers and other Data Users to guide their use and analysis of AEDC Data.
AEDC Data Guidelines	The document setting the principles and protocols governing the collection, access, use and dissemination of the AEDC Data.
AEDC Domain	One of the five areas of early childhood development that form the foundations for later good health, education and social outcomes. The AEDC Domains are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical health and wellbeing • social competence • emotional maturity • language and cognitive skills (school-based) • communication skills and general knowledge.
AEDC Indicators	Collectively, the AEDC Domain Indicators, Summary Indicators, and Multiple Strengths Indicator.
AEDC Instrument	The instrument used to collect AEDC Data. It comprises the AvEDI and additional demographic and background questions about participants.
AEDC Integrating Authority	A government agency or department that has a written agreement with the Department to receive unpublished identified and deidentified AEDC Data in order to carry out internal data linkage activities with data and datasets within their control or portfolio responsibilities.
AEDC Local Community	Small area locality, usually representing a suburb, town or Statistical Area Level 2.

AEDC Population	The total number of children for whom an AvEDI has been submitted during a collection AEDC Cycle, including children with special needs.
Australian Early Development Census	Nationwide data collection of early childhood development at the time children commence their first year of full-time school. By extension, the program enabling the above collection.
Australian Early Development Index	Name of the AEDC program prior to 1 July 2014.
Australian version of the Early Development Instrument	Teacher-completed Instrument adapted from the EDI for use in Australia and licensed to the Australian Government by McMaster University for the purposes of conducting the AEDC. It constitutes the core of the AEDC Instrument.
Australian Statistical Geography Standard	The geographical framework administered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The ABS has used this framework for the National Census since July 2011. The Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) is made up of four Statistical Area Levels: SA1, SA2, SA3 and SA4.
Authorised Data User	Person who has been given permission by the DMA or the Department to receive, access and use one or more AEDC datafiles, and who is ultimately responsible for managing the AEDC Data therein contained in accordance with the AEDC Data Guidelines on behalf of their organisation.
Authorised Data User Certification Form	Form that governs how an entity or organisation will manage AEDC Data and includes the appointment of an Authorised Data User.
Certification form	See Authorised Data User Certification Form.
Commonwealth Arrangements	Arrangements outlined in the Commonwealth Arrangements for Data Integration projects Involving Commonwealth Data for Statistical and Research Purposes .
Commonwealth Accredited Integrating Authority	Commonwealth agencies that have received accreditation to undertake high-risk integration projects involving Commonwealth data. For a list of current Accredited Integrating Authorities see the data.gov.au website.
Confidential Information	Information that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is AEDC Data that has not been released, and/or • by its nature confidential, and/or • is designated in writing by the Department as confidential, and/or • is Personal Information under the Privacy Act 1988, information under section 23(1) of the <i>Social Security Act 1991</i> (Cth), or protected information under Division 2 of Part 6 of A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999 (Cth), and/or • the Data User knows or ought to know is confidential.
Content Variables	Data items or research variables contained in the deidentified AEDC Dataset.
Critical Difference	The minimum level of change required between any two AEDC Cycles of AEDC results for the comparative result to be significant. The difference between the percentages of children vulnerable, at risk, or on track across the AEDC Cycles is statistically significant if it exceeds the Critical Difference.
Data Breach	Actual or suspected Adverse Event occurring when Personal Information held is subject to unauthorised access, use, or disclosure, or is lost.
Data Custodian	Has the same meaning as that defined in the Roles and Responsibilities section of the Commonwealth Arrangements. The Australian Government Department of Education is the Data Custodian of the AEDC Data.
Data integration	Statistical process that consists in combining data from different sources, at the unit level or at small geographic levels. By extension, the full range of management and governance practices around that process, including project approval, data transfer, linking and merging the data, and dissemination.
Data linkage	Part of the data integration process that involves creating links between records from different sources based on common features in those sources.
Data Linkage Unit	Organisation established to enable the linkage of administrative and other datasets for governments, researchers and other policy and program makers.
Data Management Agency	The organisation the Department has engaged to manage the AEDC Data collection, storage and access processes on its behalf.
Data sharing	The practice and/or process by means of which the Department provides controlled access to data to authorised individuals and/or organisations, as opposed to publication.
Data Steward	Department personnel who are responsible for the operational management of the AEDC Data. This includes, but is not limited to: metadata management, data quality, privacy, data security, sharing and release of data, and management of data risks.

Data User	Individual or organisation with whom the Department (via the Data Management Agency) has shared AEDC Data in order to undertake analysis or to produce any materials for publication, reporting, or review. This excludes schools that receive AEDC school reports.
Deidentification	The process by which identifying information in the AEDC Data is removed from all other information, to create a deidentified dataset. The AEDC deidentification process carried out by the Data Management Agency includes (as appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removing names, street addresses and dates of birth • creating a unique code for each record (i.e. for each child, teacher and school) • grouping and limiting the number of variables included in a file.
Deidentified dataset	A dataset of unit records that has had identifying variables removed from each record.
Delegate	Permitted Data User whom the Authorised Data User has nominated in an Authorised Data User Certification Form as being responsible for the day to day management of AEDC Data.
Department, the	The Australian Government Department of Education.
Developmentally at risk	AEDC Domain Indicator category applying to children whose domain score in the specified domain falls between the 10th and 25th percentile cut-off score set in 2009.
Developmentally on track	AEDC Domain Indicator category applying to children whose domain score in the specified domain falls above the 25th percentile cut-off score set in 2009.
Developmentally vulnerable	AEDC Domain Indicator category applying to children whose domain score in the specified domain falls below the 10th percentile cut-off score set in 2009.
Developmentally on track on five domains	Strength-based Summary Indicator equal to the percentage of children who are developmentally on track on all five AEDC Domains in the specified population.
Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains	Vulnerability Summary Indicator equal to the percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC Domains in the specified population.
Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains	Vulnerability Summary Indicator equal to the percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on two or more AEDC Domains in the specified population.
Domain	See AEDC Domain.
Domain cut-off score	Score set in the 2009 AEDC Data collection for each AEDC Domain to define the corresponding Domain Indicator categories.
Domain Indicator	Indicator of development on a particular AEDC developmental domain
Developmentally at risk	AEDC Domain Indicator category applying to children whose domain score in the specified domain falls between the 10th and 25th percentile cut-off score set in 2009.
Domain Indicator category	One of the three categories into which Domain Indicator scores are subdivided. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developmentally on track • developmentally at risk • developmentally vulnerable. Domain categories are only calculated for children with valid Domain Indicator scores in the corresponding domain.
Domain Indicator item	Question from the AvEDI allocated to a particular AEDC Domain and utilised to compute the corresponding Domain Indicator score.
Domain Indicator score	Numerical score calculated for each AEDC Domain by combining information on the corresponding domain items. For each domain, children receive a score between zero and ten, where higher scores denote better development.
Domain scores	See Domain Indicator score.
Early Development Instrument	Instrument developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University, in Canada, to measure the developmental health and wellbeing of populations of young children.
Embargoed circulation	The act of making materials containing aggregated, suppressed AEDC Data available to a restricted audience, under a requirement of confidentiality, and in compliance with the requirements set in the Guidelines. For the purposes of the Guidelines, embargoed circulation constitutes a type of publication.
Emerging strengths	Multiple Strength Indicator category applying to children with a Multiple Strength Indicator score of 18 or less.
English as a Second Language	Term applying to children whose first language is not English and who have conversational English but who are not yet proficient in English.

Estimated Resident Population	Estimate of the population that usually live in Australia, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
Highly developed strengths	Multiple Strength Indicator category applying to children with a Multiple Strength Indicator score of 28 or more.
Identifier	See Identifying variable.
Identifying variable	Variable that can be used to identify individuals. In most situations this refers to variables like name, address, and date of birth. In some situations, other information which reveals rare situations can act as identifying variables. For example, a dataset that allows cross-tabulation of a rare type of cancer by very small geographic areas may reveal the only person in an area with that type of cancer and this could lead to the identification of that person.
Indigenous Adaptation Study	Study conducted by the Centre for Developmental Health and the Kulunga Indigenous Research Network at Perth's Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (now known as the Telethon Kids Institute) in 2007, to ensure the relevance and sensitivity of the EDI to the needs of Australian First Nations children. The AvEDI is the product of the Indigenous Adaptation Study.
Individual Data User	Person who is a Data User.
Intellectual Property	All present and future rights conferred by law in or in relation to any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • copyright; • rights in relation to inventions, trademarks (including service marks), designs, and circuit layouts; • moral rights; and • any other rights resulting from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary or artistic fields recognised in domestic law anywhere in the world, whether registered or unregistered.
Invalid instrument	Instrument that does not meet the definition of Valid instrument.
Language background other than English	Term applying to children who speak a language other than English at home, or who speak English at home but are still considered to have English as a second language
Local Government Area	Geographic boundary published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which approximates gazetted local government boundaries as defined by each state and territory.
Macrodata	Aggregated microdata: typically counts, means, or frequencies. For the purposes of these Guidelines: aggregated AEDC Data, unless otherwise specified.
Materials	Any generated data and research findings based on research and analysis of a dataset, as well as any data visualisation tools and products reproducing information from a dataset.
Microdata	Individual level or unit record data. For the purposes of these Guidelines: individual level or unit record AEDC Data, unless otherwise specified.
Multiple Strength Indicator	Measure of children's developmental strengths that uses items from the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument and focuses on the more advanced skills, competencies, and dispositions to explore how many strengths children have at school entry.
Multiple Strength Indicator category	One of the three possible values of the Multiple Strength Indicator. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly developed strengths • Well-developed strengths • Emerging strengths.
Multiple Strength Indicator item	One of the 39 items selected from the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument as providing an indication of whether a child shows advanced skills, or better than expected development for his or her age, and utilised to develop the Multiple Strength Indicator.
Multiple Strength Indicator score	Score calculated for each individual child utilising the Multiple Strength Indicator item where enough valid scores have been recorded through the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument. Children receive a score between 0 and 39, where higher indicate strengths in a higher number of items.
Permitted Data User	Individual that has been granted permission to use AEDC Data by the Authorised Data User through a Permitted Data User Certification Form and approved as such by the Department and/or the Data Management Agency.
Personal Information	As defined by the Privacy Act 1988, information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Pre-population	The population of background and/or demographic items in the AEDC Instrument from administrative data, performed before teachers commence the completion of the AEDC Instrument for individual children.
Proficient in English	Term applying to children for whom the teachers answered 'average' or 'good/very good' to the AEDC Instrument question: 'How would you rate this child's ability to use language effectively in English?'
Release	Type of publication consisting in making materials containing aggregated, suppressed AEDC Data available to an audience that is not restricted and/or not bound by a requirement of confidentiality, in compliance with the requirements of these Guidelines. This could include but it is not limited to publishing data on a website, releasing reports, or any other method of making data available to the general public.
Released data	Data that have been previously subjected to public release, or contained in materials that have been previously subjected to public release. By extension, any data that can be derived by aggregation, algebraic manipulation, or descriptive statistics from released data.
Publication	The process of disclosing aggregated, suppressed AEDC Data beyond the Department, the DMA, and the Authorised and/or Permitted Data User(s), in compliance with the requirements set in the Guidelines.
Publication Rule	One of the rules governing the publication of AEDC Data.
Public release	See Release.
Published data	AEDC Data that has been subjected to publication.
Remoteness classification	Classification of geographic areas based on their relative access to services and released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics .
Separation Principle	One of the mechanisms to protect the identities of individuals and organisations in datasets, which consists in the separation of identifying and content information. It implies that no-one can access the information used to identify an individual (e.g. name, address, date of birth) in conjunction with the content data (e.g. AEDC Domain data).
Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas	Index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that summarises different aspects of socio-economic conditions in a geographic area.
Special needs	Term applying to children reported by teachers as requiring special assistance because of chronic medical, physical, or intellectually disabling conditions (e.g. autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome) based on a medical diagnosis or diagnoses.
Stand-alone computer	Computer not connected to other devices or to a computer network.
Statistical Area Level 1	Geographic unit from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard designed to maximise the geographic detail available for Census of Population and Housing data while maintaining confidentiality. Most SA1s have a population of between 200 to 800 people.
Statistical Area Level 2	Middle-sized, general purpose geographic unit from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard designed to represent communities that interact together socially and economically. Most SA2s have a population range of 3,000 to 25,000 people.
Statistical Area Level 3	Geographic unit from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard designed for the output of regional data and most have populations between 30,000 and 130,000 people.
Statistical Area Level 4	Geographic unit from the Australian Statistical Geography Standard designed for the output of a variety of regional data; it represents labour markets and the functional area of Australian capital cities. Most SA4s have a population of over 100,000 people.
Suppressed data	Data that have been subjected to the suppression and interpretability rules outlined in sections 7.1-7.2 of these Guidelines.
Unreleased data	Data that have not been subjected to public release and which are not contained in any materials that have been subjected to public release.
Unsuppressed data	Data that are not suppressed data.
Valid domain score	Domain Indicator score assigned to a child who has been in class for no less than a month and for whom a teacher has completed 75 per cent or more of the AEDC Instrument items contributing to the corresponding AEDC Domain.
Valid instrument	A completed instrument for a child older than three years, where the child is not considered to have special needs, and with at least four valid domain scores.






Vulnerability Summary Indicator	A measure of children's developmental vulnerability across the five AEDC Domains. The two Vulnerability Summary Indicators are Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains and Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.
Well-developed strengths	Multiple Strength Indicator category applying to children with a Multiple Strength Indicator score between 19 and 27.

2. About the AEDC

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide data collection of early childhood development at the time children commence their first year of full-time school. Formerly known as the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), the AEDC was first launched in 2009 and has since been conducted every three years, with a supplementary data collection conducted in selected communities in 2010.

AEDC Data are collected using the AEDC Instrument, at the core of which is the Australian Version of the Early Development Instrument (AvEDI). The AvEDI adapts the Early Development Instrument (EDI) developed by the Offord Centre at McMaster University (Canada) to the Australian context. The AvEDI is completed by teachers based on their observations of the children in their class, and it collects data relating to five key domains of early childhood development. These domains are outlined in Table 1. It is recommended that teachers be assisted by an AEDC Cultural Consultant in completing the AvEDI for First Nations children.

Table 1: AEDC Domains

AEDC Domain name	Icon	Description
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.

Please refer to the [AEDC website](#) for a comprehensive [history of the AEDC](#) and further details about the [development](#), [validation](#) and [content](#) of the AvEDI. For more information about the AEDC Domains see section 2.1 and the [AEDC website](#).

2.1 AEDC Indicators

AEDC Indicators provide a measure of child development within and across each of the five AEDC Domains. There are three types of AEDC Indicators: AEDC Domain Indicators, Summary Indicators, and a Supplementary Indicator.

AEDC Indicators have been developed and validated for use as a population measure at a group level and have not been psychometrically tested for application in relation to individual children. See sections 7.1-7.2 for more detail about reporting AEDC Indicators.

2.1.1 Domain Indicators

Domain Indicators measure development and skill on each AEDC Domain. Each indicator is computed from the responses provided by the teacher on a specific subset of AvEDI items. These responses are converted into a score ranging from 0 to 10, where higher scores correspond to greater development. Scores are subsequently compared to the cut-offs set in the 2009 AEDC Cycle and allocated to one of the three AEDC Domain Indicator categories, as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Domain Indicator category calculation

Domain Indicator category	Calculation of children in each category based on cut-off scores from 2009
Developmentally on track	Children who score above the cut-off score set at the 25 th percentile (top 75 per cent) of the 2009 AEDC Population with valid domain scores.
Developmentally at risk	Children who score between the cut-off scores respectively set at the 10 th percentile and 25 th percentile of the 2009 AEDC Population with valid domain scores.
Developmentally vulnerable	Children who score below the cut-off score set at the 10 th percentile (bottom 10 per cent) of the 2009 AEDC Population with valid domain scores.

Domain Indicator categories are only available for children with a valid domain score. AEDC Domain scores are considered valid if 75 per cent or more of the AvEDI items for the corresponding AEDC Domain are completed, if the child is not reported as having Special Needs, if the child is no less than three years old, and if the teacher has known the child in a classroom setting for no less than one month and/or declares that they can make an accurate assessment of the child.

Domain Indicators are typically reported at the population level as the proportion of children who are developmentally on track, developmentally at risk, and developmentally vulnerable on the corresponding domain.

The five AEDC Domains are additionally broken down into sub-domains. Sub-domain categories only provide indications for that subdomain and are only calculated if the child has a valid domain score. Preliminary work has been undertaken to validate the AEDC sub-domains and these measures should be used with caution.

Table 3: AEDC Sub-domains

Domain	Subdomains
Physical health and wellbeing	Physical readiness for school day
	Physical independence
	Gross and fine motor skills
Social competence	Overall social competence
	Responsibility and respect
	Approaches to learning
	Readiness to explore new things
Emotional maturity	Prosocial and helping behaviour
	Anxious and fearful behaviour
	Aggressive behaviour
	Hyperactivity and inattentive behaviour
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	Basic literacy
	Interest in literacy and numeracy and memory
	Advanced literacy
	Basic numeracy
Communication skills and general knowledge	Communication skills and general knowledge

Analysis of individual items that make up the sub-domains and domains is not recommended as they have not been validated as measures of child development.

For more information about the AEDC Domain Indicators see the [AEDC Data Dictionary](#). A comprehensive explanation of the Domain scores and cut-offs is given in the [Understanding the results](#) factsheet and the information video [Understanding the data](#).

2.1.2 Summary Indicators

The AEDC Summary Indicators provide a measure of child development across the five AEDC Domains. The strength-based Summary Indicator OT5 focuses on the strengths that children have developed when they start school, whereas the vulnerability Summary Indicators DV1 and DV2 show whether children are facing challenges in their development.

Table 4: Summary Indicators

Indicator	Abbreviation	Type of indicator	Reported as
Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)	DV1	Vulnerability	Percentage
Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains	DV2	Vulnerability	Percentage
Developmentally on track on five domains	OT5	Strength-based	Percentage

DV1, DV2 and OT5 are directly calculated from Domain Indicator categories and have no associated scores. They are typically reported at the population level as the percentage of children who are respectively developmentally vulnerable on at least one domain, developmentally vulnerable on at least two domains, and developmentally on track on all five domains.

2.1.3 Supplementary Indicators

The Multiple Strengths Indicator (MSI) supplements the developmental information provided by the AEDC Domain Indicators by measuring the more advanced skills, competencies, and dispositions children have at school entry. The MSI is computed from 39 items, drawn from nine AEDC subdomains across all AEDC Domains as outlined in Table 5.

MSI scores are calculated for each child with enough valid domain scores. Children receive a score between 0 and 39, depending on the number of items they show strengths in. On this basis, children are classified into one of the three categories described in Table 6.

Table 5: Composition of the MSI by domain and subdomain

Domain	Sub-domains
Physical health and wellbeing	Gross and fine motor skills
Social Competence	Overall social competence
	Responsibility and respect
	Approaches to learning
	Readiness to explore new things
Emotional Maturity	Pro-social and helping behaviour
Language and Cognitive Skills	Interest in literacy and numeracy and memory
	Advanced literacy
Communication skills and general knowledge	Communication skills and general knowledge

Table 6: MSI categories

MSI category	Description
Highly developed strengths	children with strengths in 28 to 39 of the MSI items
Well-developed strengths	children with strengths in 19 to 27 of the MSI items
Emerging strengths	children with strengths in 18 or less of the MSI items

MSI results are typically reported at population level as the percentage of children who respectively show emerging strengths, well developed strengths, and highly developed strengths. For more information about the MSI, refer to the [Understanding the Multiple Strength Indicator](#) factsheet and the [AEDC Data Dictionary](#). MSI AEDC Community summary reports are available to download from the [Community Data Explorer](#) on the [AEDC website](#).

2.1.4 Comparing AEDC Indicator results across collections

Changes in the AEDC Domain Indicators or Summary Indicators may be affected by changes in the size of the population. For instance, a decrease in the size of the population may result in an increase in the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on a given AEDC Domain even though the number of children who are vulnerable in that domain has remained relatively steady. In turn, this may affect whether an observed change in the Summary Indicator is statistically significant.

The [Critical Difference calculator](#) available on the [AEDC website](#) has been designed to determine if a significant change in development has occurred in the population of interest across any two AEDC Cycles. The Critical Difference tool is available for all Domain Indicator categories and for the Summary Indicators DV1, DV2, and OT5. No Critical Difference tool is currently available for the MSI, so caution should be used in comparing MSI results across AEDC Cycles. For more information about the Critical Difference tool, see the [Critical Difference Factsheet](#).

Caution should also be exerted in comparing OT5 results with analogous indicators that may be available from international data collections that utilise the EDI, as the methodology underlying the calculation of OT5 may be slightly different. The MSI has exclusively been developed by the Telethon Kids Institute for the AEDC, so it is not possible to compare MSI outcomes across countries.

2.2 Stewardship and management of AEDC Data

The Australian Government Department of Education is the Data Custodian of the AEDC Data. The collection, curation, storage, and day to day management of the AEDC Data is undertaken for the Department by a nominated Data Management Agency (DMA).

The DMA has been granted authority by the Department to assess requests for AEDC Data, disclose AEDC Data to authorised third parties, produce materials including AEDC Data for the Department, and review materials including AEDC Data in compliance with the rules and protocols set in these Guidelines.

To ensure AEDC Data is accessed, stored and handled in line with applicable legal and regulatory frameworks, the DMA follows strict data protocols developed in agreement with the Department. These include the use of best practice data collection techniques, storage and distribution technologies to ensure the reliability and security of AEDC Data and the implementation of methods designed to protect AEDC Data against unauthorised access, use, disclosure, modification and destruction. As part of these data protocols, Data Users are also required to ensure secure access, storage and handling of AEDC Data as outlined in sections 5-8, in addition to agreeing to ensure that AEDC Data is handled in line with applicable legal and regulatory frameworks.

The Department reserves the right to authorise or deny access to AEDC Data and is ultimately responsible for putting appropriate processes and strategies in place for the handling of AEDC Data.

2.3 Privacy

The Department is committed to the protection of privacy and must comply with the [Australian Privacy Principles](#) (APPs) contained in the [Privacy Act 1988](#) when handling any Personal Information. State and territory governments and non-government school systems involved in the collection of Personal Information for the AEDC are also committed to the protection of privacy and must comply with applicable privacy legislation and policies in their respective jurisdictions.

The Department engages a number of contracted service providers to assist with the collection and management of AEDC Data and data linkage. These service providers are contractually required to comply with the APPs as if they were an APP agency under the *Privacy Act 1988*. At all stages of the AEDC Data collection and reporting processes, the privacy of individuals is protected in accordance with the APPs and, where applicable, relevant state and territory privacy legislation and policies.

Publication and provision of AEDC Data, in any form, must ensure that the confidentiality of Personal Information is preserved and use of that information complies with the APPs.

Participation in the AEDC is voluntary and parents and guardians retain the right to request that their child/children be excluded from the AEDC by contacting their respective school. If a parent or guardian does not make such contact, consent is inferred and information about their child/children is collected in accordance with these Guidelines. There are no consequences to the child if they do not participate in the AEDC, but the usefulness and quality of AEDC outputs may be affected.

For more information on how the Department and the DMA comply with the APPs, and on how you may make a complaint about a suspected breach of the APPs in the context of the AEDC, please refer to the [Privacy Policy](#) on the Department of Education website and to the [Privacy Statement](#) on the AEDC website.

3. About the AEDC Data

3.1 Authorised uses of AEDC Data

In compliance with the [Privacy Act 1988](#), AEDC Data can only be utilised for the purposes they have been collected for. These include and are limited to:

- a. research in relation to early childhood development, including methodological research;
- b. informing schools and early childhood education providers on potential improvements to existing practice;
- c. informing the development and evaluation of national, state and community priorities, programs and policies aimed at improving developmental, educational, health, and socio-economic outcomes for children;
- d. inclusion in integrated datasets to be used for any of the above purposes.

The AEDC is not intended to identify individuals or evaluate schools, nor is it designed or intended to produce diagnostic data or measures about the status or performance of individual children, classes, teachers or schools.

Requests to access unpublished AEDC Data for purposes other than the ones listed above will be declined. Individuals or organisations found to be using AEDC Data for purposes other than those listed above may have approvals to access AEDC Data restricted or removed.

The Australian Government has licenced the calculation methodologies at the basis of the AEDC Indicators from the Offord Centre of Child Studies operating through McMaster University in Canada. These calculation methodologies are the intellectual property of McMaster University and are not available to the public.

It is strongly recommended that researchers use the domains and sub-domains consistently with standard AEDC reporting. However, if researchers intend to use the AEDC scores to create new variables and constructs, approval must be sought from the DMA via the [AEDC Support](#) mailbox. Where approval is granted, researchers must make it clear in any publication that the use and naming of new variables and constructs are not consistent with AEDC reporting of data, and ensure that they are clearly differentiated from standard AEDC terminology.

3.2 Types of data

AEDC Data are available at both the aggregated or macro level and at the unit-record or micro level. Unit-record level data can be identified or de-identified. For a complete list of available variables, see the [AEDC Data Dictionary](#).

3.2.1 Macrodata

Macrodata include derived summary data such as sums, proportions, and means, and are typically aggregated by geography, AEDC Cycle, and demographic characteristics. Macrodata do not generally constitute Personal Information; however, unsuppressed macrodata may carry a non-negligible risk of reidentification and must therefore be treated as Confidential Information.

All [released AEDC Data](#) are suppressed macrodata. No specific application process is required to access and use released macrodata, although all users should familiarise themselves with these Guidelines to ensure that their proposed use of the data is appropriate.

If released macrodata do not meet requirements, then an application for customised AEDC macrodata can be submitted to the DMA as per section 4.2.1. Macrodata provided under an application are subject to the publication rules and protocols outlined in section 7.

3.2.2 Deidentified microdata

Deidentified AEDC microdata include unit-record level analytical variables obtained from the AvEDI and nonidentifying background and demographic variables. Deidentified microdata do not generally constitute Personal Information; however, they may include demographic data and AEDC Domain scores that have not been anonymised or subjected to statistical disclosure controls that alter unit record information. Consequently, they carry a high risk of reidentification and must be treated as Confidential Information.

Deidentified AEDC microdata can be accessed either by application or via a data sharing agreement. See sections 4.2.2-4.2.3 and 4.3 for detail.

Deidentified AEDC microdata cannot be published or otherwise disclosed to non-authorised personnel. Unreleased macrodata obtained by aggregation, manipulation, or analysis of deidentified AEDC microdata are subject to the publication rules and protocols outlined in section 7.

3.2.3 Identified microdata

Identified AEDC microdata include unit-record level demographic data that can be jointly utilised to identify the individuals they pertain to. They are personal data and may include sensitive data, and as such they constitute Confidential Information.

Identified AEDC microdata are securely held by the DMA and are exclusively disclosed for data linkage purposes to [authorised data linkage agencies](#). These include Approved Data Linkage Units (DLU)s, Commonwealth accredited integrated authorities, and AEDC Integrating Authorities. AEDC Approved DLUs and Commonwealth Accredited Integrating Authorities are able to undertake data linkage for Data Users requesting AEDC Data via the application process outlined in section 4.2.3.1. AEDC Integrating Authorities are government departments or agencies that have been approved to undertake linkage of AEDC Data with their own datasets, in-house and for internal purposes only.

Organisations wishing to become authorised data linkage agencies for the purposes of the AEDC are invited to contact the Department through the [AEDC Mailbox](#).

For more information about data linkage, see data.gov.au. For more detail about seeking AEDC Data for inclusion in data linkage projects, see sections 4.2.3.1-4.2.3.24.2.3.2.

4. Accessing AEDC Data

4.1 Released data

Released data are any suppressed aggregated data that have been subjected to public release in accordance with the publication rules set out in section 7.

The [AEDC website](#) offers a wide range of released data that can be accessed and downloaded free of charge. These include data aggregated at various geographic level, including bespoke geographies such as AEDC Communities and AEDC Local Communities, LGA and ASGS levels SA2 to SA4, and GCCSA, Remoteness, GIS and SEIFA classifications.

Once publicly released, AEDC Data are no longer subject to the publication rules set in section 7. Nevertheless, prospective users should familiarise themselves with these Guidelines to ensure that data are exclusively utilised for the [authorised purposes](#).

Released AEDC Data can be accessed without research ethics approval. Nevertheless, researchers intending to use released AEDC Data may be required to obtain a formal exemption from research ethics from the relevant Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

4.2 Requesting AEDC Data by application

Bespoke AEDC [Macrodata](#) and [deidentified microdata](#) files can be requested by application to the DMA via the [AEDC Support mailbox](#).

Approval to access AEDC Data, particularly unpublished data, is contingent on it being for [appropriate use](#) and consistent with the [principles](#) outlined in these Guidelines. In addition, all data obtained by application are subjected to the data management and publishing requirements set in sections 5 to 9 of these Guidelines. All applicants should familiarise themselves with the contents of these Guidelines and the [AEDC Data Dictionary](#) prior to submitting an application to access AEDC Data.

Application processes may vary depending on the type of AEDC Data being sought and the proposed use of the data. The DMA will work closely with applicants throughout the application process to ensure the data provided meet their needs. In conformity with the [AEDC principles](#) of privacy and security, applicants are strongly encouraged to:

- request only those data elements that are required to directly answer the key research aims or questions,
- consider the number of demographic data elements requested and if they are all essential,
- determine the most relevant level of geography or spatial disaggregation relevant to the research.

Prospective Data Users whose organisations hold AEDC Data under an existing data sharing agreement should contact the nominated [Authorised Data User](#) before submitting an application to check if they can be provided access to the required data. See sections 5.1 and 5.5 for more detail.

For more information about the data elements and geographical aggregation levels available via application, refer to the [AEDC Data Dictionary](#). For more detail about the application process responsibilities, workflow, and assessment criteria please refer to the [data application assessment guidelines](#) available on the AEDC website. For information about the applicable fees and charges see the [AEDC website](#).

4.2.1 Macrodata applications

Non-government agencies and individual data applicants may request unreleased macrodata through a [macrodata application form](#). Government agencies may request unreleased macrodata through a [dedicated form](#).

Requests for macrodata submitted by government agencies or their contractors, to inform existing or planned government policies, programs and reports, to fulfill requests from parliament, or to provide advice to senior officials and/or ministers, are generally exempt from research ethics requirement.

The Department and the DMA reserve the right to request HREC approval for specific data requests that they deem involve more than low or negligible risk. For more detail about research ethics requirements, see section 4.5.

4.2.2 Microdata applications

Deidentified AEDC microdata can be requested from the [DMA](#) via a [microdata application form](#). The form contains a list of the AEDC Data elements available via application. If applicants have any questions on its completion, particularly if a required data element is not listed, they should contact the DMA before completing the application form.

Microdata applications are recommended where AEDC Data are intended to be used for a specific project or initiative where a predefined selection of AEDC variables is used to answer one or more specified research questions. Microdata obtained by application must be destroyed at completion of the relevant project or initiative.

Organisations seeking to obtain deidentified AEDC microdata for multiple research projects or initiatives are invited to consider entering a data sharing agreement with the Department. For more detail, see section 4.3.

Deidentified AEDC microdata can also be requested for inclusion in data integration projects. For more information, see section 4.2.3.

Research ethics approval is generally required for all types of microdata applications, unless an exemption from research ethics has been granted by an approved HREC. The Department reserves the right to waive the requirements for research ethics where it is satisfied that the proposed use of AEDC microdata involves low or negligible risk to participants and the [AEDC principles](#) are fully satisfied. For more detail about research ethics requirements, see section 4.5.

4.2.3 Data integration projects

Data integration consists in combining information from different sources to provide new datasets for statistical and research purposes. Data linkage is the process whereby identifying information about the same individual or analytical unit is matched across datasets, in order to allow for their integration. Deidentified AEDC microdata can be requested for inclusion in data integration projects via application to the DMA or to a permanent data linkage repository.

Linkage of AEDC Data can only be undertaken by [authorised data linkage agencies](#) and is not allowed at the school level, as the AEDC is not intended to be a measure of school performance. For more detail about accessing AEDC microdata for data integration projects see sections 4.2.3.1-4.2.3.2.

Data integration projects including AEDC Data are subject to the [arrangements for data integration involving Commonwealth data for statistical and research purposes](#) (the Commonwealth arrangements). Prospective Data Users are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Commonwealth arrangements before seeking access to AEDC Data for data integration projects.

4.2.3.1 Bespoke data linkage projects

Deidentified AEDC microdata sought for creation of a project-specific integrated dataset can be requested from the DMA by completing the dedicated section in the [microdata application form](#). Microdata provided for project-specific purposes must be destroyed at completion of the project as outlined in section 8.

Data applicants are responsible for nominating a DLU and are required to check whether the selected DLU can undertake the linkage required for the proposed study, as well as for obtaining approval from the custodians of all datasets to be linked to AEDC Data. For a list of DLUs that have been approved to undertake data linkage project including AEDC Data, see the [AEDC website](#).

In accordance with the Commonwealth arrangements, data integration projects assessed by the DMA as high risk must be conducted by an [Accredited Integrating Authority](#). For a list of Accredited Integrating Authorities that have been approved to undertake data linkage projects including AEDC Data, see the [AEDC website](#).

4.2.3.2 Data linkage repositories

Integrated AEDC microdata may be requested from a restricted number of authorised data linkage agencies holding permanent data linkage repositories. Data requests submitted through those agencies are typically subject to specific data governance arrangements and protocols, as indicated below. Nevertheless, they remain subject to approval by the Department. The publication rules outlined in section 7 apply to all unreleased AEDC Data obtained through the abovementioned agencies, in addition to any other agency-specific confidentiality treatments.

4.2.3.2.1 ABS PLIDA dataset

The Person-Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA), formerly known as the [Multi-Agency Data Integration Project](#) (MADIP), is a secure data asset managed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). PLIDA consists of a number of administrative and research datasets which ABS are responsible for linking and providing selective access to authorised researchers for approved projects.

Data applicants wishing to access integrated AEDC Data through PLIDA should follow the [data application protocols](#) available on the ABS website.

Researchers interested in using linked AEDC Data are encouraged to explore the [PLIDA metadata](#) to understand whether it may be suitable for their project requirements.

4.2.3.2.2 PeopleWA

[PeopleWA](#) is an integrated dataset holding Western Australian whole-of-government data. AEDC data in PeopleWA can be requested from the Western Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet using the online [data application form](#).

4.2.4 Application assessment and approval

Microdata and macrodata applications received by the DMA are assessed as promptly as possible and usually processed within ten business days. Data applicants will be advised of an expected timeframe; however, neither the DMA nor the Department can provide any guarantee on approval timeframes.

Applications will be assessed against the requirements set in these Guidelines and given a risk rating in accordance with the [risk framework](#) outlined in the Commonwealth arrangements, based on the following factors:

- potential to identify individuals (whether viewed alone or through data linkage) or the likelihood of spontaneous recognition of an individual occurring during the course of the project, and the possibility that this information could become public;
- availability to the recipient organisation of the skills, technologies, and access to other data sources that could be used to identify individuals;
- the risk strategies and safeguards the data applicant has in place, or proposes to put in place, to manage and mitigate any and all potential risks.

The DMA will carefully consider applications that have the potential to create a dataset (either directly or through linkage) that discloses information about individuals in a group or population considered developmentally at risk or vulnerable, or could potentially disclose (or facilitate disclosure) of information for an individual child, teacher, AEDC Cultural Consultant, or school. Such applications will be considered by the DMA in consultation with the Department, and conditional on the provision of plans regarding cell suppression, rounding, collapsing of categories, perturbation or introduction of random error to confidentialise the data. Refer to sections 7.1-7.3 for more information.

For more detail about the assessment criteria and process, refer to the [data application assessment guidelines](#).

Data application submitted to data linkage repositories as per section 4.2.3.2 may be subject to additional processes and criteria specific to each repository.

4.3 Accessing data via agreement

Government agencies, research institutes, universities and other organisations can request access to AEDC microdata by entering a data sharing agreement with the Department. Requests to establish a data sharing agreement should be directed to the Department via the [AEDC mailbox](#).

Organisations seeking to access and retain deidentified AEDC microdata for multiple research projects, including data integration projects, will not be required to independently seek approval for each project conducted within the scope of their data agreement, unless otherwise specified in the agreement. However, the publication rules at section 7 apply to all materials containing unreleased AEDC Data that are intended for circulation beyond the Authorised Data User and Permitted Data Users. This requirement extends to data integration projects undertaken by AEDC Integrating Authorities.

Data accessed via agreement are subjected to the data management and publishing requirements set out in sections 7 to 9 of these Guidelines. Said requirements do not replace, overrule, or otherwise invalidate any specific requirements or provisions contained in the data sharing agreement. Where in doubt, the data sharing agreement takes precedence over the guidelines to the extent that an inconsistency or perceived inconsistency subsists between the two.

4.4 School reports

Schools participating in the AEDC receive school reports including unsuppressed AEDC macrodata for monitoring and planning purposes. These data are provided confidentially and are not intended for public release, although principals may elect to share the data for [authorised uses](#) with parents, teachers, associated school bodies, or any other party they consider appropriate, under a requirement of confidentiality. In all other cases, approval is required and the publication rules set in section 7 must be complied with. In conformity with the [AEDC principle](#) of privacy, schools with less than six participating children without special needs do not receive a school report.

4.5 Research ethics requirements

The need for human ethics research approval from an approved Human Ethics Research Committee (HREC) to access AEDC Data is determined by the nature of the proposed research project or use and by the nature and granularity of the AEDC Data, as specified in sections 4.1, 4.2.1-4.2.3 and 4.3. It must be noted that these Guidelines do not replace or override any applicable research ethics requirements as determined by the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) and any relevant HREC, governing body, or funding agency, in relation to the proposed research project, program, or initiative for the purpose of which AEDC Data are being sought.

While the DMA can provide some initial guidance in relation to research ethics requirements, individuals and/or organisations seeking to access to AEDC Data should seek independent information from within their own organisation or the [National Health and Medical Research Council](#) (NHMRC).

HREC approval information provided by the DMA is for guidance only and does not constitute legal advice, nor should it be treated as a substitute for legal or professional advice, particularly in relation to subjects such as human research ethical approval requirements, privacy and the use and storage of Personal Information.

Where it has been determined that research ethics approval or a formal exemption from research ethics is required, and where data custodian approval is being requested by the relevant HREC to grant said approval or exemption, in principle approval can be provided by the Department if the request for data has been found to be satisfactory in all other respects. In principle approval is provided for research ethics purposes only and it does not constitute approval of the data request.

In all circumstances, the DMA and the Department reserve the right to decline applications without HREC approval if they consider that the nature of the project is such that HREC approval should be in place.

5. Managing AEDC Data

Organisations and individuals that have successfully submitted an application for AEDC Data or who have entered into a data sharing agreement with the Department for the transfer of AEDC Data qualify as Data Users for the purposes of these Guidelines. Data Users remain such until the end or termination of the project or initiative for which they have requested AEDC Data, or until the end of their data sharing agreement.

Principals who receive school reports do not qualify as Data Users for the purposes of these Guidelines and are not bound by the same requirements as Data Users. For more detail about their requirements, see section 4.4.

5.1 Responsibilities of Data Users

Once a data application has been approved by the DMA or a data sharing agreement with the Department for the transfer of AEDC Data has been executed, Data Users are required to nominate the individual Data Users that will access AEDC Data on behalf of their organisation. The three available types of individual Data Users and a Summary of their respective responsibilities are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: Types of individual Data Users and their responsibilities

Type of user	Roles and responsibilities
Authorised Data User	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual designated as the Authorised Data User through an Authorised Data User Certification form, and• who has been authorised by the DMA or the Department to receive, access and use AEDC Data, and• the person who will be ultimately responsible for ensuring that AEDC Data are managed, published, and destroyed in accordance with these Guidelines, and• unless advised otherwise, the main contact with whom the DMA and the Department will liaise in relation to the data.
Permitted Data User	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual designated as the Permitted Data User through a Permitted Data User Certification Form and/or Authorised Data User Certification form, and• who has been granted permission to use AEDC Data by the Authorised Data User or the Delegate, and• who agrees to comply with the requirements of these Guidelines when using AEDC Data.

Delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted Data User who has been designated as Delegate through a Permitted Data User Certification form, and • To whom the Authorised Data User gives delegation to: • be the main point of contact for internal and external AEDC Data queries, • be responsible for the day-to-day management of AEDC Data, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ nominating Permitted Data Users, ○ liaising with the Department and the DMA for any matters other than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ receiving AEDC Data ▪ reporting obligations as outlined at sections 5.4.1-5.4.3 ▪ management of Adverse Events as outlined as section 6.1 ▪ destruction of the AEDC Data as outlined at section 8.
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Authorised Data Users are nominated by submitting an Authorised Data User Certification Form. The form can be requested from the DMA at the [AEDC Support mailbox](#). Permitted Data Users, including Delegates, can be nominated by submitting a Permitted Data User Certification Form. This can be downloaded from the AEDC website. Authorised Data User Certification Forms and Permitted Data User Certification Forms should be returned to the DMA via the [AEDC Support mailbox](#).

Data linkage agencies receiving both an identified AEDC microdata file and a deidentified AEDC microdata file must nominate a distinct Authorised Data User for each datafile, in conformity with the **Separation Principle**. Similarly, no individual can simultaneously be nominated as a Permitted Data User for both datafiles.

If two or more organisations participate in the same data application, an Authorised Data User must be nominated for each organisation. Organisations participating in a joint data application which seek to hold a copy of the requested data are required to specify so in their Authorised Data User certification form.

Service providers who wish to access AEDC Data held by Data Users as part of their contractual obligations must also nominate an Authorised Data User and Permitted Data Users, as applicable.

The AEDC is committed to ensuring the security and confidentiality of AEDC Data. Every effort is made to safeguard the privacy of individuals participating in the AEDC in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1988](#), the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and other relevant state and territory legislations and policies, which govern the proper and effective management of data. Authorised Data Users are responsible on behalf of their organisation for ensuring compliance with these Guidelines and any applicable privacy legislation in relation to the relevant AEDC Dataset since receiving the relevant AEDC Data and at all times until their destruction.

Specific responsibilities of Authorised Data Users and Permitted Data Users are further described in sections 0, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 7.4.1 and 8.1.

5.2 Receiving AEDC Data

Transfer of AEDC Data to the Data User is conditional on the submission of a completed Authorised Data User Certification Form to the DMA. Upon receiving the Authorised Data User Certification Form, the DMA will transfer the encrypted data to the Authorised Data User via secure file transfer system. Secure shareable links can only be accessed by the intended recipient and cannot be shared or distributed to other individuals.

When AEDC unit record data are in transit, appropriate security measures must be used to ensure that only authorised access occurs. This may include, but is not limited to, the use of encryption software.

When AEDC Data containing identifying variables are in transit, a record of information exchange, transfer authorisations and recipient acknowledgements is maintained by the DMA to ensure the passage of the data can be tracked through each step.

5.3 Storing AEDC Data

Organisations that hold AEDC Data must take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect the data from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

AEDC Data must be stored in such a way as to enable access only to Authorised Data User and to Permitted Data Users that have been authorised by the Department and/or the DMA.

In addition, the following guidelines apply to identified and deidentified AEDC microdata and any unreleased results produced from their use:

- a. Data must always be stored on a secure network or server or on secure cloud-based services and kept in a directory with suitable restricted access and protected by multi-factor authentication.
- b. Printing of physical copies of AEDC microdata is not allowed under any circumstances.
- c. There must be an effective means of limiting entry during both operational and non-operational hours to room(s) or building(s) where the data are used or stored.
- d. Any computers on which the data are used must have a password protected screen saver set to be activated after no more than 15 minutes.
- e. AEDC microdata must be managed in accordance with the Separation Principle. Identifying data and content or analytical data must be securely stored in separate databases. Access restrictions must be applied to ensure that the same individual cannot access both identifying data and content data.

Requests to store deidentified AEDC microdata on a stand-alone computer will be considered by the Department and/or the DMA by exception and on a case-by-case basis. If permission to store the data on a stand-alone computer is granted, the following restrictions will apply in addition to requirements b to d above:

- f. The computer must be kept in a locked room at all times and stored in a lockable container when not in use.
- g. The keys or combinations to lockable containers in which the computer is kept must be kept secure and not be given to any unauthorised person and a record must be kept of all people who have been issued with keys and/or combinations.
- h. The datafile must be saved on a password-protected computer to prevent access by others:
 - i. the password must be at least eight characters long, and contain a mix of upper- and lower-case alphanumeric characters and symbols, and
 - ii. access to the password protected computer must only be by Authorised and Permitted Data Users of the relevant dataset and the password must only be known to Authorised Data Users and Delegate.
- i. Subject to Department and DMA approval, the Authorised Data User may arrange for an encrypted USB to be used for the purpose of transferring de-identified microdata to the standalone computer. This USB must be kept and used only on Data User premises. De-identified data must be securely destroyed from the encrypted USB immediately after the data have been transferred.

Identified AEDC microdata cannot be stored on a standalone computer at any time. Storage of AEDC microdata may be subject to different or additional requirement as specified in the relevant data sharing agreement. In case of inconsistency or perceived inconsistency with the data storage requirements set in these Guidelines, the requirements set out in the data sharing agreement apply.

If it is discovered that the security arrangements for AEDC Data are at any time below the standards required in these Guidelines or in the relevant data sharing agreement, the Department will notify the Authorised Data User of this in writing. The Data User will be given 14 days from the notification date to increase the security standards to meet the requirements. If these are not met within the 14-day period, the Department may elect to immediately terminate the approval granted to the Data Users by providing written notice to the Authorised Data User, or otherwise terminate the relevant data sharing agreement in accordance with its termination provisions. AEDC Data and any materials containing AEDC Data must be destroyed immediately upon receiving a notice of termination and in accordance with the protocols set in section 8.1, unless otherwise specified in the agreement and/or unless otherwise determined by law.

5.4 Reporting obligations

5.4.1 Progress reporting

The Department maintains an active interest in all projects involving the analysis and reporting of AEDC Data and the DMA is required to monitor active projects to ensure that the conditions for the provision of data are being honoured, to identify any emerging issues, and to notify stakeholders of research findings with potential policy or practice implications.

Multi-year projects approved via application must provide a short Summary progress report annually, at a date determined during the data provision process. The DMA will send a reminder email, with a link to a [dedicated form](#), to the Authorised Data User one month before the due date.

Reporting requirements for projects approved as part of a data sharing agreement are determined by the agreement.

5.4.2 Project amendments

5.4.2.1 Changes to projects approved via data application

If any aspect of the project changes after the project is approved, the Data User must notify the DMA using the [project amendment form](#). It is particularly important to communicate any changes to the project team and variables requested, as well as any modifications to the research plan or the publications plan. For more detail about changes to the Permitted Data Users, see section 5.5.

The project amendment form is also to be used to request extensions to project end dates. Extensions of more than three months can only be granted to projects requiring valid HREC approval if the proposed extension does not exceed the end date of the approved HREC application or of its latest approved amendment, as applicable.

In some cases, fees may apply where there are significant changes to the dataset provided for an ongoing project. In most cases, Data Users are informed whether their amendment has been approved or rejected and provided with a quote, where applicable, within ten business days from the date the DMA receives an amendment request.

5.4.2.2 Changes to projects established via data sharing agreement

Changes to projects established as part of a data sharing agreement are subject to the conditions of that agreement and will typically require the execution of a deed of variation and/or of a new project schedule. Organisations wishing to make changes to their agreement should contact the Department via the [AEDC mailbox](#).

Unless Permitted Data Users are named in a data sharing agreement, changes to Permitted Data Users can be made as outlined in section 5.5.

5.4.3 Project finalisation

When a project or agreement is concluded or terminated, the Authorised Data User is required to complete a [final report form](#). A [secure data destruction form](#) is also required to be completed to confirm that the AEDC Data have been destroyed at the conclusion of the research. For detail on the destruction of AEDC Data, see section 8.

The Department strongly recommends that Data Users archive copies of any relevant data processing syntax or code. If required, the DMA can securely and confidentially store an archived copy of the final dataset produced by the research team. This dataset can be provided to the researcher on request at no charge.

5.5 Disclosing AEDC Data

For the purposes of these Guidelines, and in relation to each specified dataset, authorised personnel include the area of the Department responsible for the AEDC, other Department personnel authorised by the Data Steward, specified personnel from the DMA as determined by their contractual arrangements with the Department, Authorised Data Users and Permitted Data Users, and the AEDC National Committee. In the case of school reports, authorised personnel also include school principals and any stakeholders they elect to confidentially share AEDC Data with.

Any disclosure of AEDC Data or materials including AEDC Data which have not been approved for publication as per section 7 and with individuals other than authorised personnel constitutes a breach of these Guidelines and will be treated as an Adverse Event as per section 6, unless and only to the extent and manner required by law.

Authorised Data Users and their Delegates can request that additional Permitted Data Users be added as required. The DMA must be informed of any additions or changes to the list of Permitted Data Users via a Permitted Data User form. The Authorised Data User or Delegate must ensure that each Permitted Data User acknowledges their understanding of, and willingness to comply with all requirements contained in these Guidelines.

5.5.1 Sharing AEDC Data with other organisations

AEDC macrodata files and microdata files containing unreleased AEDC Data may not be shared or transferred among individual Data Users belonging to different organisations. Individual Data Users from different organisations who have been provided access to unreleased AEDC Data through the same application may only share research and analysis outputs, in aggregated form and via secure data transfer services.

Service providers contracted by Data Users with a data sharing agreement with the Department for the transfer of unreleased AEDC Data may access said data to meet their contractual obligations only, and must comply at all times with these Guidelines. This includes nominating an Authorised Data User and Permitted Data Users as per section 5.1. Requests to access data where no such agreement exists, or for any other purposes outside of contractual obligations, will be subject to the application processes in these Guidelines.

Any other on-sharing of unreleased AEDC Data with third-party organisations may exclusively be undertaken as specified in the relevant microdata application, macrodata application, or data sharing agreement, and only with the prior written approval of the Department.

Where in doubt, Data Users are encouraged to contact the [AEDC Support mailbox](#) for advice.

5.5.2 Confidentiality of AEDC Data

The Data User acknowledges and agrees:

- a. that all Confidential Information is confidential, is the property of the Department, and is of value to the Department
- b. that any Confidential Information disclosed to the Data User is only disclosed to meet the needs of the approved application or in accordance with a data sharing agreement with the Department
- c. to only use Confidential Information for the purposes set out in the approved application or the applicable data sharing agreement;
- d. to keep Confidential Information confidential at all times and not, without prior written approval of the Department:
- e. use, disclose, divulge, make a digital or any other copy of, transmit electronically (including via email) to, any other person, except in accordance with these Guidelines; and
- f. deal with any Confidential Information, nor allow any act, matter or thing to be done or occur whereby any Confidential Information may be ascertained or used by, or disclosed or communicated to, any other person, except in accordance with these Guidelines
- g. to take all reasonable steps required by the Department or DMA to keep any Confidential Information, including all Documents and any other materials referring to any Confidential Information, under effective control of the
- h. Authorised Data User and protected from any unauthorised use, access, disclosure or modification; and
- i. if required at any time by the Department to do so, deliver up to the Department, or at the option of the Department destroy, without limitation, all Confidential Information in the possession, custody or control of the Organisation.

Notwithstanding the above, the Authorised Data User may use and disclose any Confidential Information only to the extent and manner required by law. If an Authorised Data User is required by law to use or disclose Confidential Information, the Authorised Data User must provide the Department with sufficient notice to enable the Department to seek a protective order or other relief from use or disclosure and the Authorised Data User must provide all assistance and co-operation which the Department reasonably considers necessary for that purpose.

6. Management of Adverse Events

An Adverse Event is any event that results in having negative impacts on key stakeholders of the AEDC, including the AEDC Data Custodian, states and territory governments, as well as the children, teachers and schools that participate in the collection. While Adverse Events are project-specific, they commonly result in:

- higher than expected probability of risk linked to the research, and/or
- higher than expected negative or serious impacts on AEDC children or teachers, and/or
- a breach of HREC approval for the project.

While all Adverse Events are significant, the Department is particularly concerned about events that lead to the reidentification of children, teachers, AEDC Cultural Consultants and schools and/or the disclosure of sensitive information about people and communities.

The Department also considers inappropriate data handling or sharing practices, whereby the requirements explained or referred to in these Guidelines are not met, as serious and while these many not constitute an Adverse Event in their own right, access to AEDC Data for future projects could be jeopardised.

6.1 Obligations of the Data Users

In the event of an Adverse Event, the Authorised Data User must immediately notify the DMA and submit an [Adverse Event Notification Form](#) via the [AEDC Support mailbox](#) as soon as practicable. All Adverse Events will be referred to the Department's legal and privacy areas for examination.

The Data User is required to take any reasonable steps to contain the Adverse Event as soon as they become aware of it, and prevent any other Adverse Events from occurring.

The Department requires the Authorised Data User to undertake an investigation into the Adverse Event as soon as they become aware of it, and/or to assist the Department in the investigation of any suspected Adverse Events, as well as with implementing any measures reasonably required by the Department to minimise the impact of the Adverse Event on the privacy and security of the data.

If it is determined that the event was avoidable, this may result in remedial action as per section 6.4.

6.2 Obligations of the Department

The Privacy Act requires the Department to contain and assess any Adverse Events that may constitute an 'eligible Data Breach' for the purposes of the Privacy Act. This includes but is not limited to:

- investigating any Adverse Event or suspected Adverse Event that they may become aware of, in order to determine whether a Data Breach has occurred;
- taking reasonable steps to contain any Adverse Event or suspected Adverse Event, in order to minimise any privacy risks and/or remediate any harm that may occur/may have occurred as a result of it;
- reviewing the incident and taking adequate and proportionate measures to prevent future Adverse Events, including any remedial actions set by the data sharing agreement with the Data User, as applicable.

To ensure the prompt assessment, containment and resolution of any Adverse Events or suspected Adverse Events, the Department will inform the Data User about any of the above actions as soon as practicable.

6.3 Obligations of the DMA

The DMA has an obligation to report any Adverse Events or suspected Adverse Events to the Department, and to facilitate communication between the Department and the Data User to ensure that said events are promptly contained, investigated, and remedied.

6.4 Remedial action

The Department reserves the right to require that remedial action be taken by the Data User, or complied with by the Data User, as a consequence of an Adverse Event or suspected Adverse Event. The appropriate remedial action will be determined by the Department on a case-by-case basis.

Should it be determined that an Adverse Event was avoidable or that the Data User otherwise failed to comply with these Guidelines due to negligence, the Department may elect to take action to prevent any further risks to the privacy and security of the data. This may include, but it is not limited to, revoking the approval to use and/or publish AEDC Data, or banning individual Data Users from being able to access unpublished AEDC Data in the future.

7. Publication of AEDC Data

In the context of these Guidelines, the publication of AEDC Data consists in any authorised disclosure of materials containing unreleased AEDC Data that have been aggregated and suppressed as specified in sections 7.1-7.3, beyond the Authorised Data User and Permitted Data User(s) for that data, the Department, the DMA and the AEDC National Committee. In this sense, both public release and embargoed circulation are to be considered as publications. Embargoed circulation consists in making materials containing aggregated, suppressed AEDC Data available to a restricted audience under a requirement of confidentiality. Release is any publication that does not meet the definition of embargoed circulation.

The AEDC publication rules set out in this section protect the privacy of the children, teachers, AEDC Cultural Consultants and schools that contribute to the AEDC, and ensure that the data used are a true reflection of the population being discussed. The rules apply to population groups at all geographical levels and demographics, although different operational requirements may apply to materials including different data.

The principle to follow for maps, graphs and diagrams, as well as other data visualisation tools, is that the publication rules must be applied to the underlying data.

It is the responsibility of the Authorised Data User to ensure that the publication rules are applied to all materials including unreleased AEDC Data prior to publication, with the sole exception of school reports as specified in sections 4.4 and 5. Materials intended for publication on peer-reviewed academic outlets must be subjected to the rules outlined in sections 7.1-7.3 and 7.4.1.1 prior to being submitted for peer review.

7.1 Confidentiality rules

Confidentiality may be breached through the disclosure of information about a person whose identity may be reasonably ascertained. De-identified demographic data items may contribute to the identification of persons if released to the public when cross-tabulated. These include but may not be limited to date of birth or age, geography, sex or gender, cultural and linguistic background, country of birth, and health-related information. Therefore, careful consideration should be given when releasing such data at the school, AEDC Local Community, or AEDC Community level, in order to protect the identity of individuals.

Since AEDC Indicators are derived from the observations of teachers in the school setting and are unlikely to be available elsewhere, it is considered that the scores themselves are unlikely to enable identification of an individual child. However, care needs to be taken when AEDC Indicators are combined with demographic variables to ensure confidentiality is not compromised.

The following rules are designed to ensure the confidentiality of data and to ensure that data released to the public do not reveal any Personal Information about the children, teachers, AEDC Cultural Consultants and schools taking part in the AEDC. Where examples are given, cells leading to the suppression are highlighted in yellow. In the final suppressed data, the cells that have been edited are highlighted in yellow.

7.1.1 Non-disclosure of adverse information rule

No information must be published, which directly or indirectly re-identifies individuals, or discloses sensitive information about individuals by disclosing information about all members of their group or community.

7.1.2 Ninety percent vulnerability rule

To prevent the identification of individual children as developmentally vulnerable, where 90 per cent or more of a group is developmentally vulnerable or has emerging strengths, the following suppression applies:

- The percentage of vulnerable children must be reported as $\geq 90\%$
- The number of vulnerable children must be reported as greater than or equal to the equivalent of 90% of children with valid instruments in that group, rounded up to the next integer.

This rule equally applies to:

- The DV1 and DV2 Summary indicators,
- the Domain developmentally vulnerable category,
- the Subdomain developmentally vulnerable category,
- the MSI emerging strengths category.

Where 90 per cent or more of a group is developmentally vulnerable, the percentage and number of children that are not developmentally vulnerable or with emerging strengths must also be suppressed, as follows:

- The percentage of children in each other developmental category must be reported as $<10\%$
- The number of children in each other developmental category must be reported as less than the equivalent of 10% of children in that group with a valid instrument, rounded down to the previous integer.

This applies to:

- the complements of the DV1 and DV2 Summary Indicators,
- the Domain developmentally at risk category, developmentally on track category, and their aggregate,
- the Subdomain developmentally non-vulnerable category,
- the MSI well developed strengths category, highly developed strengths category, and their aggregate.

Example:

Suppression of a geographical area in which more than 90 per cent of valid children are developmentally vulnerable on an AEDC Domain Indicator. The number and percentage of children must be grouped respectively to ≥ 90 per cent and the equivalent number of children. 'On Track' and 'At Risk' values should be grouped to <10 per cent and the equivalent number

of children, so that developmental vulnerability cannot be calculated. Although Area 2 contains a value greater than 90 per cent, this does not require suppression as it does not refer to developmental vulnerability.

Table 8: Example - Ninety per cent vulnerability rule for Domain Indicators

Code	Name	Valid	On track		At risk		Vulnerable	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
Original								
10001	Area 1	43	1	2.3	2	4.7	40	93.0
10002	Area 2	31	29	93.5	1	3.2	1	3.2
Suppressed								
10001	Area 1	43	<4	<10.0	<4	<10.0	≥39	≥90.0
10002	Area 2	31	29	93.5	1	3.2	1	3.2

Table 9: Example - Ninety per cent vulnerability rule for vulnerability Summary indicators

Code	Name	Valid	DV1		Not DV1	
			n	%	n	%
Original						
10001	Area 1	43	40	93.0	3	7.0
10002	Area 2	31	2	6.5	29	93.5
Suppressed						
10001	Area 1	43	≥39	≥90.0	<4	<10.0
10002	Area 2	31	2	6.5	29	93.5

7.1.3 Three children rule

For all data relating to individuals other than an AEDC Indicator, the lowest number that can be published without perturbation is four. This is to ensure individuals cannot be identified. Where the number of individuals for any variable is below four, both the number and percentage (where applicable) must be suppressed and reported respectively as '≤ 3' and 'less than X per cent', where X is the percentage corresponding to 3.

The rule of three does not apply to variables whose value is equal to zero. However, in those case the non-disclosure of adverse information rule may apply.

Example:

Suppression of cells that contain less than four children for variables that are not AEDC Indicators. Note that the number and percentage of children must be grouped to ≤3 and the equivalent percentage value, and cells containing no children do not require suppression.

Table 10: Example - Rule of three

Demographics	2009		2012		2015	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Original						
Sex - Male children	37	59.7	34	58.6	30	52.6
Sex - Female children	25	40.3	24	41.4	27	47.4
First Nations children	2	3.2	0	0.0	2	3.5
Children born in another country	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Children with ESL	1	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Suppressed						
Sex - Male children	37	59.7	34	58.6	30	52.6
Sex - Female children	25	40.3	24	41.4	27	47.4
First Nations children	≤3	≤4.8	0	0.0	≤3	≤5.3

Children born in another country	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Children with ESL	≤3	≤4.8	0	0.0	0	0.0

7.1.4 Two teachers rule

AEDC Data for a geography can only be published where the data were reported by two or more teachers. This is to ensure the privacy of teachers, as well as to ensure reliability of the data in smaller areas. This rule is applied to all AEDC Data, both published and unpublished, prior to their release to a Data User.

7.2 Interpretability rules

The following rules are designed to ensure the interpretability of AEDC Data and allow for valid comparisons across population groups. Where examples are given, cells leading to the suppression are highlighted in yellow. In the final suppressed data, the cells that have been edited are highlighted in yellow.

7.2.1 ERP rule

When comparing AEDC Data to the [Estimated Resident Populations](#) (ERP) of five year olds [released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics](#), the text outlined in Table 11: Text samples for ERP must be added as a footnote where comparisons present percentages in the corresponding range. This rule is intended to identify AEDC Communities and/or AEDC Local Communities for which insufficient AEDC Data is available to qualify the collection as a census.

Table 11: Text samples for ERP

Percentage of ERP	Footnote text
<60 per cent of ERP	AEDC Data collection is less than 60 per cent of the ABS five-year-old population. The AEDC may not accurately reflect the population of children; interpret with caution.
60-80 per cent ERP	AEDC Data collection is greater than or equal to 60 per cent and less than 80 per cent of the ABS five-year-old population; interpret with caution.

7.2.2 Eighty per cent coverage rule

In order to publish AEDC results for a group, 80 per cent of the AEDC Population in that group must have valid instruments. An example of an instrument that would be considered invalid is where less than four AEDC Domain scores can be calculated for an individual child due to non-responses to AVEDI questions.

The 80 per cent coverage rule generally applies in very few cases. If a Data User is finding they have a large number of areas that meet this rule, it is recommended that filters and calculations should be double checked.

Example:

The proportion of valid instruments can be determined by dividing the number of valid instruments (ValidInstrument = 1) by the number of non-special needs children (SpecialNeeds=0).

Note that both the number and percentage of children are suppressed in all cases, and the fields used to calculate the proportion of valid instruments do not need to be included in the final published data. They are included here to illustrate the calculation process.

Table 12: Example - Eight per cent coverage rule

Geography	Valid	Non-special needs	% valid	On track		At risk		Vulnerable	
				n	%	n	%	n	%
Area 2	58	80	72.5	*	*	*	*	*	*
Area 3	50	50	100	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0

7.2.3 Fifteen valid children rule

When reporting AEDC results, the total population represented in AEDC Indicator scores should include at least 15 children with valid AEDC Data. Where there are less than 15 children in any AEDC Indicator, this should not be reported.

Example:

Suppression of domain indicator values where the number of children with valid AEDC results is less than 15. Note that the total number of children with valid domain scores is not suppressed, as the rule only applies to the AEDC Indicators. However, the number of children with valid instruments in Area 4 is suppressed according to the rule of three.

Table 13: Example - Fifteen valid domain children rule

Code	Name	Valid	On track		At risk		Vulnerable	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
Original								
10001	Area 1	12	11	91.7	1	8.3	0	0.0
10002	Area 2	58	48	82.8	4	6.9	6	10.3
10003	Area 3	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
10004	Area 4	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
Suppressed								
10001	Area 1	12	*	*	*	*	*	*
10002	Area 2	58	48	82.8	4	6.9	6	10.3
10003	Area 3	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
10004	Area 4	≤3	*	*	*	*	*	*

7.3 Presentational suggestions

The following presentational suggestions are not rules, rather they are methods that can be applied to the data to ensure that the rules are complied with and the values of suppressed cells cannot be indirectly calculated. Where examples are given, cells leading to suppression are highlighted in yellow. In the final suppressed data, the cells that have been edited are highlighted in yellow.

7.3.1 Differencing

Differencing occurs when data from two or more marginally different datasets are compared, to generate a third dataset that applies to a sub-population that occurs in only one of them. Each of the original datasets may independently satisfy the AEDC suppression rules, but by subtracting or otherwise comparing them AEDC Data may be released which do not.

For example, an AEDC table may be generated for children aged under seven in a given area and another for all children in the same area. By subtracting the two datasets, a new dataset may be generated which relates to children aged seven or over, and which does not satisfy the suppression rules set in these Guidelines.

Researchers or organisations using AEDC Data should ensure that no publication contains data where differencing will be made possible.

7.3.2 Averages or ratios

If either or both of the primary statistics have been suppressed, then their average and/or ratios should also be suppressed.

7.3.3 Collapsing cells

If the confidentialising action severely damages the data in a table (e.g. by resulting in the suppression of many cells), then it is good practice to review the table design by collapsing some of the row and/or column categories. An alternative method is to combine several response categories or geographical areas into one that does not breach the suppression rules.

The main advantage of collapsing cells is that data are not excluded – all data are available, albeit in an altered form. If this method is used, careful attention should be paid to the appropriateness of combining specific cells. For example, when combining geographic areas these should be geographically adjacent and have similar socioeconomic status.

Example:

This example shows how collapsing cells could be used in the *Fifteen valid children rule* example in section 7.2.3 as an alternative to data suppression. Note that percentages are recalculated based on the combined figures, and the combined cells are clearly labelled.

Table 14: Example - Collapsing cells

Code	Name	Valid	On track		At risk		Vulnerable	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
Original								
10001	Area 1	12	11	91.7	1	8.3	0	0.0
10002	Area 2	58	48	82.8	4	6.9	6	10.3
10003	Area 3	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
10004	Area 4	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
Suppressed								
10001	Area 1	12	*	*	*	*	*	*
10002	Area 2	58	48	82.8	4	6.9	6	10.3
10003	Area 3	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
10004	Area 4	≤3	*	*	*	*	*	*
Collapsed								
10001/10002	Area 1 / Area 2	70	59	84.3	5	7.1	6	8.6
10003/10004	Area 3 / Area 4	52	46	88.5	5	9.6	1	1.9

7.3.4 Secondary suppression

The methods of suppression already discussed suppress only the offending data. This is often referred to as primary suppression. If a table contains totals, or totals that can otherwise be derived from the data in the table, it may be necessary to suppress other non-sensitive cells to ensure that suppressed values cannot be derived by subtracting other values from the total. This is referred to as secondary or complimentary suppression.

Example 1:

The application of secondary suppressions to geographical grouping. Where only primary suppression is applied, it is possible to derive domain results for Area 1 and the number of valid instruments for Area 6 by subtracting the available data from the total for the surrounding area. For example, by subtracting the number developmentally on track for Area 2 and Area 3 from the total for the surrounding Large Area 1 we can derive the value for Area 1 ($104 - 48 - 45 = 11$). Example 1 uses two different forms of secondary suppression: (i) collapsing Area 1 and Area 2 to avoid having a single suppressed area, and (ii) suppressing the number of valid instruments in Area 6 to remove the possibility of deriving the number of valid instruments in Area 4. Note that the value in Area 6 is grouped relative to the grouping in Area 5, so useful data are still available while also abiding by the suppression rules.

Table 15: Example - Secondary suppression to geographical grouping

Code	Name	Valid	On track		At risk		Vulnerable	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
Original								
Large Area 1		120	104	86.7	9	7.5	7	5.8
10001	Area 1	12	11	91.7	1	8.3	0	0.0
10002	Area 2	58	48	82.8	4	6.9	6	10.3
10003	Area 3	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0

Large Area 2		56	48	85.7	6	10.7	2	3.6
10004	Area 4	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
10005	Area 5	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0.0
10006	Area 6	4	2	50.0	1	50.0	1	0.0
Primary Suppression Applied								
Large Area 1		120	104	86.7	9	7.5	7	5.8
10001	Area 1	12	*	*	*	*	*	*
10002	Area 2	58	48	82.8	4	6.9	6	10.3
10003	Area 3	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
Large Area 2		56	48	85.7	6	10.7	2	3.6
10004	Area 4	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
10005	Area 5	≤3	*	*	*	*	*	*
10006	Area 6	4	*	*	*	*	*	*
Secondary Suppression Applied								
Large Area 1		120	104	86.7	9	7.5	7	5.8
10001/10002	Area 1/ Area 2	70	59	84.3	5	7.1	6	8.6
10003	Area 3	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
Large Area 2		56	48	85.7	6	10.7	2	3.6
10004	Area 4	50	45	90.0	4	8.0	1	2.0
10005	Area 5	≤3	*	*	*	*	*	*
10006	Area 6	≥3	*	*	*	*	*	*

Example 2:

The application of secondary suppression to categorical variables. Where a categorical variable has only a single category suppressed, it is possible to derive the suppressed value using the total number of children. We can derive the total number of children by adding the number of male and female children together ($37 + 25 = 62$). In the table with only primary suppressions applied, by subtracting the number of non-First Nations children from the total we can derive the number of First Nations children ($62 - 60 = 2$). As in example 1, the number of non-Indigenous children must also be suppressed. Note that the number of First Nations children is grouped to the opposite of the number of First Nations children, so useful data are still available while also abiding by the Publication Rules, and that both the number and percentage of children are suppressed.

Table 16: Example - Secondary suppression to categorical variables

Demographics	2009		2012		2015	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Original						
Sex - Male children	37	59.7	34	58.6	30	52.6
Sex - Female children	25	40.3	24	41.4	27	47.4
Non-Indigenous children	60	96.8	58	100.0	55	96.5
First Nations children	2	3.2	0	0.0	2	3.5
Primary Suppression Applied						
Sex - Male children	37	59.7	34	58.6	30	52.6
Sex - Female children	25	40.3	24	41.4	27	47.4
Non-Indigenous children	60	96.8	58	100.0	55	96.5
First Nations children	≤3	≤4.8	0	0.0	≤3	≤5.3
Secondary Suppression Applied						
Sex - Male children	37	59.7	34	58.6	30	52.6
Sex - Female children	25	40.3	24	41.4	27	47.4
Non-Indigenous children	≥59	≥95.2	58	100.0	≥54	≥94.7
First Nations children	≤3	≤4.8	0	0.0	≤3	≤5.3

7.4 Operational rules

The following operational rules apply to all materials intended for publication which include any unreleased AEDC Data, unless otherwise specified at section 9.3. Materials that exclusively include released AEDC Data are exempt from the operational rules at sections 7.4.1.1 and 7.4.2. For the purposes of the operational rules, any aggregation, algebraic manipulation, or descriptive statistics of released data is to be considered released data.

The Department reserves the right to approve exceptions to the operational rules where those prove impractical and where the privacy risk is deemed to be low or negligible.

7.4.1 Review of materials

Materials including unreleased AEDC Data may be required to undergo different review pathways depending on a number of factors. Data Users are encouraged to consider the timeframes indicated in sections 7.4.1.1-7.4.2. For a comprehensive overview of the review process, see Figure 1-Figure 2.

7.4.1.1 DMA review

The operational rules set in this section apply to all materials that include unreleased AEDC Data.

Prior to publication, any materials that include unreleased AEDC Data must be checked by the DMA to ensure that AEDC Data have been used appropriately, the confidentiality rules and interpretability rules have been applied correctly and AEDC terminology is used appropriately. The following procedure applies to the review process:

- Data Users must provide a draft, embargoed copy of the materials intended for publication to the DMA via the [AEDC Support mailbox](#). The DMA will confirm receipt by email. Data Users should allow **10 business days** from the date of receipt for the DMA to assess the publication and provide feedback.
- The DMA will notify the Data User if there are any queries regarding the use of AEDC Data and the application of the Publication Rules. The Data User must provide a response to all the queries raised by the DMA. Once agreement has been reached about the appropriate response to each query, the Data User must provide a revised version of the materials to the DMA for a final assessment.
- The DMA will complete the final assessment within **10 business days** of receipt of the revised publication and notify the Data User of the outcome.
- Following the DMA review, materials may be subjected to further review, as specified in section 7.4.2.

7.4.1.2 Editorial style and visual identity checks

Materials produced by the Department and/or its contractors, the DMA, and State and Territory governments and/or their contractors in the context of and/or for the purposes of the AEDC program are required to comply with the AEDC Editorial Style Guide and the AEDC Visual Identity Guides. Starting with the 2024 AEDC Cycle, the DMA will be responsible for checking compliance with the abovementioned guides and may require Data Users to ensure that those are followed before the materials can proceed to the next phase of the publication process. Data Users should allow additional 5 business days from the day of receipt for the DMA to conduct editorial style and visual identity checks.

Materials produced by the Department and/or its contractors, the DMA, and State and Territory governments and/or their contractors in the context of initiatives, policies, and programs other than AEDC are not subject to the AEDC Editorial Style Guide and the AEDC Visual Identity Guides. However, it is recommended that those materials comply with the guides to the extent practicable.

7.4.2 Communication to AEDC National Committee

Following the DMA review and/or the editorial style and visual identity checks, as applicable, the DMA may be required to submit the approved materials to the AEDC National Committee for either noting or comment, depending on the type of Data User, the geographical aggregation of the data, and the intended publication of the data. This process is intended to ensure that the AEDC National Committee, as the top AEDC governance body, is informed of any AEDC-related findings of national relevance.

Materials produced by Data Users other than government agencies and/or which have not been produced under contract for government agencies will be submitted to the AEDC National Committee for noting. Materials subject to peer review should be submitted for noting after the completion of the peer review, and either before or immediately following their release.

Materials produced by government agencies or under contract for a government agency may need to be submitted to the AEDC National Committee as per Table 17.

Table 17: Criteria for submission of materials to AEDC National Committee

		Intended publication		
		Embargoed circulation within Data User and/or among Data Users	Embargoed circulation beyond Data User(s)	Public release
Geographical aggregation of AEDC Data	Up to regional level	No submission to National Committee required	No submission to National Committee required	No submission to National Committee required
	Up to State or Territory level	No submission to National Committee required	No submission to National Committee required	Submission to National Committee for noting only
	Up to National level	No submission to National Committee required	Submission to National Committee for noting only	Submission to National Committee for comment

Data Users whose materials are not required to be submitted to the AEDC National committee for comment will be authorised to publish those materials as soon as they receive notification of positive review by the DMA. However,

materials that have been approved for embargoed circulation only may not be publicly released without further approval.

Data Users who wish to require that an embargo be lifted on approved materials should request so to the DMA via the [AEDC Support mailbox](#). The subsequent workflow will be determined by Figure 2.

Materials to be submitted to the AEC National Committee for comment will undergo the following process:

- e. The DMA will notify the Data User when their publication has been sent to the AEDC National Committee for comment. Up to 10 business days from the time of that notification should be allowed for the AEDC National Committee to review the publication and brief the appropriate government areas.
- f. The DMA will consider, collate and anonymously return any feedback from the AEDC National Committee to the Data User. Up to 2 additional business days should be allocated for this process.
- g. Unless otherwise required by the Department and/or the AEDC National Committee, Data Users will be authorised to publish their materials immediately after receiving the AEDC National Committee feedback and without an obligation to incorporate such feedback into their materials.
- h. In the exceptional circumstances where the Department and/or the AEDC National Committee demand that the materials be amended before publication, the Data User will be required to send the amended materials back to the DMA for review following the process outlined in section 7.4.1.1.

7.4.3 Publication disclaimer

Data Users must include the following disclaimer in all materials approved for publication, including publications for embargoed circulation and publications that exclusively contain released AEDC Data:

“This [insert type of material] uses data from the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). The AEDC is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. The findings and/or views reported are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Department or the Australian Government.”

Commonwealth agencies other than the Department of Education may alternatively use the following disclaimer:

“This [insert type of material] uses data from the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). The AEDC is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. The findings and/or views reported are those of the [insert agency name] and should not be attributed to the Department of Education.”

Publicly available AEDC Data are covered by the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. Under this licence, users who share and adapt public AEDC Data must give appropriate credit to the Department, provide a link to the licence and indicate if any changes were made to the data. For further information on adhering to the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence, please refer to the [Creative Commons website](#).

7.5 Research Snapshot

It is highly encouraged that a research snapshot is developed for research that is to be published. Research Snapshots provide a brief and accessible overview of research being undertaken in relation to the AEDC and include:

- the aim and background of the research
- key findings and study details
- the implications for the policy and practice and for researchers
- details about the research paper.

The Research Snapshot Template that must be used can be found [here](#). Once the template has been populated please send it to the [AEDC Mailbox](#) for finalisation and uploading to the [AEDC website](#).

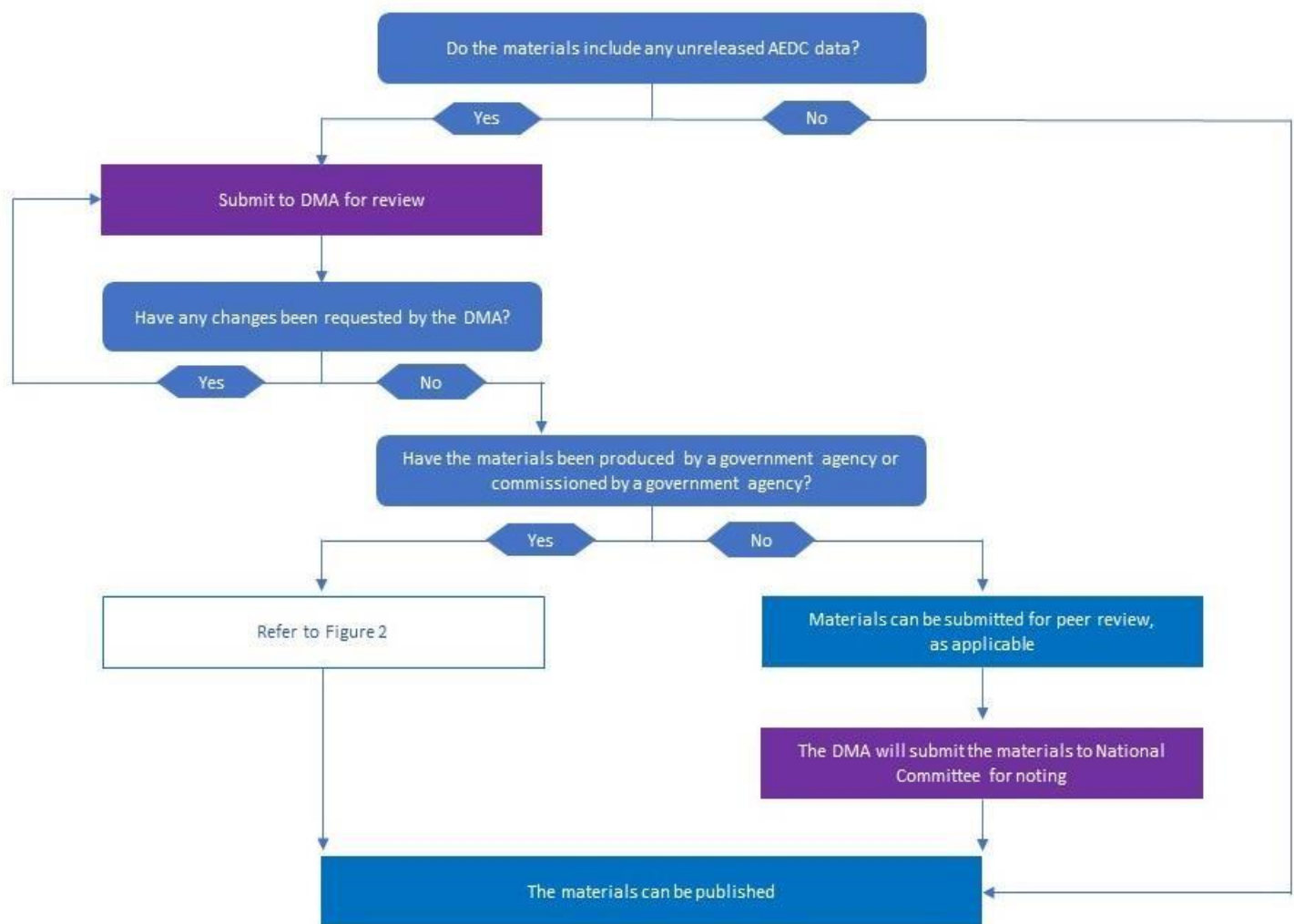


Figure 1: Publication process flowchart

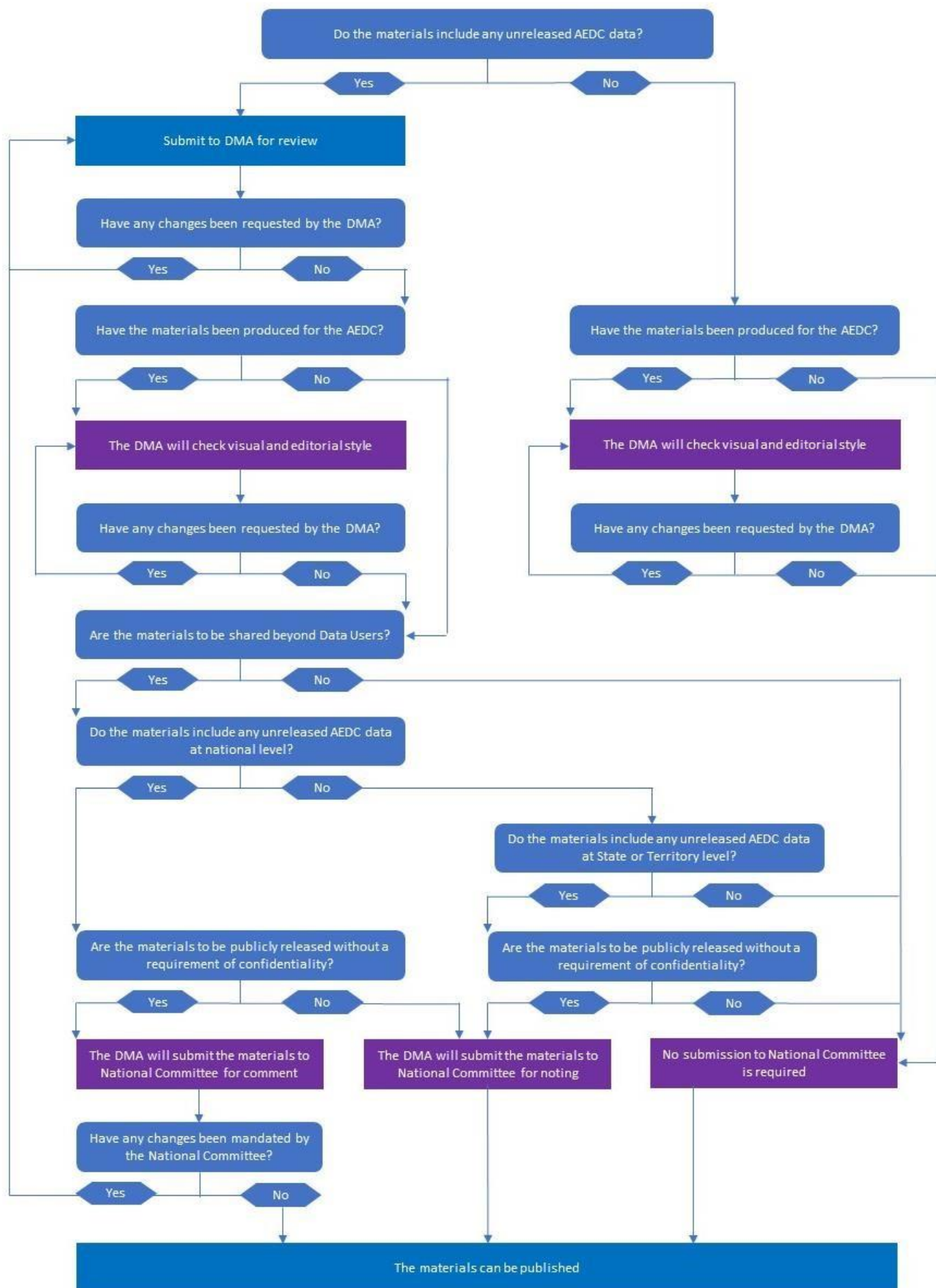


Figure 2: Publication process flowchart for materials produced by or commissioned by government agencies

8. Destruction of AEDC Data

8.1 Responsibilities of Data Users

On completion of their project, any revocation of the approval to their project, or expiry or termination of their data sharing agreement, Data Users must securely destroy the relevant AEDC Dataset and any materials in their possession containing relevant unpublished AEDC Data, unless otherwise required by law and/or unless otherwise specified in the relevant data sharing agreement, as applicable. Organisations must provide for a secure way to delete computer files so that they cannot be recovered by an unauthorised person. Printouts containing aggregated unpublished AEDC Data must be destroyed securely by shredding.

The above requirement extends to any integrated datasets including AEDC Data, unless a retention plan is agreed with the DMA and/or the governance body of the relevant data linkage repository. Retention plans should be annexed to the [data application form](#) for the relevant AEDC Dataset or requested by submitting a [project amendment form](#) to the [AEDC Support mailbox](#). Retention plans will only be considered where it is a requirement of the NHMRC guidelines and HREC approval for data to be retained, and where the integrated AEDC Data will be stored within a secure research environment. Retained integrated AEDC Data are to be treated as Confidential Information and are subjected to the storage, management, disclosure, publication and destruction requirements set in sections 5 to 9 of these Guidelines.

Data Users receiving a new AEDC Dataset as a consequence of variations to their projects or data sharing agreements, or due to the release of new AEDC Data, will be required to destroy the AEDC Data previously in their possession unless otherwise agreed by the Department.

If required at any time by the Department or the DMA to do so, Data Users must, without limitation, securely deliver to the Department or destroy all datasets and materials containing any unreleased AEDC Data which are in their possession, custody, or control.

In all circumstances, Authorised Data Users are required to submit a completed and signed [secure data destruction form](#) to the [AEDC Support mailbox](#) immediately after the relevant datasets and materials have been destroyed.

Data Users may retain any code created to manipulate, analyse, or report the data, as this is not the responsibility of the Department. The DMA can securely and confidentially store syntax or coding files with the project dataset upon request.

8.2 Responsibilities of Data Linkage Units

The destruction of identified AEDC microdata and de-identified AEDC Data provided to linkage agencies for linkage purposes only is regulated by the relevant data sharing agreement. The destruction of de-identified microdata provided to linkage agencies for both linkage and use is regulated by clause 8.1.

8.3 Responsibilities of the DMA

The DMA will securely hold any macrodata and microdata files created as a result of data applications or data sharing agreement for a period of seven years from the conclusion of the project. If the data are required during this storage period, they will be made available to Authorised Data Users conditional on the approval of a project amendment form and/or the execution of a new data sharing agreement, as applicable. Data transferred during the storage period are subject to the data usage and management requirements outlined in these Guidelines.

Should the Department at any time opt to engage a different supplier as the DMA for the AEDC, the DMA will securely transfer all the AEDC Data holdings in their custody to the new supplier and destroy any materials and datasets including unpublished AEDC Data in their possession, as specified in their contract agreement.

9. General program operations

9.1 Intellectual property

The Commonwealth owns all Intellectual Property rights in relation to the AEDC Data. Except where specified under a separate agreement, the Commonwealth will not own Intellectual Property rights of any materials created using AEDC Data to the extent that the material does not include AEDC microdata.

Where the Data User has ownership of the Intellectual Property rights in any material derived from the AEDC Data, the Data User grants a perpetual, irrevocable, worldwide, royalty-free, unlimited Licence to the Commonwealth to use, reproduce, adapt and modify and configure the material for any of the Commonwealth's Internal Purposes. This licence includes the right for the Commonwealth to sub-licence. In this context, Internal Purposes means any purpose within the power of the Commonwealth, including any purposes that are necessary or incidental to any of those purposes.

9.2 Indemnity

The Data User agrees to indemnify the Commonwealth, its officers and employees from and against any:

- cost or liability incurred by the Commonwealth
- loss of or damage to property of the Commonwealth
- loss or expense incurred by the Commonwealth in dealing with any claim against it including legal costs and expenses on a solicitor/own client basis

arising from:

- any negligent act or omission by the Data User in connection with the use of AEDC Data,
- any breach by the Data User of their obligations or warranties under these Guidelines
- any use or disclosure by the Data User of Confidential Information or Personal Information (within the meaning of this term as defined in the [Privacy Act 1988](#)) held or controlled in connection with AEDC Data,
- the use by the Department of the Research Material as intended under these Guidelines but only to the extent that the Research Material has not been misquoted or taken out of context.

The Data User's liability to indemnify the Commonwealth will be reduced proportionately to the extent that any negligent act or omission of the Department contributed to the relevant liability, loss or damage, or loss or expense.

The right of the Commonwealth to be indemnified is in addition to, and not exclusive of, any other right, power or remedy provided by law, but the Commonwealth is not entitled to be compensated in excess of the amount of the relevant liability, loss or damage, or loss or expense.

9.3 Exemptions

A number of Australian Government and State and Territory government agencies must operate within specific regulatory and/or legislative environments (such as requirements under Family Assistance Law, the Census and Statistics Act 1905 (Cth) or State or Territory privacy/confidentiality acts).

Where a government agency can demonstrate that this regulatory or legislative environment overrides, prevents or negates the need/possibility to meet a specific requirement within these Guidelines (particularly in relation to sections 4-7) then, at the sole discretion of the Department, that agency may be granted an exemption from that element of these Guidelines.

Since 2002, the Australian Government has worked in partnership with eminent child health research institutes, the Centre for Community Child Health at The Royal Children's Hospital and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and The Kids Research Institute Australia to deliver the Australian Early Development Census program to communities nationwide. The Australian Government continues to work with its partners and with state and territory governments to implement the AEDC.