

# Australian Early Development Census

## What is the AEDC?

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a nationwide census of early childhood development. It provides important insights into children's development and wellbeing from a local community level to a national level. The five key AEDC areas - known as domains - have been shown to predict later mental health, wellbeing and educational achievement.

Every three years, teachers complete an instrument (similar to a questionnaire) for each child during their first year of full-time school. Data is collected on more than 95% of children in Australia. Information on how children have developed is reported for groups of children at a school, community, state or territory and national level.

AEDC data is collected, stored and used in accordance with privacy legislation. Individual children cannot be identified in data or reports.

### AEDC domains



#### 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, interest in literacy, numeracy and memory, advanced literacy and basic numeracy.



#### Communication skills and general knowledge

Children's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills measured in the school context.



## How is the AEDC used?

Children, families and communities across Australia benefit from schools participating in the AEDC. The AEDC provides information that schools, communities and governments can use to identify and better respond to the needs of children and families. It allows them to:

- understand the factors affecting children's health, development and wellbeing
- support policy and planning for children, families and communities

- target resources and services to the areas of highest developmental need
- track progress against national policies (such as the National Agreement on Closing the Gap).

When children thrive in their early years, they have a strong foundation for lifelong learning, health, development, and wellbeing.

To learn more about the AEDC visit [www.aedc.gov.au](http://www.aedc.gov.au).

### The AEDC in action

#### Governments

- ✓ Informing early childhood decision making and policy development
- ✓ Prioritising the allocation of resources to better meet the needs of children and families
  - ✓ Evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood programs
  - ✓ Identifying inequities in children's outcomes
- ✓ Increasing awareness and understanding of early childhood development.

#### Communities

- ✓ Informing child and family support services and community planning
- ✓ Providing evidence for early childhood development programs and services
- ✓ Informing collaborations and partnerships that support children's development
- ✓ Enabling communities to advocate for the needs of children and families.

#### Schools and Early childhood education and care

- ✓ Providing insight into children's developmental strengths and challenges
- ✓ Identifying the need for additional support to minimise learning challenges
- ✓ Informing teaching strategies, transition programs and curriculum development
- ✓ Providing evidence to support grant applications and quality improvement planning
- ✓ Supporting parent engagement and participation in children's development.

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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, Melbourne, and the Telethon Kids Institute, Perth 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.