

**Australian Early Development Census National Report 2018**

A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia

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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, Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne, and the Telethon Kids Institute, Perth to deliver the Australian Early Development Census program to communities. The Australian Government continues to work with its partners, and with state and territory governments to implement the AEDC nationwide.

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Foreword

The Connected Beginnings program supports Indigenous pregnant women and Indigenous children to be prepared for school.

The Morrison Government provides $12 million to integrate early childhood, maternal and child health, and family support services with schools in a selected number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experiencing disadvantage.

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data is used to help identify priority locations for this program.

The 2018 AEDC collected data on the development of almost 309,000 children in Australia, representing over 96 per cent of children in their first year of full-time school.

Since the first census in 2009, more children have consistently had access to high-quality preschool in the year before they commence full-time school.

As a nation, we have seen a steady improvement in the language and cognitive skills of children starting school. By continuing to focus on preschool attendance, our children will be better prepared for school.

The AEDC found 21.7 per cent of Australian children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain. While the development of Australian children as a whole is improving, there is still work to do to give young Australians the best possible start.

Every Australian child deserves the best start in life, that is why the Morrison Government will spend $8.3 billion on early childhood education and child care this financial year.

Our Government has made the most significant reforms to child care in more than 40 years. Since our Child Care Subsidy was introduced on 2 July 2018, out-of-pocket child care costs for families have gone down by more than 10 per cent. Our new Child Care Package is making child care more affordable for one million families balancing parenting and family responsibilities.

With the Child Care Safety Net, more support is directed to families who work the most and earn the least. The new Child Care Package also provides much needed assistance for those who are geographically isolated or who need more targeted fee assistance, including those on low incomes or affected by natural disasters such as drought or flood.

On top of this, our Government is making $440 million available to states and territories in 2019 to ensure all children in the year before school can continue to access 15 hours of preschool a week.

We are working with the states and territories on future arrangements that will focus on lifting preschool participation rates, especially for disadvantaged and Indigenous children. The most current national data shows 30 per cent of children are not attending for the 15 hours on offer. This increases to 35 per cent for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and up to 41 per cent for Indigenous children.

Like all parents, our Government believes that every child should have access to the highest quality education. Investing in our children is an investment in the future of our country, and the more we know about the progress of our children, the better we can address areas of vulnerability to ensure improved outcomes for everyone.

That is why the AEDC is such an important resource. The detailed snapshot gives all levels of government the tools to tailor their decision-making, planning and resources to the specific needs of communities and jurisdictions.

Thank you to our state and territory partners, the Telethon Kids Institute and the Social Research Centre for their ongoing work on the AEDC, and to all of the teachers who take the time to report on the wellbeing and development of the children under their care.

Hon Dan Tehan MP  
Minister for Education

Executive summary

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) measures the development of children in Australia in their first year of full-time school. AEDC data is collected using an adapted version of the Early Development Instrument, which was developed in Canada.

The AEDC provides important information to communities, governments and schools to support their planning and service provision. The early environments and experiences children are exposed to shape their development. The AEDC is considered to be a measure of how well children and families are supported from conception through to school age.

Research shows that investing time, effort and resources in children’s early years, when their brains are developing rapidly, benefits children and the whole community. Early developmental gains support children through their school years and beyond.

The AEDC helps schools, communities and policy makers understand how children are developing before they start their first year of full-time school, what is being done well and what can be improved.

Data from the AEDC can help identify the types of services, resources or support to meet the needs of communities.

Key findings

With data sets covering four collections (2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018), results from the AEDC can be compared across collections to identify trends in early childhood development across Australia.

A majority of children are developmentally on track for each of the five AEDC domains, in each of the four collections.

Overall, there have been fewer changes in the AEDC results between 2015 and 2018, compared to previous collections.

The percentage of children developmentally on track in the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain has increased significantly from 77.1 per cent in 2009 to 84.4 per cent in 2018.

The communication skills and general knowledge domain has seen a continual decrease in the level of vulnerability since 2009, from 9.2 per cent, to 8.2 per cent in 2018.

For the emotional maturity domain, the level of vulnerability has decreased significantly from 8.9 per cent in 2009, to 8.4 per cent in 2018.

For the social competence domain, the overall percentage of children developmentally on track has increased from 75.2 per cent in 2015 to 75.8 per cent in 2018. There was also a small decrease in the level of vulnerability between 2015 to 2018 (9.9 per cent to 9.8 per cent).

The physical health and wellbeing domain has remained the most stable domain over the four collections. The biggest change has been the small, yet significant increase in the percentage of on track children between 2015 (77.3 per cent) and 2018 (78.1 per cent).

The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) has decreased significantly from 23.6 per cent in 2009 to 21.7 per cent in 2018.

The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains has decreased significantly from 11.8 per cent in 2009 to 11.0 per cent in 2018.

Over the period 2009 to 2015, the gap between the percentage of developmentally vulnerable children in the most disadvantaged areas, relative to the least disadvantaged areas, widened across all five domains. 2018 has seen this gap start to close in three of the domains (physical health and wellbeing, social competence and emotional maturity).

The gap is starting to close for children in Very Remote Australia, relative to children in Major Cities, on both the social competence and emotional maturity domains yet continues to widen on the other domains.

The gap is continuing to narrow between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children with the level of vulnerability on one or more domain(s) decreasing from 47.4 per cent in 2009 to 41.3 per cent in 2018.

Background on the AEDC

**The importance of early childhood development**

Early childhood development is increasingly recognised as a key predictor of future outcomes for children. Research has shown that investing time, effort and resources in the early years of a child’s life has significant impacts on their behaviour, learning, health and wellbeing, as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Supporting early childhood development thus lays the basis for children to grow up with the skills to succeed, bringing benefits for them and the community as a whole.

**About the AEDC**

The AEDC is a national measure of children’s development, as they enter their first year of full-time school. The data for the AEDC is collected every three years using the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument (AvEDI), adapted from Canada. Participation is voluntary with data collected through the cooperation of parents and the active involvement of the government, Catholic and independent schools sectors across Australia.

In 2009, Australia became the first country in the world to collect national data on the developmental health and wellbeing of all children as they start their first year of full-time school. The success of the 2009 collection laid the foundation for the Australian Government’s commitment to ongoing AEDC data collection cycles. The second collection occurred in 2012, the third in 2015 and the fourth in 2018.

The AEDC highlights what is working well and what needs to be improved or developed to support children and their families, and helps communities know how their children are progressing. As a population-based measure, the AEDC is not designed to be an individual diagnostic tool. As such, results are reported publicly at a community level, acknowledging Australia’s diverse cultural context.

The AEDC provides evidence to guide planning and service-provision to ensure children are supported through their early years, school years and beyond.

**About the AEDC domains**

The Australian version of the Early Development Instrument consists of approximately 100 questions across five key domains, which are closely linked to child health, education and social outcomes. The domains are:

* physical health and wellbeing
* social competence
* emotional maturity
* language and cognitive skills (school-based)
* communication skills and general knowledge.

The AEDC domains, domain icons and domain descriptions are presented in Figure 1.

For each of the five AEDC domains, children receive a score between zero and ten, where zero is most developmentally vulnerable. AEDC results are reported as percentage of children who are considered to be ‘developmentally on track’, ‘developmentally at risk’ and ‘developmentally vulnerable’ on each domain.

The AEDC domains have been shown to predict children’s later outcomes in health, wellbeing and academic success.

For further information about the domains and domain characteristics (developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable) please refer to the fact sheet [About the AEDC domains](http://www.aedc.gov.au/abtdom) **( www.aedc.gov.au/abtdom )**.

**Figure 1** – Descriptions of the AEDC developmental 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, 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 measured in the school context. |

**History of the AEDC**

The fourth national roll-out of the AEDC benefits from more than 16 years of implementing the AEDC in Australia and the Early Development Instrument (EDI) in Canada. In 2002, the EDI was tested through a number of pilot studies across the northern metropolitan suburbs of Perth in Western Australia. This resulted in the Australian Government funding the *Australian Early Development Index: Building Better Communities for Children* project between 2004 and 2008. Through this project, a number of validation studies and national trials across 60 communities were undertaken to ensure rigorous adaptation of the Canadian EDI to the Australian context.

Following the success of these studies the Australian Government funded the national roll-out of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) in 2009. An Indigenous Adaptation Study was also undertaken to assess the cultural validity of the EDI for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and adapt it to make it relevant to Australia’s diverse cultural population. The success of the 2009 collection led to the Australian Government’s commitment to funding the ongoing national measurement of the health and wellbeing of children in Australia.

In 2012, the AEDI was rolled out for a second time, using the same approach as the first collection.

Instruments were completed based on teacher’s knowledge and observation of children, along with demographic information from children’s school enrolment forms.

To clearly distinguish the AEDC program of work from the data collection, the instrument used in the census (the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument), the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) was renamed the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) in July 2014.

In 2015, the third round of the AEDC was completed, providing the first opportunity to start tracking emerging trends across the six years (2009-2015) for the five AEDC domains.

The fourth collection in 2018 provides four data points (2009, 2012, 2015, 2018) to support further trend analysis.

**AEDC score**

AEDC domain scores are calculated for each domain for each individual child where enough valid responses have been recorded.

In the first data collection cycle a series of cut-off scores was established for each of the five domains:

* children falling below the 10th percentile were categorised as ‘developmentally vulnerable’
* children falling between the 10th and 25th percentile were categorised as ‘developmentally at risk’
* all other children were categorised as ‘developmentally on track’.
* The cut-off scores set in 2009 provide a reference point against which later AEDC results can be compared. These have remained the same across all four collection cycles.

**How the AEDC results are reported**

AEDC results are presented as the number and percentage of children who are developmentally on track, developmentally at risk and developmentally vulnerable in each domain. Further, two summary indicators are presented to show the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) and developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains. Domain information about children with special needs is not included in the AEDC results because of the already identified substantial developmental needs of this group. However, teachers complete demographic information on children with special needs to enable communities to be responsive to all children in their community. Upon request, researchers may access data on special needs children. Further information can be found at Understanding the AEDC [Results](https://www.aedc.gov.au/about-the-aedc/how-to-understand-the-aedc-results) **( www.aedc.gov.au/about-the-aedc/how-to-understand-the-aedc-results )**.

**How to compare results across years**

With data sets covering four collections, results from 2009 (referred to as ‘baseline’), 2012, 2015 and 2018 can be compared to assess changes in child development over time.

Communities across Australia will see some change in the percentage of children who are developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable in 2018 compared to previous years. In some cases this difference will be small and in others, it will be more substantial.

To assist in making informed decisions about whether there has been a large enough change in the percentage of children considered developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable over time to be considered significant, a method described as the ‘critical difference’ has been developed.

The critical difference is the minimum percentage point change required between collection cycles (2009, 2012, 2015, 2018) for the results to represent a ‘significant change’ in children’s development.

For more information on the calculation of the critical difference, refer to the AEDC technical report [Calculation of the Critical Difference](http://www.aedc.gov.au/trcd) **( www.aedc.gov.au/trcd ).**

This report uses current versions of ABS geography and analytic constructs, such as SEIFA and Remoteness Areas. These updates have been applied to all cycles of the data in order to assist in comparability. The results published in this report may not be identical for these items to previous National Reports.

**How to use the AEDC data**

The AEDC can be used by communities, schools, government and non-government agencies and policy makers, in conjunction with other resources (such as state/ territory and national statistics) to plan and evaluate efforts to create optimal early childhood development outcomes. At the government level, the AEDC provides a sound basis for strategic planning, policy creation and policy evaluation. Policy makers can use AEDC results to help allocate resources and services to more effectively meet the needs of children and families. Governments at all levels can use the AEDC data to inform their strategic plans, to monitor the progress of communities over time and to assess the impact of policy changes.

The AEDC data is a powerful tool for initiating conversations and partnerships across education, health and community services. The AEDC provides a common ground from which key stakeholders can work together, enabling governments at all levels, policy makers and communities to form partnerships to plan and implement activities, programs and services to help shape the future and wellbeing of children in Australia.

For further information on how to use the AEDC results, refer to the [AEDC User Guide](https://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/aedc-userguide)   
**( www.aedc.gov.au/resources/aedc-userguide ).**

Demographics of Australian children included in the AEDC

**Participation in the AEDC across Australia**

Nationally, more than 308,000 children in their first year of full-time school participated in the AEDC in 2018. This represents a national child participation rate of 96.4 per cent.

Table 1 shows the distribution of children included in the AEDC by state and territory across the three most recent collection cycles.

Participation in the AEDC by each state and territory has remained relatively consistent across collection cycles.

Table 2 summarises the number of children, teachers and schools contributing to the AEDC results nationally.

**Table 1** – Children included in the AEDC by state and territory (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Geography** | **2012** | | **2015** | | **2018** | |
| **n** | **%\*** | **n** | **%\*** | **n** | **%\*** |
| Australia | 289,973 | 96.5 | 302,003 | 96.5 | 308,953 | 96.4 |
| New South Wales (NSW) | 94,323 | 97.3 | 95,897 | 96.8 | 97,731 | 96.1 |
| Victoria (VIC) | 67,960 | 92.9 | 71,786 | 94.3 | 76,356 | 93.8 |
| Queensland (QLD) | 61,607 | 97.6 | 65,214 | 97.1 | 64,721 | 98.1 |
| Western Australia (WA) | 32,160 | 99.0 | 33,816 | 98.7 | 34,368 | 99.3 |
| South Australia (SA) | 18,925 | 96.9 | 19,678 | 96.4 | 20,305 | 96.9 |
| Tasmania (TAS) | 6,429 | 98.4 | 6,425 | 99.0 | 6,151 | 99.0 |
| Australian Capital Territory (ACT) | 5,106 | 99.9 | 5,604 | 99.3 | 5,886 | 98.3 |
| Northern Territory (NT) | 3,463 | 95.9 | 3,583 | 98.0 | 3,435 | 95.3 |

\* % refers to the child participation rate which is defined as completed instruments as a percentage of the estimated child population in the first year of full-time schooling.

**Table 2** – Number of children, schools and teachers participating in the AEDC nationally (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2012** | **2015** | **2018** |
| Total number of children included (n) | 289,973 | 302,003 | 308,953 |
| Teachers contributing to the results | 16,425 | 16,968 | 17,508 |
| Schools contributing to the results | 7,415 | 7,510 | 7,507 |

**Demographic snapshot**

Table 3 shows the demographic profile, at a national level, of children who were included in the AEDC.

As can be seen, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children born in another country and children with English as a second language is increasing over time.

The Australian population is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in the world and this is reflected in the children included in the AEDC. The number of children with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) and those with an English Only background (non-LBOTE) is provided in Table 4.

It should be noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who have LBOTE status are part of the LBOTE group. That is, it is possible for children to be both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and have LBOTE status.

Table 3 — Demographic profile of children in the AEDC (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **2012** | | **2015** | | **2018** | |
| **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** |
| Sex – Male | 148,985 | 51.4 | 154,846 | 51.3 | 158,894 | 51.4 |
| Sex – Female | 140,988 | 48.6 | 147,157 | 48.7 | 150,059 | 48.6 |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children | 15,490 | 5.3 | 17,351 | 5.7 | 19,074 | 6.2 |
| Children born in another country | 21,695 | 7.5 | 21,215 | 7.1 | 22,971 | 7.5 |
| Children with English as a second language | 41,506 | 14.3 | 45,226 | 15.0 | 54,700 | 17.7 |

**Table 4** — Language diversity of children in the AEDC (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **2012** | | **2015** | | **2018** | |
| **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** |
| LBOTE – Total1 | 55,489 | 19.1 | 64,881 | 21.5 | 78,298 | 25.3 |
| LBOTE – Not proficient in English | 7,893 | 2.7 | 8,252 | 2.7 | 8,766 | 2.8 |
| LBOTE – Proficient in English | 46,880 | 16.3 | 56,127 | 18.7 | 68,885 | 22.4 |
| English Only – Total2 | 234,484 | 80.9 | 237,122 | 78.5 | 230,655 | 74.7 |
| English Only – Not proficient in English | 11,031 | 3.8 | 10,920 | 3.6 | 9,145 | 3.0 |
| English Only – Proficient in English | 221,990 | 77.1 | 225,562 | 75.0 | 220,862 | 71.8 |

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

**Age**

As shown in Table 5, the mean age of children (at the time AEDC instruments were completed) was 5 years and 7 months and this has remained consistent nationally across all data collections. However, there was some variation in the mean age of children in each state and territory, reflecting the different ages that children start their first year of full-time schooling.

Children in Tasmania are slightly older, at 5 years 11 months, whilst those in Western Australia are the youngest, at 5 years and 4 months.

**Table 5** — Mean age of children in the AEDC, grouped by child’s residential state/territory (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Child’s residential state/territory** | **2012** | **2015** | **2018** |
| Australia | 5 years 7 months | 5 years 7 months | 5 years 7 months |
| New South Wales (NSW) | 5 years 7 months | 5 years 7 months | 5 years 8 months |
| Victoria (VIC) | 5 years 9 months | 5 years 9 months | 5 years 9 months |
| Queensland (QLD) | 5 years 5 months | 5 years 5 months | 5 years 5 months |
| Western Australia (WA) | 5 years 4 months | 5 years 4 months | 5 years 4 months |
| South Australia (SA) | 5 years 7 months | 5 years 7 months | 5 years 7 months |
| Tasmania (TAS) | 5 years 11 months | 5 years 11 months | 5 years 11 months |
| Australian Capital Territory (ACT) | 5 years 8 months | 5 years 7 months | 5 years 8 months |
| Northern Territory (NT) | 5 years 5 months | 5 years 5 months | 5 years 5 months |

**Children with additional or special needs**

Table 6 shows the number and percentage of children included in the AEDC with special needs status and the number and percentage of children identified by teachers as requiring further assessment. Children with special needs status are those who have chronic medical, physical or intellectual disabilities that require special assistance, based on medical diagnosis. The percentage of children with special needs status has decreased from 4.9 per cent in 2012 to 4.6 per cent in 2018. This coincides with an increase in the percentage of children identified by teachers as requiring further assessment, from 10.5 per cent in 2012 to 13.3 per cent in 2018.

**Table 6** — Children with additional or special needs.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **2012** | | **2015** | | **2018** | |
| **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** |
| Children with special needs status | 14,173 | 4.9 | 14,065 | 4.7 | 14,059 | 4.6 |
| Children needing further assessment (e.g. medical and physical, behaviour management, emotional and cognitive development) | 29,628 | 10.5 | 34,793 | 11.8 | 39,861 | 13.3 |

Trends in early childhood development across Australia

With data sets covering four collections, results can be compared to identify trends in early childhood development across Australia. Trends since baseline for each of the AEDC domains and summary indicators can be seen in Figures 2 to 7.

A majority of children are developmentally on track for each of the five domains across each of the four collections. In each domain measured, less than 10 per cent of children were developmentally vulnerable.

The strongest trend over the period 2009 to 2018 was in the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain, with developmental vulnerability decreasing from 8.9 per cent in 2009, to 6.6 per cent in 2018. However, most of this decline occurred between 2009 and 2012 (6.8 per cent).

There was a corresponding increase in the percentage of children developmentally on track, improving by more than 7 percentage points between 2009 (77.1 per cent) and 2018 (84.4 per cent). There was a small decline however between 2015 (84.6 per cent) and 2018 (84.4 per cent).

Significant gains have also been made in the communication skills and general knowledge domain, with the percentage of developmentally vulnerable children decreasing from 9.2 per cent in 2009, to 8.2 per cent in 2018, with steady improvement occurring each cycle. The percentage of children developmentally on track has increased steadily since baseline, from 75.0 per cent in 2009 to 77.3 per cent in 2018.

The next largest shift in the percentage of developmentally vulnerable children occurred in the emotional maturity domain, decreasing from 8.9 per cent in 2009 to 8.4 per cent in 2018. The greatest gains were seen between 2009 and 2012 (from 8.9 per cent to 7.6 per cent). The pattern for the percentage of on track children was similar, in that the improvements seen between 2009 and 2012 were not sustained to the same degree in 2015 and 2018, yet did not fall back to baseline. However, there have been small improvements in both measures in 2018.

The social competence and physical health and wellbeing domains are both characterised by small fluctuations over the years as well as being the only domains where the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable was higher in 2018 (9.8 per cent and 9.6 per cent) compared to baseline (9.5 per cent and 9.3 per cent respectively). In both domains, the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable was highest in 2015.

The small increases in the percentage of vulnerable children in these two domains since baseline are both offset by similar gains in the percentage of children who have shifted from being at risk to on track.

The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains has decreased from 23.6 per cent in 2009 to 21.7 per cent in 2018. Whilst there was no change between 2012 and 2015 (22.0 per cent), there was a small, statistically significant decline between the two most recent collections.

There was a broadly similar pattern for the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains, with a decrease from 11.8 per cent in 2009 to 10.8 per cent in 2012. However, this was then followed by a small increase in 2015 to 11.1 per cent, remaining relatively stable in 2018 (11.0 per cent).

Table 7 - National trends by domain and summary indicators, all collections.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **2009** | | **2012** | | **2015** | | **2018** | | **Significant change** | |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **2009 vs 2018** | **2015 vs 2018** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | On track | 192,031 | 77.7 | 211,806 | 77.3 | 221,855 | 77.3 | 229,542 | 78.1 | Significant increase | Significant increase |
| At risk | 32,157 | 13.0 | 36,637 | 13.4 | 37,347 | 13.0 | 36,105 | 12.3 | Significant decrease | Significant decrease |
| Vulnerable | 23,044 | 9.3 | 25,479 | 9.3 | 27,711 | 9.7 | 28,247 | 9.6 | Significant increase | No significant change |
| **Social  competence** | On track | 186,265 | 75.4 | 209,149 | 76.5 | 215,605 | 75.2 | 222,771 | 75.8 | Significant increase | Significant increase |
| At risk | 37,499 | 15.2 | 39,018 | 14.3 | 42,892 | 15.0 | 42,434 | 14.4 | Significant decrease | Significant decrease |
| Vulnerable | 23,425 | 9.5 | 25,367 | 9.3 | 28,351 | 9.9 | 28,673 | 9.8 | Significant increase | Significant decrease |
| **Emotional  maturity** | On track | 186,210 | 75.6 | 213,059 | 78.1 | 218,341 | 76.4 | 225,739 | 77.1 | Significant increase | Significant increase |
| At risk | 38,160 | 15.5 | 38,778 | 14.2 | 43,594 | 15.3 | 42,390 | 14.5 | Significant decrease | Significant decrease |
| Vulnerable | 21,827 | 8.9 | 20,845 | 7.6 | 23,866 | 8.4 | 24,677 | 8.4 | Significant decrease | Significant increase |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | On track | 190,298 | 77.1 | 226,260 | 82.6 | 242,518 | 84.6 | 247,870 | 84.4 | Significant increase | Significant decrease |
| At risk | 34,579 | 14.0 | 29,072 | 10.6 | 25,597 | 8.9 | 26,291 | 9.0 | Significant decrease | No significant change |
| Vulnerable | 21,933 | 8.9 | 18,564 | 6.8 | 18,533 | 6.5 | 19,417 | 6.6 | Significant decrease | Significant increase |
| **Communication skills and  general  knowledge** | On track | 185,484 | 75.0 | 204,702 | 74.7 | 219,023 | 76.3 | 227,163 | 77.3 | Significant increase | Significant increase |
| At risk | 39,027 | 15.8 | 44,633 | 16.3 | 43,415 | 15.1 | 42,473 | 14.5 | Significant decrease | Significant decrease |
| Vulnerable | 22,701 | 9.2 | 24,520 | 9.0 | 24,475 | 8.5 | 24,232 | 8.2 | Significant decrease | Significant decrease |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | | 58,036 | 23.6 | 59,933 | 22.0 | 62,960 | 22.0 | 63,448 | 21.7 | Significant decrease | Significant decrease |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | | 29,227 | 11.8 | 29,543 | 10.8 | 31,754 | 11.1 | 32,434 | 11.0 | Significant decrease | No significant change |

National trends by domain and summary indicators, all collections

The physical health and wellbeing domain

This domain measures children’s physical readiness for the school day, physical independence, and gross and fine motor skills.

Table 8 provides an explanation of the characteristics of the physical health and wellbeing domain in relation to children who would be considered developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable.

**Table 8** —Characteristics of the physical health and wellbeing domain.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Developmentally on track** | Almost never have problems that interfere with their ability to physically cope with the school day. These children are generally independent, have excellent motor skills, and have energy levels that can get them through the school day. |
| **Developmentally at risk** | Experience some challenges that interfere with their ability to physically cope with the school day. These may include being dressed inappropriately, frequently late, hungry or tired. Children may also show poor coordination skills, have poor fine and gross motor skills, or show poor to average energy levels during the school day. |
| **Developmentally vulnerable** | Experience a number of challenges that interfere with their ability to physically cope with the school day. These may include being dressed inappropriately, frequently late, hungry or tired. Children are usually clumsy and may have fading energy levels. |

Table 9 shows the percentage of developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable children on the physical health and wellbeing domain by selected characteristics for the last three AEDC collections (2012, 2015 and 2018).

Overall

* At a national level, there was no significant change in the percentage of children vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain between 2015 (9.7 per cent) and 2018 (9.6 per cent), but vulnerability remains statistically higher than in 2012 (9.3 per cent).
* The percentage of children on track in the physical health and wellbeing domain increased from 77.3 per cent in 2015 to 78.1 per cent in 2018.
* Small, positive shifts in vulnerability on this domain were evident in QLD, WA and TAS in 2018, however for QLD the percentage of children vulnerable remains higher than in 2012.
* ACT, NT and, to a lesser extent, SA and NSW all experienced an increase in the percentage of children vulnerable on this domain in 2018.
* All jurisdictions except ACT and NT experienced an increase in the percentage of children on track in this domain in 2018, to levels above 2012 except for VIC. The increase in 2018 did not reach statistical significance in all jurisdictions.

Gains made

* The gap between children living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas and those from the least disadvantaged areas who are developmentally vulnerable on this domain has decreased, from 2.7 times in 2012 to 2.5 times in 2018.
* The gap between the percentage of children with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) who are developmentally vulnerable compared to non-LBOTE children has been diminishing steadily over collections. In 2018, LBOTE children were less vulnerable than non-LBOTE children (9.4 per cent compared with 9.7 per cent).
* Boys continue to be nearly twice as likely as girls to be developmentally vulnerable on this domain. Following an increase in this gap between 2012 and 2015, this has reversed in 2018 with a small narrowing of the gap.

More work needed

* There has been a steadily increasing gap in the percentage of children living in Very Remote Australia who are developmentally vulnerable on this domain, compared to children living in Major Cities, from 12.3 per cent in 2012 to 14.6 per cent in 2018.
* The gap in vulnerability between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children on this domain has been widening since 2012.
* The gap has continued to widen in this domain between LBOTE children not proficient in English and those proficient in English, from 22.4 percentage points difference in 2012 to 25.2 percentage points in 2018.

**Table 9** —National trends on the physical health and wellbeing domain (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Australia** | 2018 | 229,542 | 78.1 | 36,105 | 12.3 | 28,247 | 9.6 | 293,894 |
| 2015 | 221,855 | 77.3 | 37,347 | 13.0 | 27,711 | 9.7 | 286,913 |
| 2012 | 211,806 | 77.3 | 36,637 | 13.4 | 25,479 | 9.3 | 273,922 |
| **Jurisdiction** | | | | | | | | |
| **New South Wales** | 2018 | 73,462 | 78.5 | 12,111 | 12.9 | 7,978 | 8.5 | 93,551 |
| 2015 | 71,019 | 77.8 | 12,471 | 13.7 | 7,772 | 8.5 | 91,262 |
| 2012 | 69,843 | 78.1 | 12,245 | 13.7 | 7,393 | 8.3 | 89,481 |
| **Victoria** | 2018 | 58,221 | 81.0 | 7,767 | 10.8 | 5,904 | 8.2 | 71,892 |
| 2015 | 54,934 | 80.9 | 7,602 | 11.2 | 5,335 | 7.9 | 67,871 |
| 2012 | 51,985 | 81.1 | 7,111 | 11.1 | 4,965 | 7.8 | 64,061 |
| **Queensland** | 2018 | 45,801 | 74.1 | 8,462 | 13.7 | 7,581 | 12.3 | 61,844 |
| 2015 | 45,387 | 73.0 | 9,069 | 14.6 | 7,705 | 12.4 | 62,161 |
| 2012 | 42,427 | 72.9 | 9,023 | 15.5 | 6,759 | 11.6 | 58,209 |
| **Western Australia** | 2018 | 26,546 | 80.7 | 3,424 | 10.4 | 2,929 | 8.9 | 32,899 |
| 2015 | 25,620 | 78.8 | 3,676 | 11.3 | 3,206 | 9.9 | 32,502 |
| 2012 | 24,045 | 78.0 | 3,777 | 12.2 | 3,012 | 9.8 | 30,834 |
| **South Australia** | 2018 | 14,924 | 77.8 | 2,188 | 11.4 | 2,072 | 10.8 | 19,184 |
| 2015 | 14,081 | 76.0 | 2,456 | 13.3 | 1,993 | 10.8 | 18,530 |
| 2012 | 13,125 | 75.2 | 2,537 | 14.5 | 1,783 | 10.2 | 17,445 |
| **Tasmania** | 2018 | 4,587 | 78.5 | 706 | 12.1 | 554 | 9.5 | 5,847 |
| 2015 | 4,810 | 78.1 | 731 | 11.9 | 618 | 10 | 6,159 |
| 2012 | 4,765 | 77.8 | 751 | 12.3 | 605 | 9.9 | 6,121 |
| **Australian Capital Territory** | 2018 | 3,840 | 70.0 | 978 | 17.8 | 666 | 12.1 | 5,484 |
| 2015 | 3,755 | 72.7 | 846 | 16.4 | 564 | 10.9 | 5,165 |
| 2012 | 3,358 | 72.6 | 780 | 16.9 | 490 | 10.6 | 4,628 |
| **Northern Territory** | 2018 | 2,161 | 67.7 | 469 | 14.7 | 563 | 17.6 | 3,193 |
| 2015 | 2,249 | 68.9 | 496 | 15.2 | 518 | 15.9 | 3,263 |
| 2012 | 2,258 | 71.8 | 413 | 13.1 | 472 | 15.0 | 3,143 |
| **Socio-economic Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 38,897 | 70.0 | 8,066 | 14.5 | 8,581 | 15.4 | 55,544 |
| 2015 | 38,892 | 68.9 | 8,767 | 15.5 | 8,785 | 15.6 | 56,444 |
| 2012 | 38,435 | 68.9 | 9,030 | 16.2 | 8,320 | 14.9 | 55,785 |
| **Quintile 2** | 2018 | 42,214 | 76.2 | 7,177 | 13.0 | 6,009 | 10.8 | 55,400 |
| 2015 | 40,951 | 75.1 | 7,548 | 13.8 | 6,011 | 11.0 | 54,510 |
| 2012 | 39,898 | 75.4 | 7,573 | 14.3 | 5,465 | 10.3 | 52,936 |
| **Quintile 3** | 2018 | 46,932 | 79.2 | 7,136 | 12.0 | 5,191 | 8.8 | 59,259 |
| 2015 | 45,103 | 78.6 | 7,283 | 12.7 | 4,999 | 8.7 | 57,385 |
| 2012 | 42,098 | 78.3 | 7,081 | 13.2 | 4,562 | 8.5 | 53,741 |
| **Quintile 4** | 2018 | 50,972 | 81.1 | 7,200 | 11.5 | 4,707 | 7.5 | 62,879 |
| 2015 | 47,432 | 80.9 | 6,938 | 11.8 | 4,264 | 7.3 | 58,634 |
| 2012 | 43,534 | 80.2 | 6,831 | 12.6 | 3,941 | 7.3 | 54,306 |
| **Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 50,087 | 83.2 | 6,448 | 10.7 | 3,684 | 6.1 | 60,219 |
| 2015 | 49,064 | 82.7 | 6,714 | 11.3 | 3,568 | 6.0 | 59,346 |
| 2012 | 47,372 | 83.8 | 6,046 | 10.7 | 3,090 | 5.5 | 56,508 |
| **Geographic Location** | | | | | | | | |
| **Major Cities** | 2018 | 166,822 | 79.1 | 25,722 | 12.2 | 18,444 | 8.7 | 210,988 |
| 2015 | 157,666 | 78.3 | 25,794 | 12.8 | 17,933 | 8.9 | 201,393 |
| 2012 | 148,655 | 78.3 | 24,775 | 13.1 | 16,346 | 8.6 | 189,776 |
| **Inner Regional** | 2018 | 39,494 | 76.5 | 6,511 | 12.6 | 5,643 | 10.9 | 51,648 |
| 2015 | 39,773 | 76.1 | 6,964 | 13.3 | 5,542 | 10.6 | 52,279 |
| 2012 | 38,671 | 75.7 | 7,269 | 14.2 | 5,150 | 10.1 | 51,090 |
| **Outer Regional** | 2018 | 18,481 | 75.6 | 2,997 | 12.3 | 2,963 | 12.1 | 24,441 |
| 2015 | 19,419 | 74.6 | 3,613 | 13.9 | 2,992 | 11.5 | 26,024 |
| 2012 | 19,360 | 75.0 | 3,547 | 13.7 | 2,905 | 11.3 | 25,812 |
| **Remote** | 2018 | 3,039 | 73.7 | 518 | 12.6 | 569 | 13.8 | 4,126 |
| 2015 | 3,140 | 74.1 | 550 | 13.0 | 549 | 13.0 | 4,239 |
| 2012 | 3,251 | 75.5 | 592 | 13.7 | 463 | 10.8 | 4,306 |
| **Very Remote** | 2018 | 1,706 | 63.4 | 357 | 13.3 | 628 | 23.3 | 2,691 |
| 2015 | 1,857 | 62.4 | 426 | 14.3 | 695 | 23.3 | 2,978 |
| 2012 | 1,869 | 63.6 | 454 | 15.5 | 615 | 20.9 | 2,938 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | |
| **Male** | 2018 | 109,858 | 74.0 | 20,140 | 13.6 | 18,369 | 12.4 | 148,367 |
| 2015 | 105,496 | 73.0 | 20,861 | 14.4 | 18,078 | 12.5 | 144,435 |
| 2012 | 101,426 | 73.5 | 20,167 | 14.6 | 16,408 | 11.9 | 138,001 |
| **Female** | 2018 | 119,684 | 82.2 | 15,965 | 11.0 | 9,878 | 6.8 | 145,527 |
| 2015 | 116,359 | 81.7 | 16,486 | 11.6 | 9,633 | 6.8 | 142,478 |
| 2012 | 110,380 | 81.2 | 16,470 | 12.1 | 9,071 | 6.7 | 135,921 |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 11,036 | 62.9 | 2,782 | 15.8 | 3,738 | 21.3 | 17,556 |
| 2015 | 9,906 | 62.3 | 2,649 | 16.7 | 3,347 | 21.0 | 15,902 |
| 2012 | 8,794 | 62.6 | 2,386 | 17.0 | 2,872 | 20.4 | 14,052 |
| **Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 218,380 | 79.1 | 33,284 | 12.1 | 24,465 | 8.9 | 276,129 |
| 2015 | 211,949 | 78.2 | 34,698 | 12.8 | 24,364 | 9.0 | 271,011 |
| 2012 | 203,012 | 78.1 | 34,251 | 13.2 | 22,607 | 8.7 | 259,870 |
| **Language Diversity** | | | | | | | | |
| **LBOTE – Total1** | 2018 | 58,712 | 78.2 | 9,305 | 12.4 | 7,035 | 9.4 | 75,052 |
| 2015 | 47,558 | 76.6 | 8,449 | 13.6 | 6,067 | 9.8 | 62,074 |
| 2012 | 40,060 | 76.3 | 7,207 | 13.7 | 5,204 | 9.9 | 52,471 |
| **LBOTE – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 3,424 | 46.0 | 1,622 | 21.8 | 2,390 | 32.1 | 7,436 |
| 2015 | 3,266 | 45.9 | 1,664 | 23.4 | 2,181 | 30.7 | 7,111 |
| 2012 | 3,239 | 48.6 | 1,462 | 21.9 | 1,963 | 29.5 | 6,664 |
| **LBOTE – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 55,202 | 81.8 | 7,647 | 11.3 | 4,623 | 6.9 | 67,472 |
| 2015 | 44,265 | 80.6 | 6,780 | 12.3 | 3,881 | 7.1 | 54,926 |
| 2012 | 36,735 | 80.4 | 5,729 | 12.5 | 3,221 | 7.1 | 45,685 |
| **English Only – Total2** | 2018 | 170,830 | 78.1 | 26,800 | 12.2 | 21,212 | 9.7 | 218,842 |
| 2015 | 174,297 | 77.5 | 28,898 | 12.9 | 21,644 | 9.6 | 224,839 |
| 2012 | 171,746 | 77.6 | 29,430 | 13.3 | 20,275 | 9.2 | 221,451 |
| **English Only – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 1,422 | 24.0 | 1,127 | 19.0 | 3,384 | 57.0 | 5,933 |
| 2015 | 1,761 | 24.4 | 1,503 | 20.8 | 3,945 | 54.7 | 7,209 |
| 2012 | 1,796 | 26.3 | 1,519 | 22.2 | 3,515 | 51.5 | 6,830 |
| **English Only – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 169,354 | 79.6 | 25,657 | 12.1 | 17,808 | 8.4 | 212,819 |
| 2015 | 172,512 | 79.3 | 27,388 | 12.6 | 17,687 | 8.1 | 217,587 |
| 2012 | 169,705 | 79.2 | 27,855 | 13.00 | 16,716 | 7.8 | 214,276 |

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

The social competence domain

This domain measures children’s overall social competence, responsibility and respect, approaches to learning, and readiness to explore new things.

Table 10 provides an explanation of the characteristics of the social competence domain in relation to children who would be considered developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable.

**Table 10** — Characteristics of the social competence domain.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Developmentally on track** | Almost never have problems getting along, working, or playing with other children; these children are respectful to adults, are self-confident, and are able to follow class routines; and are capable of helping others. |
| **Developmentally at risk** | Experience some challenges in the following areas: getting along with other children and teachers, playing with a variety of children in a cooperative manner, showing respect for others and for property, following instructions and class routines, taking responsibility for their actions, working independently, and exhibiting self-control and self-confidence. |
| **Developmentally vulnerable** | Experience a number of challenges with poor overall social skills. For example children who do not get along with other children on a regular basis, do not accept responsibility for their own actions and have difficulties following rules and class routines. Children may be disrespectful of adults, children, and others’ property; have low self-confidence and self-control, do not adjust well to change; and are usually unable to work independently. |

Table 11 shows changes in the percentage of developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable children on the social competence domain for the last three collections.

Overall

* The percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain decreased marginally from 9.9 per cent in 2015 to 9.8 per cent in 2018, however this remains higher than in 2012 (9.3 per cent).
* There was a corresponding increase in the percentage of children who were developmentally on track on the social competence domain between 2015 (75.2 per cent) and 2018 (75.8 per cent).
* The national trend was mainly driven by three jurisdictions, QLD, WA and the NT. In contrast, developmental vulnerability increased in 2018 in SA and ACT.

Gains made

* Whilst the linear relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and social competence remains evident, the gap between children living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged locations and those from the least disadvantaged narrowed in 2018. This gap is the narrowest it has been since 2012 but remains wider than it was in 2012. Positive trends were seen in the percentage of children on track and at risk for all socio-economic strata in 2018.
* The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on this domain in Very Remote Australia decreased from 24.0 per cent in 2015 to 22.4 per cent in 2018, whilst the percentage living in Major Cities remained unchanged at 9.3 per cent, resulting in a narrowing of the gap but remaining wider than baseline.
* Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children had positive results on the social competence domain in 2018, with a small increase in children who are considered developmentally on track and a corresponding decrease in those at risk and developmentally vulnerable. These shifts were slightly more favourable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, resulting in a small narrowing of the gap in 2018, however the gap remains wider than it was in 2012.
* In 2018, children with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) were more likely than non-LBOTE children to be developmentally vulnerable on this domain (10.8 and 9.4 per cent). This gap has been closing since baseline and reduced significantly in 2018, due to a decrease in the percentage of LBOTE children developmentally vulnerable, whilst the percentage of non-LBOTE children developmentally vulnerable remained the same.

More work needed

* Boys continue to be more than twice as likely as girls to be developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain, a gap that has continued to widen since 2012. The percentage of boys developmentally vulnerable on this domain remained stable between 2015 and 2018 whilst there was a small improvement for girls. However, the percentage of children on track improved for both sexes in 2018, of a slightly greater magnitude for boys than girls.
* The gap continues to widen among LBOTE children who were not proficient in English and those who were proficient in English, reaching 31.0 percentage points difference in vulnerability on this domain in 2018.

**Table 11** —National trends on the social competence domain (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Australia** | 2018 | 222,771 | 75.8 | 42,434 | 14.4 | 28,673 | 9.8 | 293,878 |
| 2015 | 215,605 | 75.2 | 42,892 | 15 | 28,351 | 9.9 | 286,848 |
| 2012 | 209,149 | 76.5 | 39,018 | 14.3 | 25,367 | 9.3 | 273,534 |
| **Jurisdiction** | | | | | | | | |
| **New South Wales** | 2018 | 72,119 | 77.1 | 12,854 | 13.7 | 8,568 | 9.2 | 93,541 |
| 2015 | 69,828 | 76.5 | 13,058 | 14.3 | 8,359 | 9.2 | 91,245 |
| 2012 | 69,752 | 78.0 | 12,043 | 13.5 | 7,578 | 8.5 | 89,373 |
| **Victoria** | 2018 | 55,597 | 77.3 | 9,974 | 13.9 | 6,331 | 8.8 | 71,902 |
| 2015 | 52,378 | 77.2 | 9,548 | 14.1 | 5,934 | 8.7 | 67,860 |
| 2012 | 50,226 | 78.6 | 8,519 | 13.3 | 5,151 | 8.1 | 63,896 |
| **Queensland** | 2018 | 44,446 | 71.9 | 10,004 | 16.2 | 7,388 | 11.9 | 61,838 |
| 2015 | 44,213 | 71.2 | 10,204 | 16.4 | 7,719 | 12.4 | 62,136 |
| 2012 | 42,392 | 72.9 | 9,077 | 15.6 | 6,717 | 11.5 | 58,186 |
| **Western Australia** | 2018 | 26,171 | 79.6 | 4,292 | 13.0 | 2,431 | 7.4 | 32,894 |
| 2015 | 25,051 | 77.1 | 4,724 | 14.5 | 2,721 | 8.4 | 32,496 |
| 2012 | 23,689 | 76.9 | 4,521 | 14.7 | 2,589 | 8.4 | 30,799 |
| **South Australia** | 2018 | 13,947 | 72.7 | 3,034 | 15.8 | 2,200 | 11.5 | 19,181 |
| 2015 | 13,490 | 72.8 | 3,034 | 16.4 | 2,004 | 10.8 | 18,528 |
| 2012 | 12,812 | 73.6 | 2,641 | 15.2 | 1,965 | 11.3 | 17,418 |
| **Tasmania** | 2018 | 4,456 | 76.2 | 879 | 15.0 | 513 | 8.8 | 5,848 |
| 2015 | 4,718 | 76.6 | 913 | 14.8 | 528 | 8.6 | 6,159 |
| 2012 | 4,698 | 77.0 | 903 | 14.8 | 503 | 8.2 | 6,104 |
| **Australian Capital Territory** | 2018 | 3,969 | 72.4 | 841 | 15.3 | 674 | 12.3 | 5,484 |
| 2015 | 3,845 | 74.5 | 836 | 16.2 | 483 | 9.4 | 5,164 |
| 2012 | 3,489 | 75.5 | 734 | 15.9 | 396 | 8.6 | 4,619 |
| **Northern Territory** | 2018 | 2,066 | 64.8 | 556 | 17.4 | 568 | 17.8 | 3,190 |
| 2015 | 2,082 | 63.9 | 575 | 17.6 | 603 | 18.5 | 3,260 |
| 2012 | 2,091 | 66.6 | 580 | 18.5 | 468 | 14.9 | 3,139 |
| **Socio-economic Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 37,477 | 67.5 | 9,734 | 17.5 | 8,323 | 15.0 | 55,534 |
| 2015 | 37,651 | 66.7 | 10,124 | 17.9 | 8,649 | 15.3 | 56,424 |
| 2012 | 37,841 | 67.9 | 9,921 | 17.8 | 7,955 | 14.3 | 55,717 |
| **Quintile 2** | 2018 | 40,884 | 73.8 | 8,563 | 15.5 | 5,955 | 10.7 | 55,402 |
| 2015 | 39,679 | 72.8 | 8,757 | 16.1 | 6,058 | 11.1 | 54,494 |
| 2012 | 39,344 | 74.4 | 8,070 | 15.3 | 5,473 | 10.3 | 52,887 |
| **Quintile 3** | 2018 | 45,491 | 76.8 | 8,346 | 14.1 | 5,420 | 9.1 | 59,257 |
| 2015 | 43,720 | 76.2 | 8,513 | 14.8 | 5,141 | 9.0 | 57,374 |
| 2012 | 41,462 | 77.3 | 7,533 | 14 | 4,654 | 8.7 | 53,649 |
| **Quintile 4** | 2018 | 49,522 | 78.8 | 8,421 | 13.4 | 4,933 | 7.8 | 62,876 |
| 2015 | 46,125 | 78.7 | 7,927 | 13.5 | 4,573 | 7.8 | 58,625 |
| 2012 | 43,263 | 79.8 | 6,971 | 12.9 | 3,990 | 7.4 | 54,224 |
| **Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 48,962 | 81.3 | 7,299 | 12.1 | 3,955 | 6.6 | 60,216 |
| 2015 | 48,022 | 80.9 | 7,472 | 12.6 | 3,844 | 6.5 | 59,338 |
| 2012 | 46,783 | 82.9 | 6,445 | 11.4 | 3,185 | 5.6 | 56,413 |
| **Geographic Location** | | | | | | | | |
| **Major Cities** | 2018 | 161,550 | 76.6 | 29,775 | 14.1 | 19,653 | 9.3 | 210,978 |
| 2015 | 153,294 | 76.1 | 29,262 | 14.5 | 18,802 | 9.3 | 201,358 |
| 2012 | 146,603 | 77.4 | 26,041 | 13.7 | 16,865 | 8.9 | 189,509 |
| **Inner Regional** | 2018 | 38,764 | 75.1 | 7,686 | 14.9 | 5,199 | 10.1 | 51,649 |
| 2015 | 38,909 | 74.4 | 8,024 | 15.4 | 5,337 | 10.2 | 52,270 |
| 2012 | 38,628 | 75.7 | 7,726 | 15.1 | 4,680 | 9.2 | 51,034 |
| **Outer Regional** | 2018 | 17,899 | 73.2 | 3,802 | 15.6 | 2,738 | 11.2 | 24,439 |
| 2015 | 18,751 | 72.1 | 4,268 | 16.4 | 3,001 | 11.5 | 26,020 |
| 2012 | 18,995 | 73.7 | 3,938 | 15.3 | 2,823 | 11.0 | 25,756 |
| **Remote** | 2018 | 3,010 | 73.0 | 633 | 15.4 | 480 | 11.6 | 4,123 |
| 2015 | 3,004 | 70.9 | 734 | 17.3 | 500 | 11.8 | 4,238 |
| 2012 | 3,163 | 73.5 | 686 | 15.9 | 455 | 10.6 | 4,304 |
| **Very Remote** | 2018 | 1,548 | 57.6 | 538 | 20.0 | 603 | 22.4 | 2,689 |
| 2015 | 1,647 | 55.6 | 604 | 20.4 | 711 | 24.0 | 2,962 |
| 2012 | 1,760 | 60.0 | 627 | 21.4 | 544 | 18.6 | 2,931 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | |
| **Male** | 2018 | 101,756 | 68.6 | 26,478 | 17.8 | 20,127 | 13.6 | 148,361 |
| 2015 | 97,966 | 67.8 | 26,821 | 18.6 | 19,622 | 13.6 | 144,409 |
| 2012 | 95,878 | 69.6 | 24,465 | 17.8 | 17,474 | 12.7 | 137,817 |
| **Female** | 2018 | 121,015 | 83.2 | 15,956 | 11.0 | 8,546 | 5.9 | 145,517 |
| 2015 | 117,639 | 82.6 | 16,071 | 11.3 | 8,729 | 6.1 | 142,439 |
| 2012 | 113,271 | 83.5 | 14,553 | 10.7 | 7,893 | 5.8 | 135,717 |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 10,604 | 60.4 | 3,429 | 19.5 | 3,517 | 20.0 | 17,550 |
| 2015 | 9,402 | 59.2 | 3,239 | 20.4 | 3,251 | 20.5 | 15,892 |
| 2012 | 8,517 | 60.7 | 2,905 | 20.7 | 2,619 | 18.7 | 14,041 |
| **Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 212,030 | 76.8 | 38,968 | 14.1 | 25,121 | 9.1 | 276,119 |
| 2015 | 206,203 | 76.1 | 39,653 | 14.6 | 25,100 | 9.3 | 270,956 |
| 2012 | 200,632 | 77.3 | 36,113 | 13.9 | 22,748 | 8.8 | 259,493 |
| **Language Diversity** | | | | | | | | |
| **LBOTE – Total1** | 2018 | 55,843 | 74.4 | 11,082 | 14.8 | 8,120 | 10.8 | 75,045 |
| 2015 | 45,093 | 72.7 | 9,673 | 15.6 | 7,276 | 11.7 | 62,042 |
| 2012 | 38,376 | 73.3 | 8,128 | 15.5 | 5,879 | 11.2 | 52,383 |
| **LBOTE – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 2,505 | 33.7 | 2,047 | 27.6 | 2,875 | 38.7 | 7,427 |
| 2015 | 2,466 | 34.8 | 1,894 | 26.7 | 2,727 | 38.5 | 7,087 |
| 2012 | 2,535 | 38.2 | 1,793 | 27.0 | 2,312 | 34.8 | 6,640 |
| **LBOTE – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 53,235 | 78.9 | 9,012 | 13.4 | 5,228 | 7.7 | 67,475 |
| 2015 | 42,603 | 77.6 | 7,771 | 14.1 | 4,545 | 8.3 | 54,919 |
| 2012 | 35,770 | 78.4 | 6,323 | 13.9 | 3,549 | 7.8 | 45,642 |
| **English Only – Total2** | 2018 | 166,928 | 76.3 | 31,352 | 14.3 | 20,553 | 9.4 | 218,833 |
| 2015 | 170,512 | 75.8 | 33,219 | 14.8 | 21,075 | 9.4 | 224,806 |
| 2012 | 170,773 | 77.2 | 30,890 | 14.0 | 19,488 | 8.8 | 221,151 |
| **English Only – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 1,376 | 23.2 | 1,507 | 25.4 | 3,047 | 51.4 | 5,930 |
| 2015 | 1,744 | 24.2 | 1,951 | 27.1 | 3,513 | 48.7 | 7,208 |
| 2012 | 1,924 | 28.2 | 1,816 | 26.6 | 3,085 | 45.2 | 6,825 |
| **English Only – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 165,502 | 77.8 | 29,822 | 14.0 | 17,488 | 8.2 | 212,812 |
| 2015 | 168,746 | 77.6 | 31,258 | 14.4 | 17,552 | 8.1 | 217,556 |
| 2012 | 168,651 | 78.8 | 29,016 | 13.6 | 16,355 | 7.6 | 214,022 |

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

The emotional maturity domain

This domain measures children’s pro- social and helping behaviour, anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention.

Table 12 provides an explanation of the characteristics of the emotional maturity domain in relation to children who would be considered developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable.

**Table 12** — Characteristics of the emotional maturity domain.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Developmentally on track** | Almost never shows aggressive, anxious, or impulsive behaviour. Children will have good concentration and will often help other children. |
| **Developmentally at risk** | Experience some challenges in the following areas: helping other children who are hurt, sick or upset, inviting other children to join in activities, being kind to other children, and waiting their turn in activities. They will sometimes experience problems with anxious behaviours, aggressive behaviour, temper tantrums, or problems with inattention or hyperactivity. |
| **Developmentally vulnerable** | Experience a number of challenges related to emotional regulation. For example problems managing aggressive behaviour, being prone to disobedience and/or easily distracted, inattentive, and impulsive. Children will usually not help others and are sometimes upset when left by their caregiver. |

Table 13 shows changes in the percentage of developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable children on the emotional maturity domain for the last three collections.

Overall

* At the national level, the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on this domain has continued to increase over the three most recent collections, albeit minimally between 2015 and 2018. However, the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on this domain remains significantly lower than at baseline (8.9 per cent, not shown in Table 13).
* The percentage of children developmentally on track in this domain improved slightly over the two most recent collections, from 76.4 in 2015 to 77.1 per cent in 2018.
* The pattern amongst the jurisdictions was mixed in 2018, with QLD, SA and ACT all recording an increase in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable, whilst WA had positive results. There was no significant change in 2018 for NSW, VIC, TAS and NT.

Gains made

* Although not pronounced, there was some improvement in developmental vulnerability on this domain among the more disadvantaged areas compared to the least disadvantaged areas in 2018. A small increase in the percentage of children who were considered to be on track in 2018 was evident across all socio-economic strata in 2018.
* In 2018, children living in Very Remote Australia were at least twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the emotional maturity domain than children living in Major Cities. This gap has narrowed since 2015 when the difference was nearly three times.
* Consistent with previous collections, the largest difference between the sexes across the five AEDC domains is in the emotional maturity domain, with boys 3.4 times more likely than girls to be developmentally vulnerable and nearly twice as likely to be classified as developmentally at risk. Whilst both boys and girls had no change in vulnerability on this domain in 2018, there was a small increase in the percentage of children on track and a corresponding decrease in those at risk, which for boys was around one per cent and around half a per cent for girls.
* Whilst the difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous children is less marked on the emotional maturity domain than other domains, the gap in developmental vulnerability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children closed further in 2018 to below baseline (not shown in Table 13). This was due to a decline in vulnerability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 16.9 per cent in 2015 to 16.2 per cent in 2018, whilst for non-Indigenous children the percentage vulnerable on this domain remained consistent (7.9 per cent in 2015 and 2018).
* In 2018, for the first time in AEDC history, LBOTE children were less likely than non-LBOTE children to be developmentally vulnerable on the emotional maturity domain (7.7 and 8.7 per cent). The percentage of LBOTE children who were vulnerable on this domain decreased significantly in 2018 (from 8.5 in 2015 to 7.7 per cent) whilst it increased for non-LBOTE children (from 8.3 in 2015 to 8.7 per cent). Although the gap between these two groups has always been small (less than 1 percentage point difference at baseline), it has continued to close.

More work needed

* As for other domains, more work is needed to bridge the gap on this domain between LBOTE children proficient in English and those not proficient in English. In 2018 those not proficient in English were more than four times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable (24.8 per cent) than LBOTE children who were proficient in English (5.8 per cent), a gap that has continued to widen since 2012.

**Table 13** —National trends on the emotional maturity domain (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Australia** | 2018 | 225,739 | 77.1 | 42,390 | 14.5 | 24,677 | 8.4 | 292,806 |
| 2015 | 218,341 | 76.4 | 43,594 | 15.3 | 23,866 | 8.4 | 285,801 |
| 2012 | 213,059 | 78.1 | 38,778 | 14.2 | 20,845 | 7.6 | 272,682 |
| **Jurisdiction** | | | | | | | | |
| **New South Wales** | 2018 | 74,725 | 80.2 | 12,136 | 13.0 | 6,306 | 6.8 | 93,167 |
| 2015 | 71,870 | 79.1 | 12,757 | 14.0 | 6,176 | 6.8 | 90,803 |
| 2012 | 72,282 | 81.2 | 11,219 | 12.6 | 5,487 | 6.2 | 88,988 |
| **Victoria** | 2018 | 55,651 | 77.7 | 10,167 | 14.2 | 5,791 | 8.1 | 71,609 |
| 2015 | 52,392 | 77.5 | 9,817 | 14.5 | 5,408 | 8.0 | 67,617 |
| 2012 | 50,605 | 79.3 | 8,604 | 13.5 | 4,566 | 7.2 | 63,775 |
| **Queensland** | 2018 | 45,192 | 73.3 | 9,988 | 16.2 | 6,448 | 10.5 | 61,628 |
| 2015 | 45,529 | 73.5 | 10,164 | 16.4 | 6,266 | 10.1 | 61,959 |
| 2012 | 43,459 | 74.9 | 9,161 | 15.8 | 5,368 | 9.3 | 57,988 |
| **Western Australia** | 2018 | 25,488 | 77.7 | 4,792 | 14.6 | 2,518 | 7.7 | 32,798 |
| 2015 | 24,401 | 75.3 | 5,241 | 16.2 | 2,751 | 8.5 | 32,393 |
| 2012 | 23,147 | 75.5 | 4,972 | 16.2 | 2,559 | 8.3 | 30,678 |
| **South Australia** | 2018 | 13,966 | 73.1 | 3,084 | 16.1 | 2,064 | 10.8 | 19,114 |
| 2015 | 13,461 | 72.9 | 3,218 | 17.4 | 1,793 | 9.7 | 18,472 |
| 2012 | 13,075 | 75.3 | 2,685 | 15.5 | 1,610 | 9.3 | 17,370 |
| **Tasmania** | 2018 | 4,403 | 75.4 | 898 | 15.4 | 535 | 9.2 | 5,836 |
| 2015 | 4,638 | 75.3 | 975 | 15.8 | 545 | 8.9 | 6,158 |
| 2012 | 4,740 | 77.1 | 908 | 14.8 | 501 | 8.1 | 6,149 |
| **Australian Capital Territory** | 2018 | 4,173 | 76.1 | 764 | 13.9 | 543 | 9.9 | 5,480 |
| 2015 | 3,910 | 75.9 | 819 | 15.9 | 423 | 8.2 | 5,152 |
| 2012 | 3,651 | 79.0 | 636 | 13.8 | 333 | 7.2 | 4,620 |
| **Northern Territory** | 2018 | 2,141 | 67.5 | 561 | 17.7 | 472 | 14.9 | 3,174 |
| 2015 | 2,140 | 65.9 | 603 | 18.6 | 504 | 15.5 | 3,247 |
| 2012 | 2,100 | 67.4 | 593 | 19.0 | 421 | 13.5 | 3,114 |
| **Socio-economic Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 39,030 | 70.6 | 9,551 | 17.3 | 6,695 | 12.1 | 55,276 |
| 2015 | 39,087 | 69.6 | 10,295 | 18.3 | 6,799 | 12.1 | 56,181 |
| 2012 | 39,525 | 71.2 | 9,701 | 17.5 | 6,261 | 11.3 | 55,487 |
| **Quintile 2** | 2018 | 41,556 | 75.2 | 8,594 | 15.6 | 5,082 | 9.2 | 55,232 |
| 2015 | 40,536 | 74.7 | 8,706 | 16.0 | 5,057 | 9.3 | 54,299 |
| 2012 | 40,376 | 76.6 | 7,896 | 15.0 | 4,446 | 8.4 | 52,718 |
| **Quintile 3** | 2018 | 45,872 | 77.7 | 8,503 | 14.4 | 4,667 | 7.9 | 59,042 |
| 2015 | 44,104 | 77.1 | 8,618 | 15.1 | 4,482 | 7.8 | 57,204 |
| 2012 | 42,093 | 78.7 | 7,560 | 14.1 | 3,846 | 7.2 | 53,499 |
| **Quintile 4** | 2018 | 49,728 | 79.4 | 8,372 | 13.4 | 4,548 | 7.3 | 62,648 |
| 2015 | 46,133 | 79.0 | 8,274 | 14.2 | 3,965 | 6.8 | 58,372 |
| 2012 | 43,575 | 80.6 | 7,119 | 13.2 | 3,374 | 6.2 | 54,068 |
| **Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 49,097 | 81.8 | 7,303 | 12.2 | 3,619 | 6.0 | 60,019 |
| 2015 | 48,068 | 81.3 | 7,604 | 12.9 | 3,484 | 5.9 | 59,156 |
| 2012 | 47,030 | 83.6 | 6,398 | 11.4 | 2,842 | 5.1 | 56,270 |
| **Geographic Location** | | | | | | | | |
| **Major Cities** | 2018 | 163,733 | 77.9 | 29,863 | 14.2 | 16,520 | 7.9 | 210,116 |
| 2015 | 155,114 | 77.3 | 29,821 | 14.9 | 15,618 | 7.8 | 200,553 |
| 2012 | 149,191 | 79.0 | 26,061 | 13.8 | 13,485 | 7.1 | 188,737 |
| **Inner Regional** | 2018 | 39,199 | 76.1 | 7,520 | 14.6 | 4,814 | 9.3 | 51,533 |
| 2015 | 39,366 | 75.5 | 8,091 | 15.5 | 4,697 | 9.0 | 52,154 |
| 2012 | 39,359 | 77.1 | 7,474 | 14.6 | 4,206 | 8.2 | 51,039 |
| **Outer Regional** | 2018 | 18,070 | 74.1 | 3,896 | 16.0 | 2,422 | 9.9 | 24,388 |
| 2015 | 19,199 | 73.9 | 4,290 | 16.5 | 2,476 | 9.5 | 25,965 |
| 2012 | 19,473 | 75.6 | 4,020 | 15.6 | 2,253 | 8.8 | 25,746 |
| **Remote** | 2018 | 3,095 | 75.4 | 588 | 14.3 | 424 | 10.3 | 4,107 |
| 2015 | 3,003 | 71.3 | 763 | 18.1 | 446 | 10.6 | 4,212 |
| 2012 | 3,244 | 75.7 | 666 | 15.5 | 377 | 8.8 | 4,287 |
| **Very Remote** | 2018 | 1,642 | 61.7 | 523 | 19.6 | 497 | 18.7 | 2,662 |
| 2015 | 1,659 | 56.9 | 629 | 21.6 | 629 | 21.6 | 2,917 |
| 2012 | 1,792 | 62.4 | 557 | 19.4 | 524 | 18.2 | 2,873 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | |
| **Male** | 2018 | 100,981 | 68.4 | 27,584 | 18.7 | 19,117 | 12.9 | 147,682 |
| 2015 | 96,986 | 67.5 | 28,278 | 19.7 | 18,520 | 12.9 | 143,784 |
| 2012 | 95,534 | 69.6 | 25,482 | 18.6 | 16,189 | 11.8 | 137,205 |
| **Female** | 2018 | 124,758 | 86.0 | 14,806 | 10.2 | 5,560 | 3.8 | 145,124 |
| 2015 | 121,355 | 85.5 | 15,316 | 10.8 | 5,346 | 3.8 | 142,017 |
| 2012 | 117,525 | 86.7 | 13,296 | 9.8 | 4,656 | 3.4 | 135,477 |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 11,254 | 64.5 | 3380 | 19.4 | 2,827 | 16.2 | 17,461 |
| 2015 | 9,893 | 62.5 | 3277 | 20.7 | 2,671 | 16.9 | 15,841 |
| 2012 | 9,041 | 64.7 | 2760 | 19.7 | 2,180 | 15.6 | 13,981 |
| **Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 214,330 | 77.9 | 38,982 | 14.2 | 21,824 | 7.9 | 275,136 |
| 2015 | 208,448 | 77.2 | 40,317 | 14.9 | 21,195 | 7.9 | 269,960 |
| 2012 | 204,018 | 78.9 | 36,018 | 13.9 | 18,665 | 7.2 | 258,701 |
| **Language Diversity** | | | | | | | | |
| **LBOTE – Total1** | 2018 | 57,398 | 76.9 | 11484 | 15.4 | 5,764 | 7.7 | 74,646 |
| 2015 | 46,271 | 75.0 | 10175 | 16.5 | 5,240 | 8.5 | 61,686 |
| 2012 | 39,490 | 75.9 | 8416 | 16.2 | 4,133 | 7.9 | 52,039 |
| **LBOTE – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 3,293 | 44.8 | 2236 | 30.4 | 1,825 | 24.8 | 7,354 |
| 2015 | 3,082 | 43.9 | 2273 | 32.4 | 1,669 | 23.8 | 7,024 |
| 2012 | 3,149 | 48.0 | 2028 | 30.9 | 1,385 | 21.1 | 6,562 |
| **LBOTE – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 54,002 | 80.4 | 9225 | 13.7 | 3,924 | 5.8 | 67,151 |
| 2015 | 43,162 | 79.0 | 7895 | 14.5 | 3,568 | 6.5 | 54,625 |
| 2012 | 36,260 | 80.0 | 6351 | 14.0 | 2,739 | 6.0 | 45,350 |
| **English Only – Total2** | 2018 | 168,341 | 77.2 | 30,906 | 14.2 | 18,913 | 8.7 | 218,160 |
| 2015 | 172,070 | 76.8 | 33,419 | 14.9 | 18,626 | 8.3 | 224,115 |
| 2012 | 173,569 | 78.7 | 30,362 | 13.8 | 16,712 | 7.6 | 220,643 |
| **English Only – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 1,955 | 33.1 | 1,729 | 29.3 | 2,215 | 37.5 | 5,899 |
| 2015 | 2,489 | 34.7 | 2,239 | 31.2 | 2,447 | 34.1 | 7,175 |
| 2012 | 2,720 | 40.1 | 2,005 | 29.6 | 2,052 | 30.3 | 6,777 |
| **English Only – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 166,332 | 78.4 | 29,155 | 13.7 | 16,685 | 7.9 | 212,172 |
| 2015 | 169,562 | 78.2 | 31,167 | 14.4 | 16,169 | 7.5 | 216,898 |
| 2012 | 170,479 | 79.9 | 28,263 | 13.2 | 14,620 | 6.9 | 213,362 |

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

The language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain

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

Table 14 provides an explanation of the characteristics of the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain in relation to children who would be considered developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable.

**Table 14** — Characteristics of the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Developmentally on track** | Children will be interested in books, reading and writing, and basic math; capable of reading and writing simple sentences and complex words. Will be able to count and recognise numbers and shapes. |
| **Developmentally at risk** | Have mastered some but not all of the following literacy and numeracy skills: being able to identify some letters and attach sounds to some letters, show awareness of rhyming words, know writing directions, being able to write their own name, count to 20, recognise shapes and numbers, compare numbers, sort and classify, and understand simple time concepts. Children may have difficultly remembering things, and show a lack of interest in books, reading, maths and numbers, and may not have mastered more advanced literacy skills such as reading and writing simple words or sentences. |
| **Developmentally vulnerable** | Experience a number of challenges in reading/writing and with numbers; unable to read and write simple words, will be uninterested in trying, and often unable to attach sounds to letters. Children will have difficulty remembering things, counting to 20, and recognising and comparing numbers; and are usually not interested in numbers. |

Table 15 shows changes in the percentage of developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable children on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain for the last three collections.

Overview

* There was a small but significant increase in the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain between 2015 (6.5 per cent) and 2018 (6.6 per cent). This followed a large improvement from 8.9 per cent in 2009 (not shown in Table 15) to 6.8 per cent in 2012.
* There was a corresponding small decrease in the proportion of children developmentally on track in 2018, from 84.6 per cent in 2015 to 84.4 per cent. However, this represents an improvement since baseline of more than 7 percentage points (77.1 per cent, not shown in Table 15).
* A significant increase in vulnerability occurred in NSW and SA between 2015 and 2018. NT had a significant decrease in vulnerability from 21.5 per cent in 2015 to 19.6 per cent in 2018.

Gains made

* The gap between LBOTE children and non-LBOTE children on this domain has continued to steadily decline, with LBOTE children experiencing positive shifts on this domain in 2018 whilst non-LBOTE children experienced a small decline in on track and an increase in vulnerability.

More work needed

* The linear relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and language and cognitive skills remains quite marked. At the extremes, children living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged locations were 4.6 times as likely to be developmentally vulnerable than those from the least disadvantaged areas (for other domains the difference is around 2.0 – 3.4 times). The gap in 2018 is the widest since baseline (not shown in Table 15), despite a small improvement between 2012 and 2015. This contrasts with all other domains where the gap has ben closing across socio-economic strata since 2012.
* Children living in Very Remote Australia were more than five times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills domain than children living in Major Cities in 2018, a gap that has been steadily increasing since 2012. The gap is most marked on this domain.
* The largest difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children continues to on be the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children nearly four times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable than non-Indigenous children in 2018 (20.7 and 5.7 per cent respectively). This gap increased further in 2018 with the proportion of developmentally vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children increasing from 20.2 to 20.7 per cent, whilst the proportion of non-Indigenous children remained steady at 5.7 per cent. The gap, however, is significantly lower than baseline (not shown in Table 15).
* LBOTE children who were not proficient in English were nearly eight times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable in 2019 (38.9 per cent) than LBOTE children who were proficient in English (5.0 per cent), a gap that has been widening since 2012.

**Table 15** —National trends on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Australia** | 2018 | 247,870 | 84.4 | 26,291 | 9.0 | 19,417 | 6.6 | 293,578 |
| 2015 | 242,518 | 84.6 | 25,597 | 8.9 | 18,533 | 6.5 | 286,648 |
| 2012 | 226,260 | 82.6 | 29,072 | 10.6 | 18,564 | 6.8 | 273,896 |
| **Jurisdiction** | | | | | | | | |
| **New South Wales** | 2018 | 81,521 | 87.2 | 7,086 | 7.6 | 4,884 | 5.2 | 93,491 |
| 2015 | 80,140 | 87.9 | 6,699 | 7.3 | 4,360 | 4.8 | 91,199 |
| 2012 | 78,022 | 87.2 | 7,177 | 8.0 | 4,251 | 4.8 | 89,450 |
| **Victoria** | 2018 | 60,779 | 84.6 | 6,461 | 9.0 | 4,608 | 6.4 | 71,848 |
| 2015 | 57,474 | 84.7 | 6,062 | 8.9 | 4,292 | 6.3 | 67,828 |
| 2012 | 53,929 | 84.0 | 6,351 | 9.9 | 3,915 | 6.1 | 64,195 |
| **Queensland** | 2018 | 50,909 | 82.4 | 5,925 | 9.6 | 4,947 | 8.0 | 61,781 |
| 2015 | 51,100 | 82.3 | 6,026 | 9.7 | 5,000 | 8.0 | 62,126 |
| 2012 | 45,632 | 78.5 | 7,186 | 12.4 | 5,304 | 9.1 | 58,122 |
| **Western Australia** | 2018 | 27,418 | 83.4 | 3,284 | 10.0 | 2,158 | 6.6 | 32,860 |
| 2015 | 26,857 | 82.7 | 3,449 | 10.6 | 2,153 | 6.6 | 32,459 |
| 2012 | 23,346 | 75.8 | 4,816 | 15.6 | 2,636 | 8.6 | 30,798 |
| **South Australia** | 2018 | 15,805 | 82.7 | 1,928 | 10.1 | 1,375 | 7.2 | 19,108 |
| 2015 | 15,433 | 83.6 | 1,770 | 9.6 | 1,263 | 6.8 | 18,466 |
| 2012 | 14,440 | 82.8 | 1,804 | 10.3 | 1,188 | 6.8 | 17,432 |
| **Tasmania** | 2018 | 4,701 | 80.6 | 660 | 11.3 | 468 | 8.0 | 5,829 |
| 2015 | 5,073 | 82.4 | 621 | 10.1 | 465 | 7.5 | 6,159 |
| 2012 | 4,966 | 80.5 | 761 | 12.3 | 439 | 7.1 | 6,166 |
| **Australian Capital Territory** | 2018 | 4,613 | 84.2 | 514 | 9.4 | 352 | 6.4 | 5,479 |
| 2015 | 4,312 | 83.5 | 549 | 10.6 | 303 | 5.9 | 5,164 |
| 2012 | 3,987 | 86.5 | 440 | 9.5 | 182 | 3.9 | 4,609 |
| **Northern Territory** | 2018 | 2,124 | 66.8 | 433 | 13.6 | 625 | 19.6 | 3,182 |
| 2015 | 2,129 | 65.6 | 421 | 13.0 | 697 | 21.5 | 3,247 |
| 2012 | 1,938 | 62.0 | 537 | 17.2 | 649 | 20.8 | 3,124 |
| **Socio-economic Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 40,927 | 73.8 | 7,382 | 13.3 | 7,155 | 12.9 | 55,464 |
| 2015 | 41,972 | 74.4 | 7,341 | 13.0 | 7,065 | 12.5 | 56,378 |
| 2012 | 40,255 | 72.2 | 8,426 | 15.1 | 7,063 | 12.7 | 55,744 |
| **Quintile 2** | 2018 | 45,293 | 81.8 | 5,737 | 10.4 | 4,312 | 7.8 | 55,342 |
| 2015 | 44,841 | 82.3 | 5,459 | 10.0 | 4,164 | 7.6 | 54,464 |
| 2012 | 42,462 | 80.2 | 6,295 | 11.9 | 4,187 | 7.9 | 52,944 |
| **Quintile 3** | 2018 | 50,623 | 85.5 | 5,104 | 8.6 | 3,464 | 5.9 | 59,191 |
| 2015 | 49,083 | 85.6 | 5,055 | 8.8 | 3,207 | 5.6 | 57,345 |
| 2012 | 44,886 | 83.5 | 5,587 | 10.4 | 3,286 | 6.1 | 53,759 |
| **Quintile 4** | 2018 | 55,562 | 88.5 | 4,541 | 7.2 | 2,712 | 4.3 | 62,815 |
| 2015 | 51,873 | 88.6 | 4,289 | 7.3 | 2,403 | 4.1 | 58,565 |
| 2012 | 47,039 | 86.6 | 4,827 | 8.9 | 2,425 | 4.5 | 54,291 |
| **Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 54,995 | 91.4 | 3,474 | 5.8 | 1,705 | 2.8 | 60,174 |
| 2015 | 54,294 | 91.6 | 3,385 | 5.7 | 1,624 | 2.7 | 59,303 |
| 2012 | 51,140 | 90.5 | 3,860 | 6.8 | 1,513 | 2.7 | 56,513 |
| **Geographic Location** | | | | | | | | |
| **Major Cities** | 2018 | 180,950 | 85.8 | 17,684 | 8.4 | 12,173 | 5.8 | 210,807 |
| 2015 | 172,993 | 86.0 | 16,910 | 8.4 | 11,326 | 5.6 | 201,229 |
| 2012 | 159,741 | 84.2 | 18,884 | 10.0 | 11,107 | 5.9 | 189,732 |
| **Inner Regional** | 2018 | 42,660 | 82.7 | 5,100 | 9.9 | 3,809 | 7.4 | 51,569 |
| 2015 | 43,550 | 83.4 | 4,983 | 9.5 | 3,694 | 7.1 | 52,227 |
| 2012 | 41,597 | 81.3 | 5,760 | 11.3 | 3,797 | 7.4 | 51,154 |
| **Outer Regional** | 2018 | 19,597 | 80.3 | 2,596 | 10.6 | 2,206 | 9 | 24,399 |
| 2015 | 21,101 | 81.1 | 2,686 | 10.3 | 2,222 | 8.5 | 26,009 |
| 2012 | 20,092 | 77.9 | 3,291 | 12.8 | 2,399 | 9.3 | 25,782 |
| **Remote** | 2018 | 3,189 | 77.4 | 486 | 11.8 | 446 | 10.8 | 4,121 |
| 2015 | 3,180 | 75.4 | 544 | 12.9 | 493 | 11.7 | 4,217 |
| 2012 | 3,187 | 74.2 | 597 | 13.9 | 510 | 11.9 | 4,294 |
| **Very Remote** | 2018 | 1,474 | 55.0 | 425 | 15.8 | 783 | 29.2 | 2,682 |
| 2015 | 1,694 | 57.1 | 474 | 16.0 | 798 | 26.9 | 2,966 |
| 2012 | 1,643 | 56.0 | 540 | 18.4 | 751 | 25.6 | 2,934 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | |
| **Male** | 2018 | 120,884 | 81.6 | 15,327 | 10.3 | 12,014 | 8.1 | 148,225 |
| 2015 | 117,474 | 81.4 | 15,117 | 10.5 | 11,713 | 8.1 | 144,304 |
| 2012 | 109,068 | 79.0 | 17,229 | 12.5 | 11,689 | 8.5 | 137,986 |
| **Female** | 2018 | 126,986 | 87.4 | 10,964 | 7.5 | 7,403 | 5.1 | 145,353 |
| 2015 | 125,044 | 87.8 | 10,480 | 7.4 | 6,820 | 4.8 | 142,344 |
| 2012 | 117,192 | 86.2 | 11,843 | 8.7 | 6,875 | 5.1 | 135,910 |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 10,966 | 62.6 | 2,925 | 16.7 | 3,626 | 20.7 | 17,517 |
| 2015 | 9,972 | 62.8 | 2,698 | 17.0 | 3,199 | 20.2 | 15,869 |
| 2012 | 8,140 | 58.1 | 2,735 | 19.5 | 3,142 | 22.4 | 14,017 |
| **Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 236,750 | 85.8 | 23,335 | 8.5 | 15,767 | 5.7 | 275,852 |
| 2015 | 232,546 | 85.9 | 22,899 | 8.5 | 15,334 | 5.7 | 270,779 |
| 2012 | 218,120 | 83.9 | 26,337 | 10.1 | 15,422 | 5.9 | 259,879 |
| **Language Diversity** | | | | | | | | |
| **LBOTE – Total1** | 2018 | 61,239 | 81.7 | 7,446 | 9.9 | 6,272 | 8.4 | 74,957 |
| 2015 | 50,088 | 80.8 | 6,503 | 10.5 | 5,408 | 8.7 | 61,999 |
| 2012 | 40,841 | 77.9 | 6,557 | 12.5 | 5,025 | 9.6 | 52,423 |
| **LBOTE – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 2,676 | 36.1 | 1,845 | 24.9 | 2,883 | 38.9 | 7,404 |
| 2015 | 2,641 | 37.3 | 1,744 | 24.6 | 2,695 | 38.1 | 7,080 |
| 2012 | 2,417 | 36.5 | 1,777 | 26.8 | 2,430 | 36.7 | 6,624 |
| **LBOTE – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 58,455 | 86.7 | 5,585 | 8.3 | 3,379 | 5.0 | 67,419 |
| 2015 | 47,420 | 86.4 | 4,756 | 8.7 | 2,706 | 4.9 | 54,882 |
| 2012 | 38,319 | 83.9 | 4,761 | 10.4 | 2,586 | 5.7 | 45,666 |
| **English Only – Total2** | 2018 | 186,631 | 85.4 | 18,845 | 8.6 | 13,145 | 6.0 | 218,621 |
| 2015 | 192,430 | 85.7 | 19,094 | 8.5 | 13,125 | 5.8 | 224,649 |
| 2012 | 185,419 | 83.7 | 22,515 | 10.2 | 13,539 | 6.1 | 221,473 |
| **English Only – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | 1,482 | 25.1 | 1,336 | 22.6 | 3,098 | 52.4 | 5,916 |
| 2015 | 2,041 | 28.4 | 1,638 | 22.8 | 3,517 | 48.9 | 7,196 |
| 2012 | 1,886 | 27.7 | 1,676 | 24.6 | 3,246 | 47.7 | 6,808 |
| **English Only – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 185,089 | 87.1 | 17,503 | 8.2 | 10,030 | 4.7 | 212,622 |
| 2015 | 190,365 | 87.6 | 17,449 | 8.0 | 9,600 | 4.4 | 217,414 |
| 2012 | 183,107 | 85.5 | 20,765 | 9.7 | 10,271 | 4.8 | 214,143 |

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

The communication skills and general knowledge domain

This domain measures children’s communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills measured in the school context.

Table 16 provides an explanation of the characteristics of the communication skills and general knowledge domain in relation to children who would be considered developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable.

**Table 16** — Characteristics of the communication skills and general knowledge domain.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Developmentally on track** | Children will have excellent communication skills, can tell a story and communicate easily with both children and adults, and have no problems with articulation. |
| **Developmentally at risk** | Have mastered some but not all of the following communication skills: listening, understanding and speaking effectively in English, being able to articulate clearly, being able to tell a story and to take part in imaginative play. Children may not know some basic general knowledge about the world such as knowing that leaves fall in autumn, apple is fruit, and dogs bark. |
| **Developmentally vulnerable** | Children will have poor communication skills and articulation; have limited command of English (or the language of instruction), have difficulties talking to others, understanding, and being understood; and have poor general knowledge. |

Table 17 shows changes in the percentage of developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable children on the communication skills and general knowledge domain for the last three collections.

Overall

* There has been a positive trend in this domain since baseline. The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable continued to decrease, from 8.5 per cent in 2015 to 8.2 per cent in 2018. There have been stronger gains in the percentage of children considered to be on track in this domain, increasing one percentage point in 2018 (from 76.3 per cent to 77.3 per cent).
* Similar positive trends on this domain were seen at the jurisdictional level, most notably for WA, TAS and QLD. The exceptions were NT and ACT, with the latter experiencing a decrease of three percentage points in the percentage of children considered on track in 2018.

Gains made

* The linear relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and communication skills and general knowledge was once again quite apparent. At the extremes, children living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged locations were more than three times as likely to be developmentally vulnerable than those from the least disadvantaged areas. Whilst the gap in vulnerability has not changed over the two most recent collections, it remains narrower than in 2012.
* There has been a continual narrowing of the gap in vulnerability between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children on this domain since baseline. The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were vulnerable on this domain decreased from 19.3 per cent in 2015 to 18.8 per cent in 2018. The percentage on track also increased from 59.5 per cent to 61.6 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
* The largest gap between children with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) and children who speak only English at home is on this domain, with LBOTE children two and a half times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable relative to non-LBOTE children (14.8 per cent and 6.4 per cent respectively in 2018). This gap however has been gradually narrowing each collection.

More work needed

* In 2018, children living in Very Remote Australia were nearly three times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on this domain than children living in Major Cities, a gap that has been widening since 2012.
* LBOTE children not proficient in English were universally reported by teachers as developmentally vulnerable on this domain (over 90 per cent), a pattern that has been consistent since baseline. The gap between LBOTE children proficient in English and those not proficient in English has continued to widen since baseline, as results continue to improve for those proficient in English.

**Table 17** —National trends on the communication skills and general knowledge domain (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Australia** | 2018 | 227,163 | 77.3 | 42,473 | 14.5 | 24,232 | 8.2 | 293,868 |
| 2015 | 219,023 | 76.3 | 43,415 | 15.1 | 24,475 | 8.5 | 286,913 |
| 2012 | 204,702 | 74.7 | 44,633 | 16.3 | 24,520 | 9.0 | 273,855 |
| **Jurisdiction** | | | | | | | | |
| **New South Wales** | 2018 | 71,825 | 76.8 | 14,268 | 15.3 | 7,448 | 8.0 | 93,541 |
| 2015 | 69,247 | 75.9 | 14,656 | 16.1 | 7,360 | 8.1 | 91,263 |
| 2012 | 66,806 | 74.7 | 15,064 | 16.8 | 7,590 | 8.5 | 89,460 |
| **Victoria** | 2018 | 57,098 | 79.4 | 9,483 | 13.2 | 5,312 | 7.4 | 71,893 |
| 2015 | 53,474 | 78.8 | 9,259 | 13.6 | 5,131 | 7.6 | 67,864 |
| 2012 | 49,557 | 77.4 | 9,371 | 14.6 | 5,110 | 8.0 | 64,038 |
| **Queensland** | 2018 | 45,747 | 74.0 | 9,838 | 15.9 | 6,248 | 10.1 | 61,833 |
| 2015 | 45,235 | 72.8 | 10,395 | 16.7 | 6,533 | 10.5 | 62,163 |
| 2012 | 41,547 | 71.4 | 10,417 | 17.9 | 6,239 | 10.7 | 58,203 |
| **Western Australia** | 2018 | 26,749 | 81.3 | 3,837 | 11.7 | 2,311 | 7.0 | 32,897 |
| 2015 | 25,811 | 79.4 | 4,082 | 12.6 | 2,612 | 8.0 | 32,505 |
| 2012 | 23,643 | 76.7 | 4,397 | 14.3 | 2,797 | 9.1 | 30,837 |
| **South Australia** | 2018 | 14,919 | 77.8 | 2,642 | 13.8 | 1,620 | 8.4 | 19,181 |
| 2015 | 14,265 | 77.0 | 2,744 | 14.8 | 1,518 | 8.2 | 18,527 |
| 2012 | 12,849 | 73.7 | 3,038 | 17.4 | 1,552 | 8.9 | 17,439 |
| **Tasmania** | 2018 | 4,727 | 80.9 | 785 | 13.4 | 334 | 5.7 | 5,846 |
| 2015 | 4,913 | 79.8 | 852 | 13.8 | 394 | 6.4 | 6,159 |
| 2012 | 4,757 | 77.8 | 955 | 15.6 | 402 | 6.6 | 6,114 |
| **Australian Capital Territory** | 2018 | 3,974 | 72.5 | 1083 | 19.7 | 427 | 7.8 | 5,484 |
| 2015 | 3,898 | 75.5 | 870 | 16.8 | 397 | 7.7 | 5,165 |
| 2012 | 3,393 | 73.4 | 853 | 18.5 | 376 | 8.1 | 4,622 |
| **Northern Territory** | 2018 | 2,124 | 66.5 | 537 | 16.8 | 532 | 16.7 | 3,193 |
| 2015 | 2,180 | 66.7 | 557 | 17.0 | 530 | 16.2 | 3,267 |
| 2012 | 2,150 | 68.4 | 538 | 17.1 | 454 | 14.4 | 3,142 |
| **Socio-economic Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 37,192 | 67.0 | 10,215 | 18.4 | 8,129 | 14.6 | 55,536 |
| 2015 | 37,249 | 66.0 | 10,825 | 19.2 | 8,366 | 14.8 | 56,440 |
| 2012 | 35,776 | 64.1 | 11,426 | 20.5 | 8,577 | 15.4 | 55,779 |
| **Quintile 2** | 2018 | 41,416 | 74.8 | 8,649 | 15.6 | 5,326 | 9.6 | 55,391 |
| 2015 | 40,083 | 73.5 | 9,022 | 16.6 | 5,399 | 9.9 | 54,504 |
| 2012 | 38,017 | 71.8 | 9,507 | 18.0 | 5,415 | 10.2 | 52,939 |
| **Quintile 3** | 2018 | 46,585 | 78.6 | 8,347 | 14.1 | 4,320 | 7.3 | 59,252 |
| 2015 | 44,457 | 77.5 | 8,497 | 14.8 | 4,439 | 7.7 | 57,393 |
| 2012 | 40,702 | 75.8 | 8,572 | 16.0 | 4,446 | 8.3 | 53,720 |
| **Quintile 4** | 2018 | 50,973 | 81.1 | 8,125 | 12.9 | 3,777 | 6.0 | 62,875 |
| 2015 | 47,244 | 80.6 | 7,873 | 13.4 | 3,519 | 6.0 | 58,636 |
| 2012 | 42,746 | 78.7 | 8,016 | 14.8 | 3,529 | 6.5 | 54,291 |
| **Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 50,552 | 83.9 | 7,051 | 11.7 | 2,618 | 4.3 | 60,221 |
| 2015 | 49,591 | 83.6 | 7,088 | 11.9 | 2,667 | 4.5 | 59,346 |
| 2012 | 47,021 | 83.3 | 7,007 | 12.4 | 2,453 | 4.3 | 56,481 |
| **Geographic Location** | | | | | | | | |
| **Major Cities** | 2018 | 163,618 | 77.6 | 30,379 | 14.4 | 16,975 | 8.0 | 210,972 |
| 2015 | 154,605 | 76.8 | 30,018 | 14.9 | 16,760 | 8.3 | 201,383 |
| 2012 | 142,602 | 75.2 | 30,328 | 16.0 | 16,764 | 8.8 | 189,694 |
| **Inner Regional** | 2018 | 40,173 | 77.8 | 7,427 | 14.4 | 4,041 | 7.8 | 51,641 |
| 2015 | 40,027 | 76.6 | 8,070 | 15.4 | 4,185 | 8.0 | 52,282 |
| 2012 | 38,149 | 74.6 | 8,711 | 17.0 | 4,250 | 8.3 | 51,110 |
| **Outer Regional** | 2018 | 18,687 | 76.5 | 3,583 | 14.7 | 2,169 | 8.9 | 24,439 |
| 2015 | 19,479 | 74.9 | 4,112 | 15.8 | 2,433 | 9.3 | 26,024 |
| 2012 | 18,977 | 73.6 | 4,262 | 16.5 | 2,560 | 9.9 | 25,799 |
| **Remote** | 2018 | 3,085 | 74.8 | 608 | 14.7 | 433 | 10.5 | 4,126 |
| 2015 | 3,155 | 74.4 | 632 | 14.9 | 451 | 10.6 | 4,238 |
| 2012 | 3,145 | 73.1 | 780 | 18.1 | 379 | 8.8 | 4,304 |
| **Very Remote** | 2018 | 1,600 | 59.5 | 476 | 17.7 | 614 | 22.8 | 2,690 |
| 2015 | 1,757 | 58.8 | 583 | 19.5 | 646 | 21.6 | 2,986 |
| 2012 | 1,829 | 62.0 | 552 | 18.7 | 567 | 19.2 | 2,948 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | | |
| **Male** | 2018 | 108,284 | 73.0 | 24,469 | 16.5 | 15,604 | 10.5 | 148,357 |
| 2015 | 103,727 | 71.8 | 25,066 | 17.4 | 15,647 | 10.8 | 144,440 |
| 2012 | 96,670 | 70.1 | 25,753 | 18.7 | 15,536 | 11.3 | 137,959 |
| **Female** | 2018 | 118,879 | 81.7 | 18,004 | 12.4 | 8,628 | 5.9 | 145,511 |
| 2015 | 115,296 | 80.9 | 18,349 | 12.9 | 8,828 | 6.2 | 142,473 |
| 2012 | 108,032 | 79.5 | 18,880 | 13.9 | 8,984 | 6.6 | 135,896 |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status** | | | | | | | | |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 10,801 | 61.6 | 3,490 | 19.9 | 3,256 | 18.6 | 17,547 |
| 2015 | 9,468 | 59.5 | 3,362 | 21.1 | 3,072 | 19.3 | 15,902 |
| 2012 | 8,100 | 57.6 | 3,159 | 22.5 | 2,798 | 19.9 | 14,057 |
| **Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 216,235 | 78.3 | 38,934 | 14.1 | 20,943 | 7.6 | 276,112 |
| 2015 | 209,555 | 77.3 | 40,053 | 14.8 | 21,403 | 7.9 | 271,011 |
| 2012 | 196,602 | 75.7 | 41,474 | 16.0 | 21,722 | 8.4 | 259,798 |
| **Language Diversity** | | | | | | | | |
| **LBOTE – Total1** | 2018 | 50,093 | 66.8 | 13,873 | 18.5 | 11,071 | 14.8 | 75,037 |
| 2015 | 39,804 | 64.1 | 12,190 | 19.6 | 10,069 | 16.2 | 62,063 |
| 2012 | 31,919 | 60.9 | 10,969 | 20.9 | 9,555 | 18.2 | 52,443 |
| **LBOTE – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | <743 | <10.0 | <743 | <10.0 | >6,691 | > 90.0 | 7,434 |
| 2015 | <710 | <10.0 | <710 | <10.0 | >6,400 | > 90.0 | 7,110 |
| 2012 | <665 | <10.0 | <665 | <10.0 | >5,991 | > 90.0 | 6,658 |
| **LBOTE – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 49,978 | 74.1 | 13347 | 19.8 | 4,158 | 6.2 | 67,483 |
| 2015 | 39,709 | 72.3 | 11701 | 21.3 | 3,518 | 6.4 | 54,928 |
| 2012 | 31,798 | 69.6 | 10489 | 22.9 | 3,420 | 7.5 | 45,707 |
| **English Only – Total2** | 2018 | 177,070 | 80.9 | 28,600 | 13.1 | 13,161 | 6.0 | 218,831 |
| 2015 | 179,219 | 79.7 | 31,225 | 13.9 | 14,406 | 6.4 | 224,850 |
| 2012 | 172,783 | 78.0 | 33,664 | 15.2 | 14,965 | 6.8 | 221,412 |
| **English Only – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | <593 | <10.0 | <593 | <10.0 | >5,337 | > 90.0 | 5,930 |
| 2015 | <721 | <10.0 | <721 | <10.0 | >6,497 | > 90.0 | 7,219 |
| 2012 | <684 | <10.0 | <684 | <10.0 | >6,156 | > 90.0 | 6,840 |
| **English Only – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 176,987 | 83.2 | 28,164 | 13.2 | 7,675 | 3.6 | 212,826 |
| 2015 | 179,147 | 82.3 | 30,617 | 14.1 | 7,842 | 3.6 | 217,606 |
| 2012 | 172,549 | 80.5 | 33,083 | 15.4 | 8,699 | 4.1 | 214,331 |

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

\*\* Where 90% or more of a population group is considered developmentally vulnerable in any domain or sub-domain the number and percentage of children vulnerable is grouped to >90%, this is to prevent identification of individual children as developmentally vulnerable.

Summary indicators

The percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more developmental domain(s) (‘Vuln1’) and developmentally vulnerable on two or more developmental domains (‘Vuln2’) are provided in Table 18. These children are considered to be at particularly high-risk developmentally.

Overall

* In 2018 approximately one in five children (21.7 per cent) were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s). One in nine (11.0 per cent) were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.
* There was a significant decrease in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) from 22.0 per cent in both 2012 and 2015 to 21.7 per cent in 2018. The level of vulnerability on two or more domains also decreased, from 11.1 per cent in 2015 to 11.0 per cent in 2018 although this is not statistically significant.
* The 2018 figures were well below those recorded in 2009 (not shown in Table 18) for children developmentally vulnerable on one or more (23.6 per cent) and two or more domains (11.8 per cent).
* The jurisdictions had mixed results on the summary indicators, with the most positive results occurring in WA and to a lesser extent QLD, NSW and the NT. In contrast, ACT and SA had an increase in vulnerability on both summary indicators in 2018.

Gains made

* Children living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged locations in 2018 were twice as likely as those from the least disadvantaged areas to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (32.3 per cent and 14.7 per cent respectively). They were nearly three times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (18.5 per cent and 6.5 per cent respectively). This gap has been steadily declining over the last three collections.
* Children living in Very Remote areas in Australia in 2018 were more than twice as likely as those living in Major Cities to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (45.5 and 20.8 per cent). They were also three times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (30.3 and 10.2 per cent). Following an increase in 2015, the percentage of children who live in Remote or Very Remote areas who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more or two or more domains decreased in 2018, albeit not back to 2012 levels. This gap had been widening since baseline, but has now narrowed slightly in 2018.
* In 2018, boys were approximately twice as likely as girls to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more (27.9 per cent and 15.3 per cent) and two or more domains (15.3 per cent and 6.7 per cent respectively). There was a small decrease in the percentage of boys developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains from 28.5 per cent in 2015 to 27.9 per cent in 2018, slightly narrowing the gap between boys and girls who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s).
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in 2018 were twice as likely as non-Indigenous children to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more (41.3 per cent and 20.4 per cent) and two or more domains (25.8 per cent and 10.1 per cent respectively). The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children has continued to close on both these summary indicators since baseline.
* In 2018 children with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) were more likely than non-LBOTE children to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more (25.7 and 20.3 per cent) and two or more domains (13.1 and 10.4 per cent respectively).
* For children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s), the gap between LBOTE children and those who only spoke English has continued to close steadily, from 9.3 per cent in 2012, 7.4 per cent in 2015 and 5.4 per cent in 2018, nearly half that of 2009 (10.5 per cent, not shown in Table 18). The pattern is similar for children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.

More work needed

* More than 90 per cent of children reported as not proficient in English from both LBOTE and English-speaking backgrounds, were reported as developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s). Almost all these children were reported as developmentally vulnerable on the communication skills and general knowledge domain. The gap on both DV1 and DV2 has been growing since baseline between LBOTE children who are proficient in English and those who are not proficient in English.

**Table 18** —National trends on the summary indicators (2012, 2015, 2018).

|  |  | **Developmentally on one or more domain(s)** | | **Total** | **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Australia** | 2018 | 63,448 | 21.7 | 292,976 | 32,434 | 11.0 | 293,619 |
| 2015 | 62,960 | 22.0 | 286,041 | 31,754 | 11.1 | 286,616 |
| 2012 | 59,933 | 22 | 272,282 | 29,543 | 10.8 | 273,275 |
| **Jurisdiction** | | | | | | | |
| **New South Wales** | 2018 | 18,583 | 19.9 | 93,245 | 9,001 | 9.6 | 93,468 |
| 2015 | 18,378 | 20.2 | 90,956 | 8,733 | 9.6 | 91,143 |
| 2012 | 17,722 | 19.9 | 88,921 | 8,189 | 9.2 | 89,260 |
| **Victoria** | 2018 | 14,232 | 19.9 | 71,671 | 7,231 | 10.1 | 71,828 |
| 2015 | 13,465 | 19.9 | 67,670 | 6,707 | 9.9 | 67,812 |
| 2012 | 12,407 | 19.5 | 63,584 | 6,053 | 9.5 | 63,889 |
| **Queensland** | 2018 | 15,954 | 25.9 | 61,673 | 8,576 | 13.9 | 61,781 |
| 2015 | 16,220 | 26.1 | 62,027 | 8,713 | 14.0 | 62,103 |
| 2012 | 15,217 | 26.2 | 57,994 | 8,001 | 13.8 | 58,107 |
| **Western Australia** | 2018 | 6,369 | 19.4 | 32,798 | 3,086 | 9.4 | 32,880 |
| 2015 | 6,895 | 21.3 | 32,373 | 3,403 | 10.5 | 32,478 |
| 2012 | 7,048 | 23.0 | 30,631 | 3,449 | 11.2 | 30,770 |
| **South Australia** | 2018 | 4,564 | 23.9 | 19,092 | 2,490 | 13.0 | 19,157 |
| 2015 | 4,338 | 23.5 | 18,451 | 2,259 | 12.2 | 18,509 |
| 2012 | 4,115 | 23.7 | 17,355 | 2,126 | 12.2 | 17,399 |
| **Tasmania** | 2018 | 1,255 | 21.5 | 5,825 | 625 | 10.7 | 5,840 |
| 2015 | 1,296 | 21.0 | 6,159 | 657 | 10.7 | 6,158 |
| 2012 | 1,308 | 21.5 | 6,086 | 618 | 10.1 | 6,104 |
| **Australian Capital Territory** | 2018 | 1,350 | 24.6 | 5,482 | 680 | 12.4 | 5,481 |
| 2015 | 1,161 | 22.5 | 5,157 | 531 | 10.3 | 5,158 |
| 2012 | 1,010 | 22.0 | 4,594 | 454 | 9.8 | 4,616 |
| **Northern Territory** | 2018 | 1,141 | 35.8 | 3,190 | 745 | 23.4 | 3,184 |
| 2015 | 1,207 | 37.2 | 3,248 | 751 | 23.1 | 3,255 |
| 2012 | 1,106 | 35.5 | 3,117 | 653 | 20.9 | 3,130 |
| **Socio-economic Status** | | | | | | | |
| **Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 17,909 | 32.3 | 55,368 | 10,263 | 18.5 | 55,464 |
| 2015 | 18,464 | 32.8 | 56,285 | 10,492 | 18.6 | 56,352 |
| 2012 | 18,399 | 33.1 | 55,516 | 10,121 | 18.2 | 55,601 |
| **Quintile 2** | 2018 | 13,330 | 24.1 | 55,256 | 6,980 | 12.6 | 55,352 |
| 2015 | 13,475 | 24.8 | 54,353 | 6,923 | 12.7 | 54,453 |
| 2012 | 12,926 | 24.5 | 52,665 | 6,453 | 12.2 | 52,823 |
| **Quintile 3** | 2018 | 12,004 | 20.3 | 59,084 | 5,919 | 10.0 | 59,198 |
| 2015 | 11,742 | 20.5 | 57,240 | 5,715 | 10.0 | 57,344 |
| 2012 | 11,090 | 20.8 | 53,392 | 5,314 | 9.9 | 53,614 |
| **Quintile 4** | 2018 | 11,198 | 17.9 | 62,658 | 5,269 | 8.4 | 62,831 |
| 2015 | 10,274 | 17.6 | 58,387 | 4,788 | 8.2 | 58,586 |
| 2012 | 9,563 | 17.7 | 53,951 | 4,327 | 8.0 | 54,199 |
| **Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)** | 2018 | 8,848 | 14.7 | 60,020 | 3,911 | 6.5 | 60,183 |
| 2015 | 8,822 | 14.9 | 59,186 | 3,727 | 6.3 | 59,288 |
| 2012 | 7,752 | 13.8 | 56,119 | 3,207 | 5.7 | 56,393 |
| **Geographic Location** | | | | | | | |
| **Major Cities** | 2018 | 43,646 | 20.8 | 210,289 | 21,589 | 10.2 | 210,777 |
| 2015 | 42,167 | 21.0 | 200,765 | 20,598 | 10.2 | 201,188 |
| 2012 | 39,707 | 21.1 | 188,621 | 19,065 | 10.1 | 189,331 |
| **Inner Regional** | 2018 | 11,490 | 22.3 | 51,504 | 6,121 | 11.9 | 51,622 |
| 2015 | 11,728 | 22.5 | 52,150 | 6,142 | 11.8 | 52,238 |
| 2012 | 11,439 | 22.5 | 50,818 | 5,727 | 11.2 | 50,995 |
| **Outer Regional** | 2018 | 5,997 | 24.6 | 24,389 | 3,301 | 13.5 | 24,416 |
| 2015 | 6,544 | 25.2 | 25,980 | 3,437 | 13.2 | 26,009 |
| 2012 | 6,400 | 24.9 | 25,657 | 3,377 | 13.1 | 25,735 |
| **Remote** | 2018 | 1,096 | 26.6 | 4,116 | 610 | 14.8 | 4,120 |
| 2015 | 1,152 | 27.4 | 4,206 | 653 | 15.4 | 4,227 |
| 2012 | 1,100 | 25.7 | 4,278 | 563 | 13.1 | 4,298 |
| **Very Remote** | 2018 | 1,219 | 45.5 | 2,678 | 813 | 30.3 | 2,684 |
| 2015 | 1,369 | 46.6 | 2,940 | 924 | 31.3 | 2,954 |
| 2012 | 1,287 | 44.3 | 2,908 | 811 | 27.8 | 2,916 |
| **Sex** | | | | | | | |
| **Male** | 2018 | 41,190 | 27.9 | 147,854 | 22,626 | 15.3 | 148,212 |
| 2015 | 40,994 | 28.5 | 143,970 | 22,077 | 15.3 | 144,261 |
| 2012 | 38,661 | 28.2 | 137,119 | 20,374 | 14.8 | 137,620 |
| **Female** | 2018 | 22,258 | 15.3 | 145,122 | 9,808 | 6.7 | 145,407 |
| 2015 | 21,966 | 15.5 | 142,071 | 9,677 | 6.8 | 142,355 |
| 2012 | 21,272 | 15.7 | 135,163 | 9,169 | 6.8 | 135,655 |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status** | | | | | | | |
| **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 7,225 | 41.3 | 17,507 | 4,528 | 25.8 | 17,525 |
| 2015 | 6,681 | 42.1 | 15,874 | 4,157 | 26.2 | 15,875 |
| 2012 | 6,057 | 43.2 | 14,011 | 3,648 | 26.0 | 14,011 |
| **Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** | 2018 | 56,154 | 20.4 | 275,260 | 27,863 | 10.1 | 275,885 |
| 2015 | 56,279 | 20.8 | 270,167 | 27,597 | 10.2 | 270,741 |
| 2012 | 53,876 | 20.9 | 258,271 | 25,895 | 10.0 | 259,264 |
| **Language Diversity** | | | | | | | |
| **LBOTE – Total1** | 2018 | 19,199 | 25.7 | 74,759 | 9,784 | 13.1 | 74,943 |
| 2015 | 17,170 | 27.8 | 61,839 | 8,777 | 14.2 | 61,946 |
| 2012 | 15,366 | 29.5 | 52,107 | 7,623 | 14.6 | 52,277 |
| **LBOTE – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | >6,690 | > 90.0 | 7,433 | 4,420 | 59.7 | 7,403 |
| 2015 | >6,397 | > 90.0 | 7,107 | 4,179 | 59.2 | 7,060 |
| 2012 | >5,995 | > 90.0 | 6,661 | 3,830 | 58.0 | 6,608 |
| **LBOTE – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 12,131 | 18.1 | 67,201 | 5,340 | 7.9 | 67,405 |
| 2015 | 10,461 | 19.1 | 54,704 | 4,589 | 8.4 | 54,850 |
| 2012 | 9,084 | 20.0 | 45,370 | 3,777 | 8.3 | 45,579 |
| **English Only – Total2** | 2018 | 44,249 | 20.3 | 218,217 | 22,650 | 10.4 | 218,676 |
| 2015 | 45,790 | 20.4 | 224,202 | 22,977 | 10.2 | 224,670 |
| 2012 | 44,567 | 20.2 | 220,175 | 21,920 | 9.9 | 220,998 |
| **English Only – Not proficient in English** | 2018 | >5,340 | > 90.0 | 5,933 | 4,551 | 76.9 | 5,921 |
| 2015 | >6,498 | > 90.0 | 7,219 | 5,387 | 74.7 | 7,207 |
| 2012 | >6,154 | > 90.0 | 6,837 | 4,924 | 72.3 | 6,810 |
| **English Only – Proficient in English** | 2018 | 38,573 | 18.2 | 212,209 | 18,080 | 8.5 | 212,673 |
| 2015 | 38,992 | 18.0 | 216,951 | 17,579 | 8.1 | 217,425 |
| 2012 | 38,052 | 17.9 | 213,116 | 16,954 | 7.9 | 213,930 |

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

\*\* Where 90% or more of a population group is considered developmentally vulnerable in any domain or sub-domain the number and percentage of children vulnerable is grouped to >90%, this is to prevent identification of individual children as developmentally vulnerable.

Appendix 1: State and territory trends

NSW trends (2012, 2015, 2018)

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 73,462 | 78.5 | 12,111 | 12.9 | 7,978 | 8.5 | 93,551 |
| **2015** | 71,019 | 77.8 | 12,471 | 13.7 | 7,772 | 8.5 | 91,262 |
| **2012** | 69,843 | 78.1 | 12,245 | 13.7 | 7,393 | 8.3 | 89,481 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 72,119 | 77.1 | 12,854 | 13.7 | 8,568 | 9.2 | 93,541 |
| **2015** | 69,828 | 76.5 | 13,058 | 14.3 | 8,359 | 9.2 | 91,245 |
| **2012** | 69,752 | 78 | 12,043 | 13.5 | 7,578 | 8.5 | 89,373 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 74,725 | 80.2 | 12,136 | 13.0 | 6,306 | 6.8 | 93,167 |
| **2015** | 71,870 | 79.1 | 12,757 | 14.0 | 6,176 | 6.8 | 90,803 |
| **2012** | 72,282 | 81.2 | 11,219 | 12.6 | 5,487 | 6.2 | 88,988 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 81,521 | 87.2 | 7,086 | 7.6 | 4,884 | 5.2 | 93,491 |
| **2015** | 80,140 | 87.9 | 6,699 | 7.3 | 4,360 | 4.8 | 91,199 |
| **2012** | 78,022 | 87.2 | 7,177 | 8.0 | 4,251 | 4.8 | 89,450 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 71,825 | 76.8 | 14,268 | 15.3 | 7,448 | 8 | 93,541 |
| **2015** | 69,247 | 75.9 | 14,656 | 16.1 | 7,360 | 8.1 | 91,263 |
| **2012** | 66,806 | 74.7 | 15,064 | 16.8 | 7,590 | 8.5 | 89,460 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 18,583 | 19.9 | 93,245 |
| **2015** | 18,378 | 20.2 | 90,956 |
| **2012** | 17,722 | 19.9 | 88,921 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 9,001 | 9.6 | 93,468 |
| **2015** | 8,733 | 9.6 | 91,143 |
| **2012** | 8,189 | 9.2 | 89,260 |

**VIC trends (2012, 2015, 2018)**

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 58,221 | 81.0 | 7,767 | 10.8 | 5,904 | 8.2 | 71,892 |
| **2015** | 54,934 | 80.9 | 7,602 | 11.2 | 5,335 | 7.9 | 67,871 |
| **2012** | 51,985 | 81.1 | 7,111 | 11.1 | 4,965 | 7.8 | 64,061 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 55,597 | 77.3 | 9,974 | 13.9 | 6,331 | 8.8 | 71,902 |
| **2015** | 52,378 | 77.2 | 9,548 | 14.1 | 5,934 | 8.7 | 67,860 |
| **2012** | 50,226 | 78.6 | 8,519 | 13.3 | 5,151 | 8.1 | 63,896 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 55,651 | 77.7 | 10,167 | 14.2 | 5,791 | 8.1 | 71,609 |
| **2015** | 52,392 | 77.5 | 9,817 | 14.5 | 5,408 | 8.0 | 67,617 |
| **2012** | 50,605 | 79.3 | 8,604 | 13.5 | 4,566 | 7.2 | 63,775 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 60,779 | 84.6 | 6,461 | 9.0 | 4,608 | 6.4 | 71,848 |
| **2015** | 57,474 | 84.7 | 6,062 | 8.9 | 4,292 | 6.3 | 67,828 |
| **2012** | 53,929 | 84.0 | 6,351 | 9.9 | 3,915 | 6.1 | 64,195 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 57,098 | 79.4 | 9,483 | 13.2 | 5,312 | 7.4 | 71,893 |
| **2015** | 53,474 | 78.8 | 9,259 | 13.6 | 5,131 | 7.6 | 67,864 |
| **2012** | 49,557 | 77.4 | 9,371 | 14.6 | 5,110 | 8.0 | 64,038 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 14,232 | 19.9 | 71,671 |
| **2015** | 13,465 | 19.9 | 67,670 |
| **2012** | 12,407 | 19.5 | 63,584 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 7,231 | 10.1 | 71,828 |
| **2015** | 6,707 | 9.9 | 67,812 |
| **2012** | 6,053 | 9.5 | 63,889 |

**QLD trends (2012, 2015, 2018)**

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 45,801 | 74.1 | 8,462 | 13.7 | 7,581 | 12.3 | 61,844 |
| **2015** | 45,387 | 73.0 | 9,069 | 14.6 | 7,705 | 12.4 | 62,161 |
| **2012** | 42,427 | 72.9 | 9,023 | 15.5 | 6,759 | 11.6 | 58,209 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 44,446 | 71.9 | 10,004 | 16.2 | 7,388 | 11.9 | 61,838 |
| **2015** | 44,213 | 71.2 | 10,204 | 16.4 | 7,719 | 12.4 | 62,136 |
| **2012** | 42,392 | 72.9 | 9,077 | 15.6 | 6,717 | 11.5 | 58,186 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 45,192 | 73.3 | 9,988 | 16.2 | 6,448 | 10.5 | 61,628 |
| **2015** | 45,529 | 73.5 | 10,164 | 16.4 | 6,266 | 10.1 | 61,959 |
| **2012** | 43,459 | 74.9 | 9,161 | 15.8 | 5,368 | 9.3 | 57,988 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 50,909 | 82.4 | 5,925 | 9.6 | 4,947 | 8.0 | 61,781 |
| **2015** | 51,100 | 82.3 | 6,026 | 9.7 | 5,000 | 8.0 | 62,126 |
| **2012** | 45,632 | 78.5 | 7,186 | 12.4 | 5,304 | 9.1 | 58,122 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 45,747 | 74.0 | 9,838 | 15.9 | 6,248 | 10.1 | 61,833 |
| **2015** | 45,235 | 72.8 | 10,395 | 16.7 | 6,533 | 10.5 | 62,163 |
| **2012** | 41,547 | 71.4 | 10,417 | 17.9 | 6,239 | 10.7 | 58,203 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 15,954 | 25.9 | 61,673 |
| **2015** | 16,220 | 26.1 | 62,027 |
| **2012** | 15,217 | 26.2 | 57,994 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 8,576 | 13.9 | 61,781 |
| **2015** | 8,713 | 14.0 | 62,103 |
| **2012** | 8,001 | 13.8 | 58,107 |

**WA trends (2012, 2015, 2018)**

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 26,546 | 80.7 | 3,424 | 10.4 | 2,929 | 8.9 | 32,899 |
| **2015** | 25,620 | 78.8 | 3,676 | 11.3 | 3,206 | 9.9 | 32,502 |
| **2012** | 24,045 | 78.0 | 3,777 | 12.2 | 3,012 | 9.8 | 30,834 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 26,171 | 79.6 | 4,292 | 13.0 | 2,431 | 7.4 | 32,894 |
| **2015** | 25,051 | 77.1 | 4,724 | 14.5 | 2,721 | 8.4 | 32,496 |
| **2012** | 23,689 | 76.9 | 4,521 | 14.7 | 2,589 | 8.4 | 30,799 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 25,488 | 77.7 | 4,792 | 14.6 | 2,518 | 7.7 | 32,798 |
| **2015** | 24,401 | 75.3 | 5,241 | 16.2 | 2,751 | 8.5 | 32,393 |
| **2012** | 23,147 | 75.5 | 4,972 | 16.2 | 2,559 | 8.3 | 30,678 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 27,418 | 83.4 | 3,284 | 10.0 | 2,158 | 6.6 | 32,860 |
| **2015** | 26,857 | 82.7 | 3,449 | 10.6 | 2,153 | 6.6 | 32,459 |
| **2012** | 23,346 | 75.8 | 4,816 | 15.6 | 2,636 | 8.6 | 30,798 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 26,749 | 81.3 | 3,837 | 11.7 | 2,311 | 7.0 | 32,897 |
| **2015** | 25,811 | 79.4 | 4,082 | 12.6 | 2,612 | 8.0 | 32,505 |
| **2012** | 23,643 | 76.7 | 4,397 | 14.3 | 2,797 | 9.1 | 30,837 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 6,369 | 19.4 | 32,798 |
| **2015** | 6,895 | 21.3 | 32,373 |
| **2012** | 7,048 | 23.0 | 30,631 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 3,086 | 9.4 | 32,880 |
| **2015** | 3,403 | 10.5 | 32,478 |
| **2012** | 3,449 | 11.2 | 30,770 |

**SA trends (2012, 2015, 2018)**

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 14,924 | 77.8 | 2,188 | 11.4 | 2,072 | 10.8 | 19,184 |
| **2015** | 14,081 | 76.0 | 2,456 | 13.3 | 1,993 | 10.8 | 18,530 |
| **2012** | 13,125 | 75.2 | 2,537 | 14.5 | 1,783 | 10.2 | 17,445 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 13,947 | 72.7 | 3,034 | 15.8 | 2,200 | 11.5 | 19,181 |
| **2015** | 13,490 | 72.8 | 3,034 | 16.4 | 2,004 | 10.8 | 18,528 |
| **2012** | 12,812 | 73.6 | 2,641 | 15.2 | 1,965 | 11.3 | 17,418 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 13,966 | 73.1 | 3,084 | 16.1 | 2,064 | 10.8 | 19,114 |
| **2015** | 13,461 | 72.9 | 3,218 | 17.4 | 1,793 | 9.7 | 18,472 |
| **2012** | 13,075 | 75.3 | 2,685 | 15.5 | 1,610 | 9.3 | 17,370 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 15,805 | 82.7 | 1,928 | 10.1 | 1,375 | 7.2 | 19,108 |
| **2015** | 15,433 | 83.6 | 1,770 | 9.6 | 1,263 | 6.8 | 18,466 |
| **2012** | 14,440 | 82.8 | 1,804 | 10.3 | 1,188 | 6.8 | 17,432 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 14,919 | 77.8 | 2,642 | 13.8 | 1,620 | 8.4 | 19,181 |
| **2015** | 14,265 | 77.0 | 2,744 | 14.8 | 1,518 | 8.2 | 18,527 |
| **2012** | 12,849 | 73.7 | 3,038 | 17.4 | 1,552 | 8.9 | 17,439 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 4,564 | 23.9 | 19,092 |
| **2015** | 4,338 | 23.5 | 18,451 |
| **2012** | 4,115 | 23.7 | 17,355 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 2,490 | 13.0 | 19,157 |
| **2015** | 2,259 | 12.2 | 18,509 |
| **2012** | 2,126 | 12.2 | 17,399 |

**TAS trends (2012, 2015, 2018)**

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 4,587 | 78.5 | 706 | 12.1 | 554 | 9.5 | 5,847 |
| **2015** | 4,810 | 78.1 | 731 | 11.9 | 618 | 10 | 6,159 |
| **2012** | 4,765 | 77.8 | 751 | 12.3 | 605 | 9.9 | 6,121 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 4,456 | 76.2 | 879 | 15.0 | 513 | 8.8 | 5,848 |
| **2015** | 4,718 | 76.6 | 913 | 14.8 | 528 | 8.6 | 6,159 |
| **2012** | 4,698 | 77.0 | 903 | 14.8 | 503 | 8.2 | 6,104 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 4,403 | 75.4 | 898 | 15.4 | 535 | 9.2 | 5,836 |
| **2015** | 4,638 | 75.3 | 975 | 15.8 | 545 | 8.9 | 6,158 |
| **2012** | 4,740 | 77.1 | 908 | 14.8 | 501 | 8.1 | 6,149 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 4,701 | 80.6 | 660 | 11.3 | 468 | 8.0 | 5,829 |
| **2015** | 5,073 | 82.4 | 621 | 10.1 | 465 | 7.5 | 6,159 |
| **2012** | 4,966 | 80.5 | 761 | 12.3 | 439 | 7.1 | 6,166 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 4,727 | 80.9 | 785 | 13.4 | 334 | 5.7 | 5,846 |
| **2015** | 4,913 | 79.8 | 852 | 13.8 | 394 | 6.4 | 6,159 |
| **2012** | 4,757 | 77.8 | 955 | 15.6 | 402 | 6.6 | 6,114 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 1,255 | 21.5 | 5,825 |
| **2015** | 1,296 | 21.0 | 6,159 |
| **2012** | 1,308 | 21.5 | 6,086 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 625 | 10.7 | 5,840 |
| **2015** | 657 | 10.7 | 6,158 |
| **2012** | 618 | 10.1 | 6,104 |

**ACT trends (2012, 2015, 2018)**

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 3,840 | 70.0 | 978 | 17.8 | 666 | 12.1 | 5,484 |
| **2015** | 3,755 | 72.7 | 846 | 16.4 | 564 | 10.9 | 5,165 |
| **2012** | 3,358 | 72.6 | 780 | 16.9 | 490 | 10.6 | 4,628 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 3,969 | 72.4 | 841 | 15.3 | 674 | 12.3 | 5,484 |
| **2015** | 3,845 | 74.5 | 836 | 16.2 | 483 | 9.4 | 5,164 |
| **2012** | 3,489 | 75.5 | 734 | 15.9 | 396 | 8.6 | 4,619 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 4,173 | 76.1 | 764 | 13.9 | 543 | 9.9 | 5,480 |
| **2015** | 3,910 | 75.9 | 819 | 15.9 | 423 | 8.2 | 5,152 |
| **2012** | 3,651 | 79.0 | 636 | 13.8 | 333 | 7.2 | 4,620 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 4,613 | 84.2 | 514 | 9.4 | 352 | 6.4 | 5,479 |
| **2015** | 4,312 | 83.5 | 549 | 10.6 | 303 | 5.9 | 5,164 |
| **2012** | 3,987 | 86.5 | 440 | 9.5 | 182 | 3.9 | 4,609 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 3,974 | 72.5 | 1,083 | 19.7 | 427 | 7.8 | 5,484 |
| **2015** | 3,898 | 75.5 | 870 | 16.8 | 397 | 7.7 | 5,165 |
| **2012** | 3,393 | 73.4 | 853 | 18.5 | 376 | 8.1 | 4,622 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 1,350 | 24.6 | 5,482 |
| **2015** | 1,161 | 22.5 | 5,157 |
| **2012** | 1,010 | 22.0 | 4,594 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 680 | 12.4 | 5,481 |
| **2015** | 531 | 10.3 | 5,158 |
| **2012** | 454 | 9.8 | 4,616 |

**NT trends (2012, 2015, 2018)**

|  |  | **Developmentally on track** | | **Developmentally at risk** | | **Developmentally vulnerable** | | **Total children with valid scores** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** | **%** | **n** |
| **Physical health and wellbeing** | **2018** | 2,161 | 67.7 | 469 | 14.7 | 563 | 17.6 | 3,193 |
| **2015** | 2,249 | 68.9 | 496 | 15.2 | 518 | 15.9 | 3,263 |
| **2012** | 2,258 | 71.8 | 413 | 13.1 | 472 | 15.0 | 3,143 |
| **Social competence** | **2018** | 2,066 | 64.8 | 556 | 17.4 | 568 | 17.8 | 3,190 |
| **2015** | 2,082 | 63.9 | 575 | 17.6 | 603 | 18.5 | 3,260 |
| **2012** | 2,091 | 66.6 | 580 | 18.5 | 468 | 14.9 | 3,139 |
| **Emotional maturity** | **2018** | 2,141 | 67.5 | 561 | 17.7 | 472 | 14.9 | 3,174 |
| **2015** | 2,140 | 65.9 | 603 | 18.6 | 504 | 15.5 | 3,247 |
| **2012** | 2,100 | 67.4 | 593 | 19.0 | 421 | 13.5 | 3,114 |
| **Language and cognitive skills (school-based)** | **2018** | 2,124 | 66.8 | 433 | 13.6 | 625 | 19.6 | 3,182 |
| **2015** | 2,129 | 65.6 | 421 | 13.0 | 697 | 21.5 | 3,247 |
| **2012** | 1,938 | 62.0 | 537 | 17.2 | 649 | 20.8 | 3,124 |
| **Communication skills and general knowledge** | **2018** | 2,124 | 66.5 | 537 | 16.8 | 532 | 16.7 | 3,193 |
| **2015** | 2,180 | 66.7 | 557 | 17.0 | 530 | 16.2 | 3,267 |
| **2012** | 2,150 | 68.4 | 538 | 17.1 | 454 | 14.4 | 3,142 |

|  |  | **n** | **%** | **Total n** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)** | **2018** | 1,141 | 35.8 | 3,190 |
| **2015** | 1,207 | 37.2 | 3,248 |
| **2012** | 1,106 | 35.5 | 3,117 |
| **Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains** | **2018** | 745 | 23.4 | 3,184 |
| **2015** | 751 | 23.1 | 3,255 |
| **2012** | 653 | 20.9 | 3,130 |

**Appendix 2: AEDC additional resources**

A variety of resources are available online to help you understand AEDC results and learn more about the scope and purpose of the program. The resources listed below are just some of those available. These can be accessed through the [AEDC web site](http://www.aedc.gov.au) **( www.aedc.gov.au/ )** or alternatively by clicking on the links provided.

Refer to the [AEDC user guides](http://www.aedc.gov.au/resources/user-guides) **( www.aedc.gov.au/resources/user-guides )** for ideas and strategies on how to respond to AEDC data.

For detailed information on AEDC results reporting, refer to the fact sheet [Understanding the results](http://www.aedc.gov.au/unders)   
**( www.aedc.gov.au/unders )**.

The fact sheet [Definition of AEDC terms](http://www.aedc.gov.au/defterm) **( www.aedc.gov.au/defterm )** is a valuable guide that describes terminology used throughout the program.

The [AEDC community results tables](http://www.aedc.gov.au/tables) **( www.aedc.gov.au/tables )** summarise results for each AEDC community and the local communities within it. As part of the online [Data Explorer](http://www.aedc.gov.au/data) **( www.aedc.gov.au/data )**, this searchable resource allows comparisons across years and communities. The 2018 AEDC community data was published in March 2019.

**AEDC publications**

Important AEDC resources include:

* [Sector messages](http://www.aedc.gov.au/sectormsgs) **( www.aedc.gov.au/sectormsgs )**
* [Calculation of the critical difference](http://www.aedc.gov.au/trcd) **( www.aedc.gov.au/trcd )**
* [Fact sheet library](http://www.aedc.gov.au/factsheets) **( www.aedc.gov.au/factsheets )**
  + [About the AEDC data collection](http://www.aedc.gov.au/abtdata) **( www.aedc.gov.au/abtdata )**
  + [About the AEDC domains](http://www.aedc.gov.au/abtdom) **( www.aedc.gov.au/abtdom )**
  + Definition of AEDC terms **( www.aedc.gov.au/defterm )**
  + [Trends from the AEDC](http://www.aedc.gov.au/emerging-trends) **( www.aedc.gov.au/trends )**
  + [Understanding community boundaries](http://www.aedc.gov.au/ucb) **( www.aedc.gov.au/ucb )**
  + Understanding the results **( www.aedc.gov.au/unders ).**

**AEDC videos**

* [Introduction to the AEDC](http://www.aedc.gov.au/vi1) **( www.aedc.gov.au/vi1 )**
* [Informing your planning](http://www.aedc.gov.au/vi2) **( www.aedc.gov.au/vi2 )**
* [Understanding the data](http://www.aedc.gov.au/vi3) **( www.aedc.gov.au/vi3 ).**

**Key AEDC web pages**

* [Communities FAQs](http://www.aedc.gov.au/commfaqs) **( www.aedc.gov.au/commfaqs )**
* [History of the AEDC](http://www.aedc.gov.au/history) **( www.aedc.gov.au/history )**
* [Protective and risk factors for children](http://www.aedc.gov.au/prsk) **( www.aedc.gov.au/prsk )**
* [Resources for communities](http://www.aedc.gov.au/rfc) **( www.aedc.gov.au/rfc )**
* [Using your AEDC results](http://www.aedc.gov.au/ug) **( www.aedc.gov.au/ug )**
* [Validation and trial of the AEDC](http://www.aedc.gov.au/valid) **( www.aedc.gov.au/valid ).**

**Appendix 3: Glossary**

**AEDC community**

AEDC communities are a geographic area, usually equivalent to a Local Government Area (LGA), made up of Local Communities (see ‘Local Community’ definition).

**AEDC cut-off scores**

For each of the five AEDC domains, children receive a score between 0 and 10 where 0 is most developmentally vulnerable.

The cut off scores set in 2009 provide a reference point against which later AEDC results can be compared. These have remained the same across all collection cycles. For example, using the cut off scores established in 2009, in the 2018 AEDC only 6.6 per cent of children were considered developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive development domain, a decrease from 8.9 per cent in 2009.

**AEDC domains**

The AEDC measures five areas, or domains, of early childhood development that form the foundations for later good health, education and social outcomes. These domains are:

* physical health and wellbeing
* social competence
* emotional maturity
* language and cognitive skills (school-based)
* communication skills and general knowledge.

More information about these domains ( www.aedc.gov.au/abtdom ) can be found on the AEDC website.

**Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)**

A population measure of young children’s development based on a teacher completed Instrument across five developmental domains (AEDC domains). Prior to 1 July 2014, the AEDC was known as the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI).

**Australian version of the Early Development Instrument (the Early Development Instrument, which has been adapted for use in Australia)**

A teacher-completed Instrument that consists of approximately 100 questions measuring the five developmental domains. To ensure teacher judgement is moderated across Australia, teachers receive online training prior to completing the Instruments.

**Community profiles and maps**

All AEDC data collected in a geographic area are collated and analysed at the suburb or small area locality (Local Community) of the child. This is reported back to the community through AEDC Community Profiles and AEDC maps.

The AEDC Community Profiles report the percentage of children on track, developmentally at risk and developmentally vulnerable for each developmental domain.

**Control for age variability at school entry**

The ages of children in their first year of full-time school vary. As age is a factor contributing to children’s development, the published AEDC results control for age.

**Critical difference**

The critical difference is the minimum level of change required between any two cycles of AEDC results for the comparative result to be significant. The difference between the percentage of children vulnerable across the cycles is statistically significant if it exceeds the critical difference. For further information see the Calculation of the critical difference Technical Report ( www.aedc.gov.au/trcd ).

**Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (Vuln 1)**

The percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC domain(s). Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (Vuln 1) are part of the Summary Indicators (See ‘Summary indicators’ definition).

**Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (Vuln 2)**

The percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on two or more AEDC domains. Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (Vuln 2) are part of the Summary Indicators (See ‘Summary indicators’ definition).

**Early Development Instrument**

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) was developed in Canada to measure the developmental health and wellbeing of populations of young children. An Australian adapted version of the EDI is the teacher completed instrument used in the AEDC program, (see the ‘Australian version of the Early Development Instrument’.)

**English as a Second Language (ESL)**

Children are considered to have ESL status where English is not their first language and they need additional instruction in English; or where English is not their first language, they have conversational English, but are not yet proficient in English.

**Geographic location**

Geographic location for the AEDC is based on the Australian Statistical Geographical Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Areas, developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to classify places of remoteness. Geographical areas are given a score based on the road distance to service towns of different sizes. Scores for regions are derived by averaging scores from a one square kilometre grid.

The five Remoteness Areas are:

1. Major Cities – relatively unrestricted accessibility to a wide range of goods and services and opportunities for social interaction.

2. Inner Regional – some restrictions to accessibility of some goods, services and opportunities for social interaction.

3. Outer Regional – significantly restricted accessibility of goods, services and opportunities for social interaction.

4. Remote – very restricted accessibility of goods, services and opportunities for social interaction.

5. Very Remote – very little accessibility of goods, services and opportunities for social interaction.

The ASGS Remoteness Areas classification is an all of Australia view. As such, remote parts of Tasmania are remote because of their location in the context of Australia, not their location in Tasmania.

**Language background other than English (LBOTE)**

Children are considered ‘LBOTE’ if they speak a language other than English at home, or if they speak English at home but are still considered to have ESL status. Indigenous children who have LBOTE status are part of the LBOTE group. For example, it is possible for children to be both Indigenous and have LBOTE status.

**Local community**

A small area locality, usually representing a suburb or town. For its results to be reported, Local communities must have a minimum of 15 children and two teachers. Results are not reported if more than 20 per cent of children were identified as children with special needs.

**Population of children enrolled to begin school**

The population of Australian children enrolled to begin their first year of full-time school is data provided by the 2018 School Census, inclusive of government, Catholic and independent schools across Australia.

This number is used to determine the extent to which the AEDC is reflective of the entire population of Australian children starting school in 2018.

**Proficient in English**

Proficient in English refers to what is expected of the average monolingual English speaker in a similar phase of development. For the AEDC, children are considered proficient in English if teachers answered “average” or “good/very good” to the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument question: “How would you rate this child’s ability to use language effectively in English?”

This question refers to the child’s use of the appropriate words and expressions at appropriate times, as well as the child’s contribution to conversations. Effective use is defined as “use sufficient to convey the desired message”. Only basic grammatical concepts need to be adhered to, so long as the meaning is clear. Teachers were asked specifically to consider English language skills.

**Quintiles**

Quintiles are used for the AEDC comparisons to Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) (see definition for SEIFA). The lowest quintile (Quintile 1) represents the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas; the highest quintile (Quintile 5) represents the least socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

**Reported results**

Reported results refer to the information that is made publicly available at a community level from the AEDC data collection. This includes:

* Demographic data for all children included in the census
* AEDC domain scores – includes scores only from children with valid domain scores, and for those who do not have any diagnosed special need.

**Summary indicators**

Summary indicators are a measure of developmental vulnerability for children across the five AEDC domains (See ‘developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (Vuln 1)’ and ‘developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (Vuln 2)’).

**Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)**

The AEDC classifies socio-economic status according to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). They are a set of measures, derived from Census information, that summarise different aspects of socioeconomic conditions in an area. The Index for Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, which is used in AEDC results, looks at Census information that reflects disadvantage such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. Every geographical area in Australia is given a SEIFA score that ranks the disadvantage of an area, compared with other areas in Australia.

**Special needs**

A child 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 medical diagnoses.

**Valid domain scores**

Scores are flagged as invalid for children who have been in the class for less than one month, are less than four years old or where teachers complete less than 75 per cent of the items in any given domain.