

Our Children
Our Communities
Our Future



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.

Contents

Foreword by the Minister for Education	4
Executive summary	5
Background on the AEDC	7
Demographics of Australian children included in the AEDC	10
Trends in early childhood development across Australia	13
National trends by domain and summary indicators, all collections	15
Physical health and wellbeing domain	17
Social competence domain	22
Emotional maturity domain	27
Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain	32
Communication skills and general knowledge domain	37
Summary indicators	42
Appendices	47
Appendix 1: State and territory trends	47
New South Wales	47
Victoria	48
Queensland	49
Western Australia	50
South Australia	51
Tasmania	52
Australian Capital Territory	53
Northern Territory	54
Appendix 2: AEDC additional resources	55
Appendix 3: Glossary	56

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.

A blue ink signature of Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education. The signature is stylized and fluid, written in a cursive-like font.

Hon Dan Tehan MP
Minister for Education

Executive summary

“ A majority of children are developmentally on track for each of the five AEDC domains ”

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

“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 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**¹.

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’

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.

1 www.aedc.gov.au/abtddom

- 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**¹.

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**².

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**³.

¹ www.aedc.gov.au/about-the-aedc/how-to-understand-the-aedc-results

² www.aedc.gov.au/trcd

³ 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 – Total ¹	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 – Total ²	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.

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

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

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

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.

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).





National trends by domain and summary indicators, all collections

Figure 2 — Physical health and wellbeing over time.

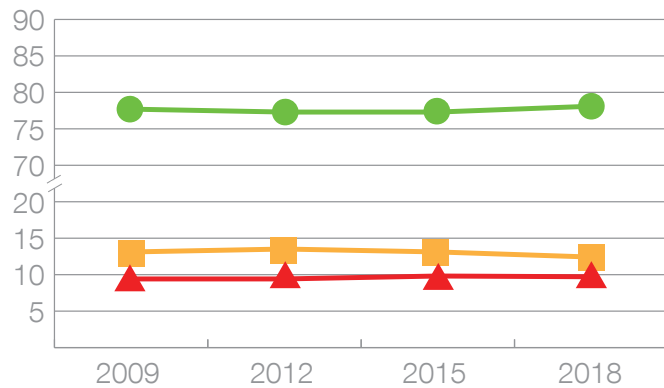


Figure 3 — Social competence over time.

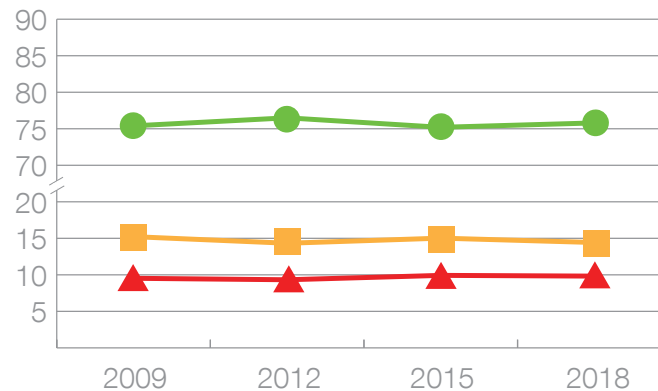


Figure 4 — Emotional maturity over time.

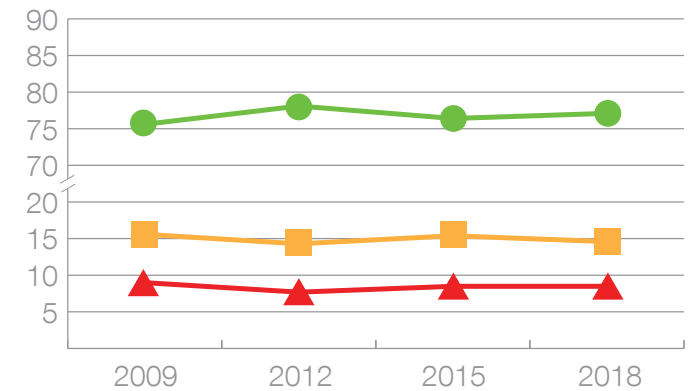


Figure 5 — Language and cognitive skills (school-based) over time.

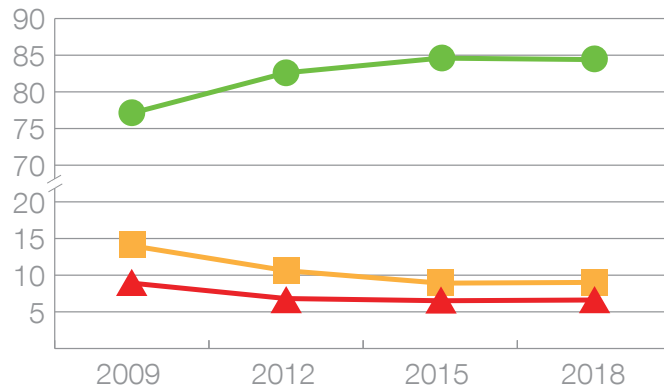


Figure 6 — Communication skills and general knowledge over time.

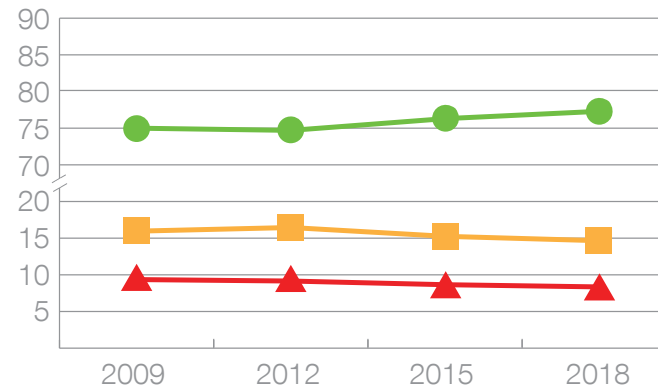
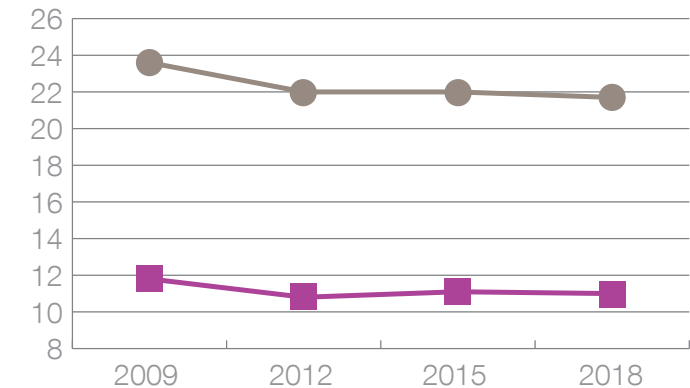


Figure 7 — Summary of vulnerability over time.



● On track ■ At risk ▲ Vulnerable

● Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)

■ Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

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

Children by developmental category			2009		2012		2015		2018		Significant change	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	2009 vs 2018	2015 vs 2018
			On track									
	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

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

Trends over the last three collections by domain and summary indicators

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.



Physical health and wellbeing domain

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

			0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
									n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Overall	Australia								229,542	78.1	36,105	12.3	28,247	9.6	293,894
									221,855	77.3	37,347	13.0	27,711	9.7	286,913
									211,806	77.3	36,637	13.4	25,479	9.3	273,922
Jurisdiction	NSW								73,462	78.5	12,111	12.9	7,978	8.5	93,551
									71,019	77.8	12,471	13.7	7,772	8.5	91,262
									69,843	78.1	12,245	13.7	7,393	8.3	89,481
	VIC								58,221	81.0	7,767	10.8	5,904	8.2	71,892
									54,934	80.9	7,602	11.2	5,335	7.9	67,871
									51,985	81.1	7,111	11.1	4,965	7.8	64,061
	QLD								45,801	74.1	8,462	13.7	7,581	12.3	61,844
									45,387	73.0	9,069	14.6	7,705	12.4	62,161
									42,427	72.9	9,023	15.5	6,759	11.6	58,209
	WA								26,546	80.7	3,424	10.4	2,929	8.9	32,899
									25,620	78.8	3,676	11.3	3,206	9.9	32,502
									24,045	78.0	3,777	12.2	3,012	9.8	30,834
	SA								14,924	77.8	2,188	11.4	2,072	10.8	19,184
									14,081	76.0	2,456	13.3	1,993	10.8	18,530
									13,125	75.2	2,537	14.5	1,783	10.2	17,445
	TAS								4,587	78.5	706	12.1	554	9.5	5,847
									4,810	78.1	731	11.9	618	10	6,159
									4,765	77.8	751	12.3	605	9.9	6,121
	ACT								3,840	70.0	978	17.8	666	12.1	5,484
									3,755	72.7	846	16.4	564	10.9	5,165
									3,358	72.6	780	16.9	490	10.6	4,628
	NT								2,161	67.7	469	14.7	563	17.6	3,193
									2,249	68.9	496	15.2	518	15.9	3,263
									2,258	71.8	413	13.1	472	15.0	3,143

* Total children with valid scores



Physical health and wellbeing domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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

* Total children with valid scores



Physical health and wellbeing domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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 & Torres Strait Islander background	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 – Total ¹							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 – Total ²							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	13.0	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.

* Total children with valid scores

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.



Social competence domain

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

			0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
									n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Overall	Australia								222,771	75.8	42,434	14.4	28,673	9.8	293,878
									215,605	75.2	42,892	15.0	28,351	9.9	286,848
									209,149	76.5	39,018	14.3	25,367	9.3	273,534
Jurisdiction	NSW								72,119	77.1	12,854	13.7	8,568	9.2	93,541
									69,828	76.5	13,058	14.3	8,359	9.2	91,245
									69,752	78.0	12,043	13.5	7,578	8.5	89,373
	VIC								55,597	77.3	9,974	13.9	6,331	8.8	71,902
									52,378	77.2	9,548	14.1	5,934	8.7	67,860
									50,226	78.6	8,519	13.3	5,151	8.1	63,896
	QLD								44,446	71.9	10,004	16.2	7,388	11.9	61,838
									44,213	71.2	10,204	16.4	7,719	12.4	62,136
									42,392	72.9	9,077	15.6	6,717	11.5	58,186
	WA								26,171	79.6	4,292	13.0	2,431	7.4	32,894
									25,051	77.1	4,724	14.5	2,721	8.4	32,496
									23,689	76.9	4,521	14.7	2,589	8.4	30,799
	SA								13,947	72.7	3,034	15.8	2,200	11.5	19,181
									13,490	72.8	3,034	16.4	2,004	10.8	18,528
									12,812	73.6	2,641	15.2	1,965	11.3	17,418
	TAS								4,456	76.2	879	15.0	513	8.8	5,848
									4,718	76.6	913	14.8	528	8.6	6,159
									4,698	77.0	903	14.8	503	8.2	6,104
	ACT								3,969	72.4	841	15.3	674	12.3	5,484
									3,845	74.5	836	16.2	483	9.4	5,164
									3,489	75.5	734	15.9	396	8.6	4,619
	NT								2,066	64.8	556	17.4	568	17.8	3,190
									2,082	63.9	575	17.6	603	18.5	3,260
									2,091	66.6	580	18.5	468	14.9	3,139

* Total children with valid scores



Social competence domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track	Developmentally at risk	Developmentally vulnerable	Total*			
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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	14.0	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	

* Total children with valid scores



Social competence domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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 & Torres Strait Islander background	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 – Total ¹							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 – Total ²							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.

* Total children with valid scores

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.



Emotional maturity domain

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

			0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track	Developmentally at risk	Developmentally vulnerable	Total*			
											n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Overall	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	NSW								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
	VIC								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
	QLD								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
	WA								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
	SA								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
	TAS								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
	ACT								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
	NT								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

* Total children with valid scores



Emotional maturity domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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

* Total children with valid scores



Emotional maturity domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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 & Torres Strait Islander background	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander							2018		11,254	64.5	3,380	19.4	2,827	16.2	17,461
								2015		9,893	62.5	3,277	20.7	2,671	16.9	15,841
								2012		9,041	64.7	2,760	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 – Total ¹							2018		57,398	76.9	11,484	15.4	5,764	7.7	74,646
								2015		46,271	75.0	10,175	16.5	5,240	8.5	61,686
								2012		39,490	75.9	8,416	16.2	4,133	7.9	52,039
	LBOTE – Not proficient in English							2018		3,293	44.8	2,236	30.4	1,825	24.8	7,354
								2015		3,082	43.9	2,273	32.4	1,669	23.8	7,024
								2012		3,149	48.0	2,028	30.9	1,385	21.1	6,562
	LBOTE – Proficient in English							2018		54,002	80.4	9,225	13.7	3,924	5.8	67,151
								2015		43,162	79.0	7,895	14.5	3,568	6.5	54,625
								2012		36,260	80.0	6,351	14.0	2,739	6.0	45,350
	English Only – Total ²							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.

* Total children with valid scores

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 difficulty 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 been 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 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.



Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain

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

			0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%							
									Developmentally on track	Developmentally at risk	Developmentally vulnerable	Total*			
									n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Overall	Australia								247,870	84.4	26,291	9.0	19,417	6.6	293,578
									242,518	84.6	25,597	8.9	18,533	6.5	286,648
									226,260	82.6	29,072	10.6	18,564	6.8	273,896
Jurisdiction	NSW								81,521	87.2	7,086	7.6	4,884	5.2	93,491
									80,140	87.9	6,699	7.3	4,360	4.8	91,199
									78,022	87.2	7,177	8.0	4,251	4.8	89,450
	VIC								60,779	84.6	6,461	9.0	4,608	6.4	71,848
									57,474	84.7	6,062	8.9	4,292	6.3	67,828
									53,929	84.0	6,351	9.9	3,915	6.1	64,195
	QLD								50,909	82.4	5,925	9.6	4,947	8.0	61,781
									51,100	82.3	6,026	9.7	5,000	8.0	62,126
									45,632	78.5	7,186	12.4	5,304	9.1	58,122
	WA								27,418	83.4	3,284	10.0	2,158	6.6	32,860
									26,857	82.7	3,449	10.6	2,153	6.6	32,459
									23,346	75.8	4,816	15.6	2,636	8.6	30,798
	SA								15,805	82.7	1,928	10.1	1,375	7.2	19,108
									15,433	83.6	1,770	9.6	1,263	6.8	18,466
									14,440	82.8	1,804	10.3	1,188	6.8	17,432
	TAS								4,701	80.6	660	11.3	468	8.0	5,829
									5,073	82.4	621	10.1	465	7.5	6,159
									4,966	80.5	761	12.3	439	7.1	6,166
	ACT								4,613	84.2	514	9.4	352	6.4	5,479
									4,312	83.5	549	10.6	303	5.9	5,164
									3,987	86.5	440	9.5	182	3.9	4,609
	NT								2,124	66.8	433	13.6	625	19.6	3,182
									2,129	65.6	421	13.0	697	21.5	3,247
									1,938	62.0	537	17.2	649	20.8	3,124

* Total children with valid scores



Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%		Developmentally on track	Developmentally at risk	Developmentally vulnerable	Total*			
									n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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	9.0	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

* Total children with valid scores



Language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track		Developmentally at risk		Developmentally vulnerable		Total*
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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 & Torres Strait Islander background	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 – Total ¹							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 – Total ²							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.

* Total children with valid scores

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.



Communication skills and general knowledge domain

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

			0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%								
Overall	Australia								Developmentally on track	Developmentally at risk	Developmentally vulnerable	Total*				
									n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
Jurisdiction	NSW								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
	VIC								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
	QLD								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
	WA								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
	SA								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
	TAS								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
	ACT								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
	NT								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

* Total children with valid scores



Communication skills and general knowledge domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%			Developmentally on track	Developmentally at risk	Developmentally vulnerable	Total*			
										n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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	

* Total children with valid scores



Communication skills and general knowledge domain

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

		0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%		Developmentally on track	Developmentally at risk	Developmentally vulnerable	Total*			
									n	%	n	%	n	%	n
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 & Torres Strait Islander background	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	Data not available**						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	13,347	19.8	4,158	6.2	67,483
								2015	39,709	72.3	11,701	21.3	3,518	6.4	54,928
								2012	31,798	69.6	10,489	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	Data not available**						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	

* Total children with valid scores

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



Vuln
1

Vuln
2

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.

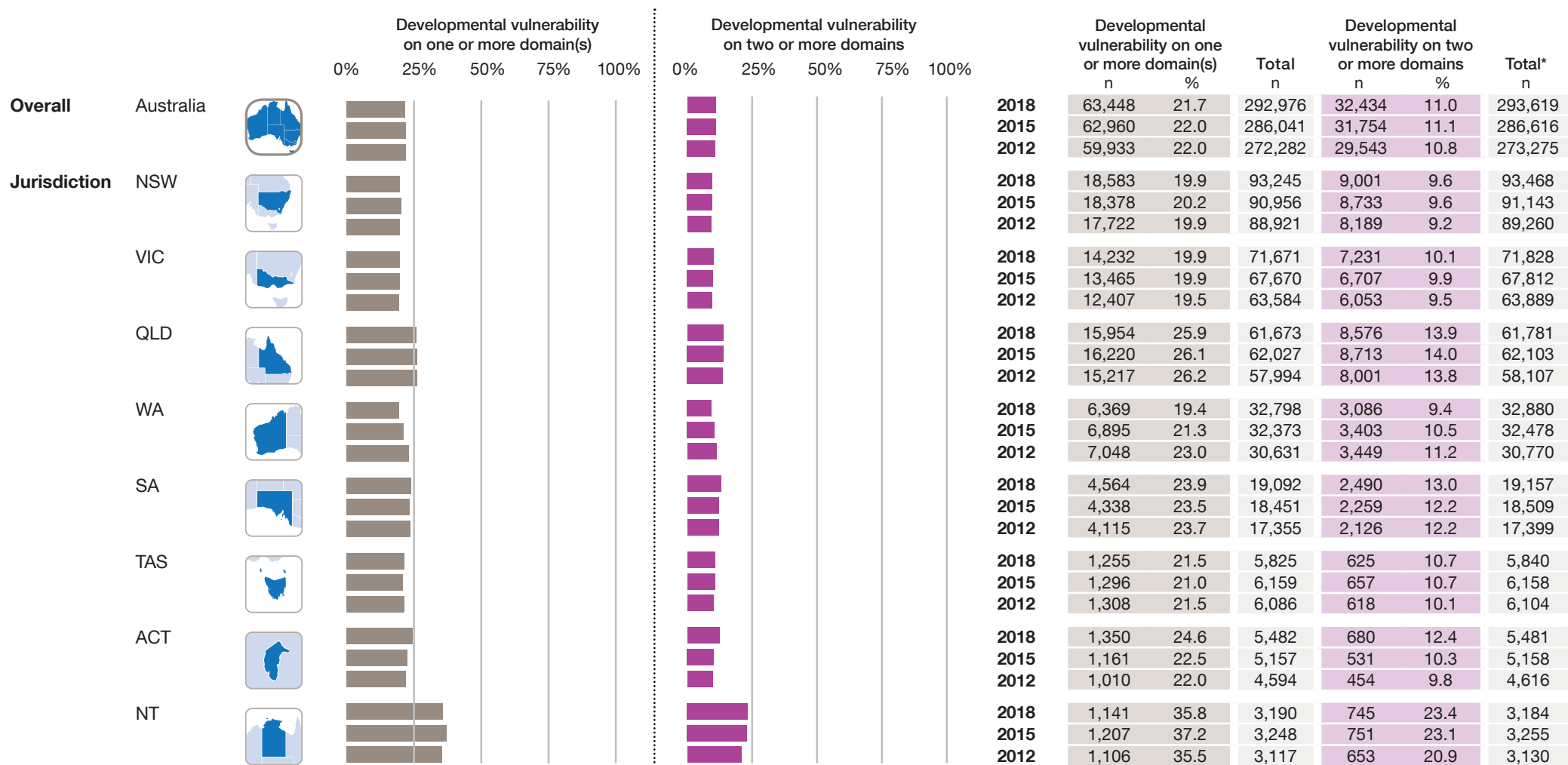
- In 2018 children with a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) were more likely than non-LBOTE children to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more (25.7 and 20.3 per cent) and two or more domains (13.1 and 10.4 per cent respectively).
- For children developmentally vulnerable on one or 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 Vuln1 and Vuln2 has been growing since baseline between LBOTE children who are proficient in English and those who are not proficient in English.

AEDC results for children vulnerable on one or more domain(s) and two or more domain(s) (2012, 2015, 2018)

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



* Total children with valid scores

AEDC results for children vulnerable on one or more domain(s) and two or more domain(s) (2012, 2015, 2018)



















































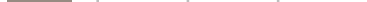
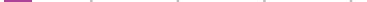
Table 18 (continued) — National trends on the summary indicators (2012, 2015, 2018).

		Developmental vulnerability on one or more domain(s)					Developmental vulnerability on two or more domains					Developmental vulnerability on one or more domain(s)			Developmental vulnerability on two or more domains		
		0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	n	%	Total n	n	%	Total*
Socio- economic status	Quintile 1 (most disadvantaged)											17,909	32.3	55,368	10,263	18.5	55,464
												18,464	32.8	56,285	10,492	18.6	56,352
												18,399	33.1	55,516	10,121	18.2	55,601
	Quintile 2											13,330	24.1	55,256	6,980	12.6	55,352
												13,475	24.8	54,353	6,923	12.7	54,453
												12,926	24.5	52,665	6,453	12.2	52,823
	Quintile 3											12,004	20.3	59,084	5,919	10.0	59,198
												11,742	20.5	57,240	5,715	10.0	57,344
												11,090	20.8	53,392	5,314	9.9	53,614
	Quintile 4											11,198	17.9	62,658	5,269	8.4	62,831
												10,274	17.6	58,387	4,788	8.2	58,586
												9,563	17.7	53,951	4,327	8.0	54,199
	Quintile 5 (least disadvantaged)											8,848	14.7	60,020	3,911	6.5	60,183
												8,822	14.9	59,186	3,727	6.3	59,288
												7,752	13.8	56,119	3,207	5.7	56,393
Geographic location	Major Cities											43,646	20.8	210,289	21,589	10.2	210,777
												42,167	21.0	200,765	20,598	10.2	201,188
												39,707	21.1	188,621	19,065	10.1	189,331
	Inner Regional											11,490	22.3	51,504	6,121	11.9	51,622
												11,728	22.5	52,150	6,142	11.8	52,238
												11,439	22.5	50,818	5,727	11.2	50,995
	Outer Regional											5,997	24.6	24,389	3,301	13.5	24,416
												6,544	25.2	25,980	3,437	13.2	26,009
												6,400	24.9	25,657	3,377	13.1	25,735
	Remote											1,096	26.6	4,116	610	14.8	4,120
												1,152	27.4	4,206	653	15.4	4,227
												1,100	25.7	4,278	563	13.1	4,298
	Very Remote											1,219	45.5	2,678	813	30.3	2,684
												1,369	46.6	2,940	924	31.3	2,954
												1,287	44.3	2,908	811	27.8	2,916

* Total children with valid scores

AEDC results for children vulnerable on one or more domain(s) and two or more domain(s) (2012, 2015, 2018)

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

		Developmental vulnerability on one or more domain(s)					Developmental vulnerability on two or more domains					Developmental vulnerability on one or more domain(s)			Developmental vulnerability on two or more domains			
		0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	n	%	Total n	n	%	Total n	
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 & Torres Strait Islander background	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 – Total ¹											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	Data not available**										2018	>6,690	> 90.0	7,433	4,420	59.7	7,403
		Data not available**										2015	>6,397	> 90.0	7,107	4,179	59.2	7,060
		Data not available**										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 – Total ²											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	Data not available**										2018	>5,340	> 90.0	5,933	4,551	76.9	5,921
		Data not available**										2015	>6,498	> 90.0	7,219	5,387	74.7	7,207
		Data not available**										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

* Total children with valid scores

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.

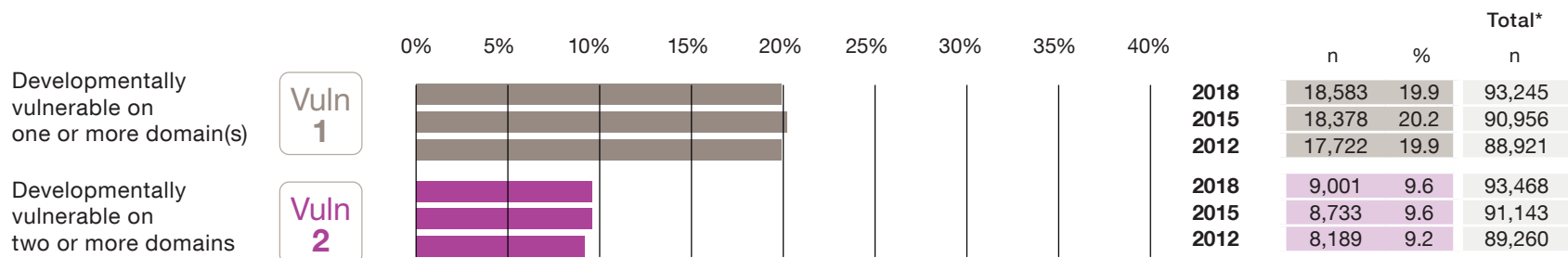
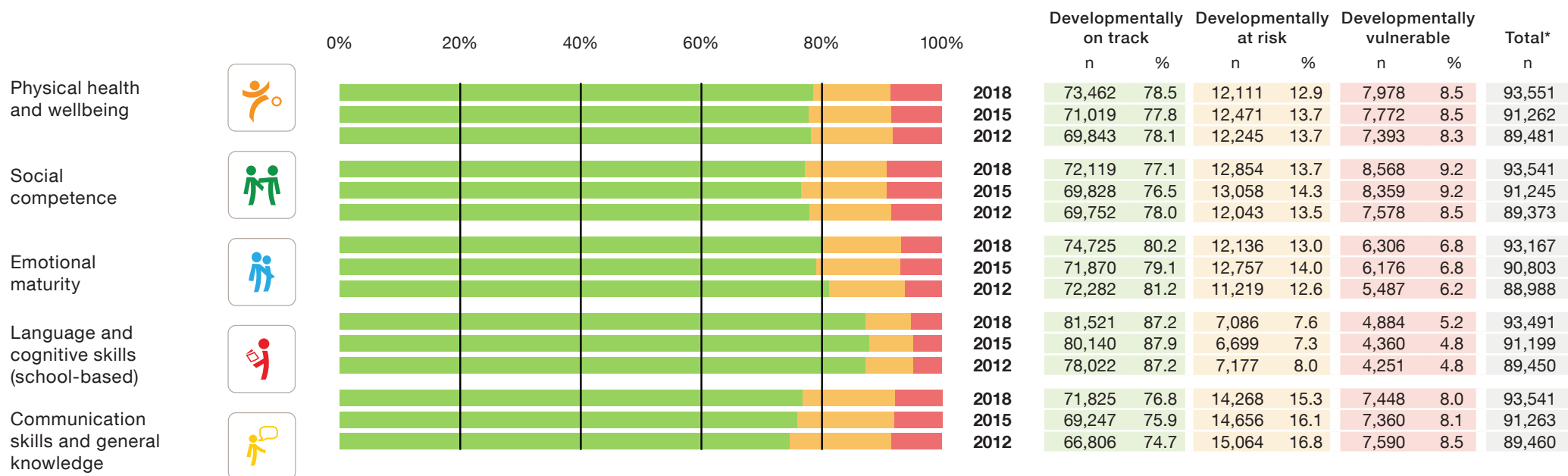
² Total children who speak only English at home includes children who are NOT proficient in English, children who ARE proficient in English, as well as children whose proficiency in English is unknown.

** 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



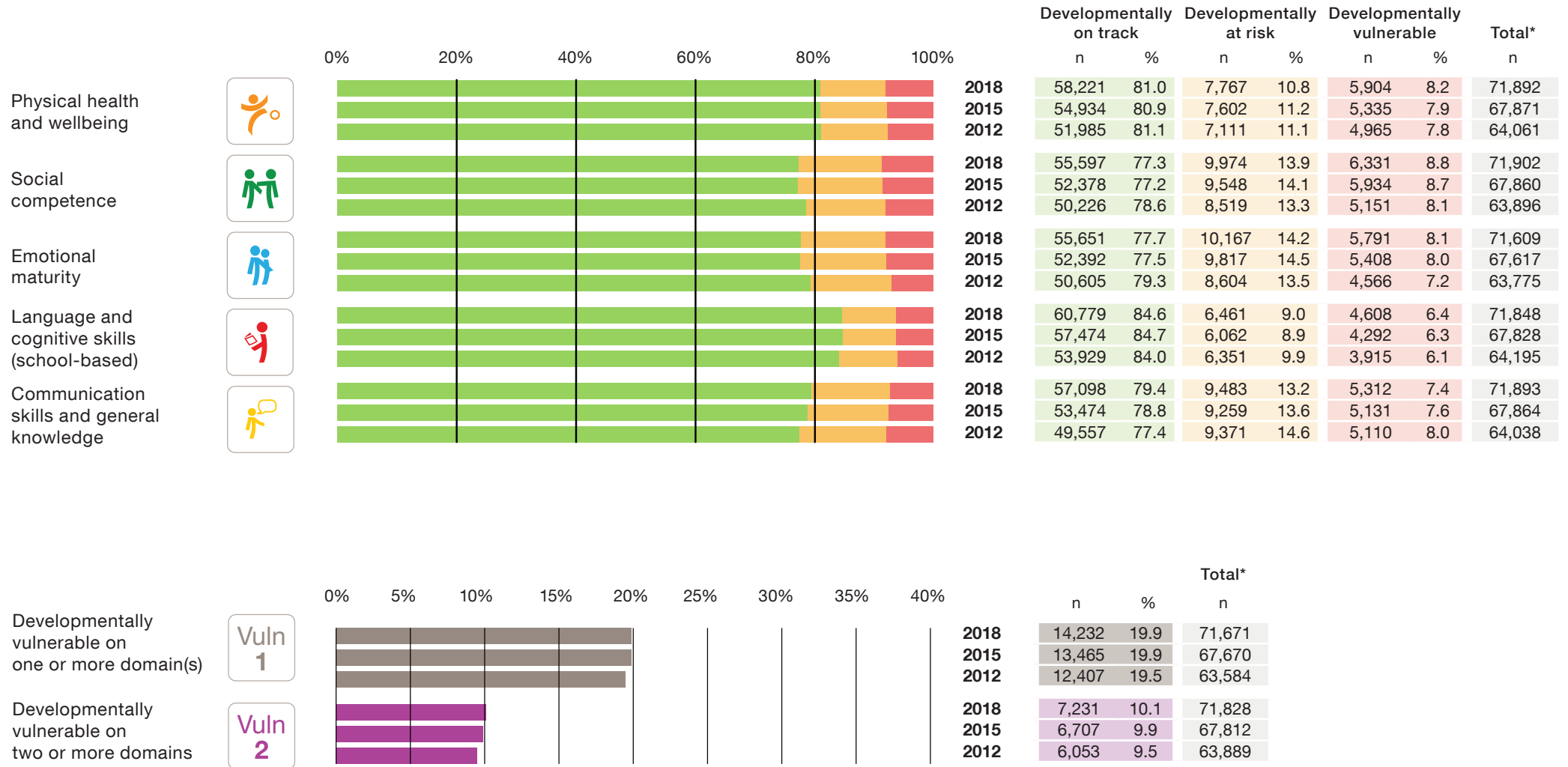
NSW trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



* Total children with valid scores



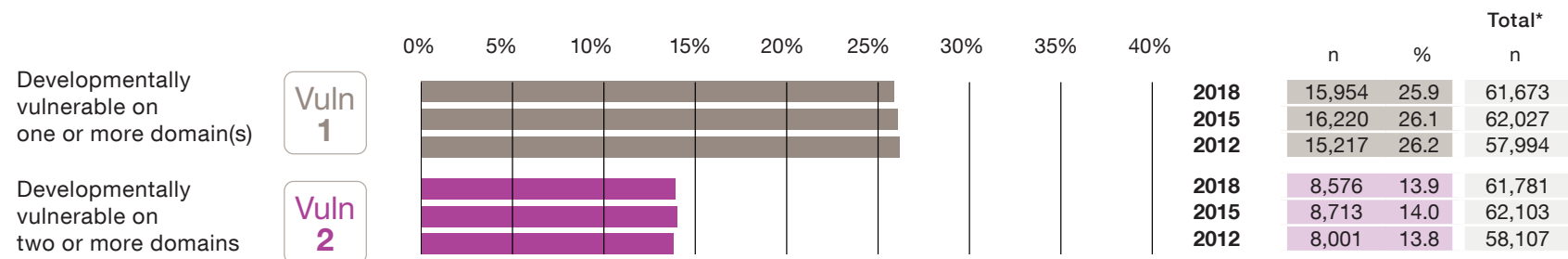
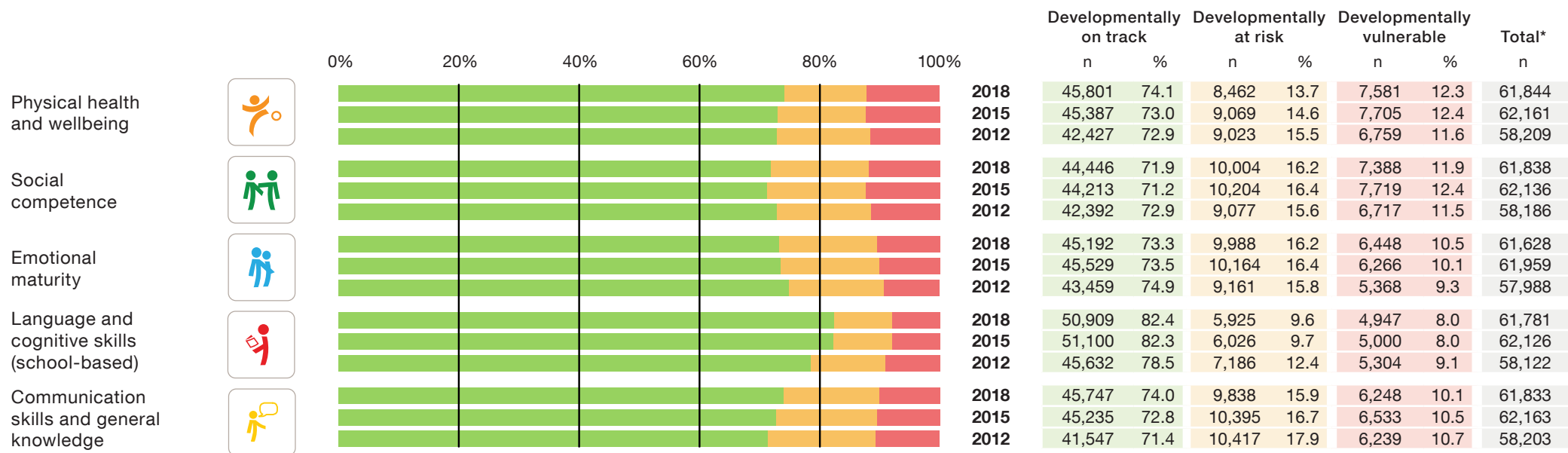
VIC trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



*Total children with valid scores



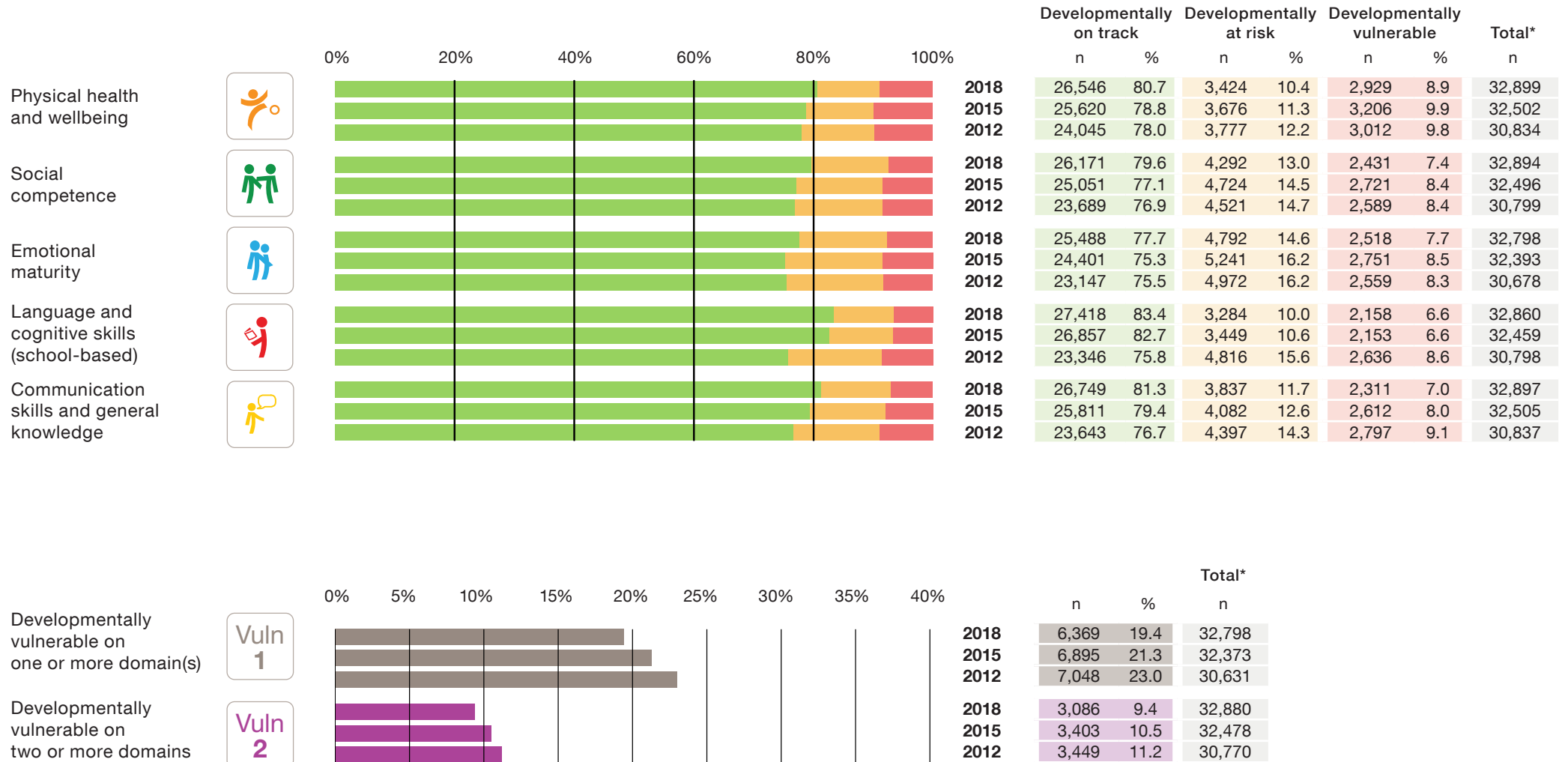
QLD trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



*Total children with valid scores



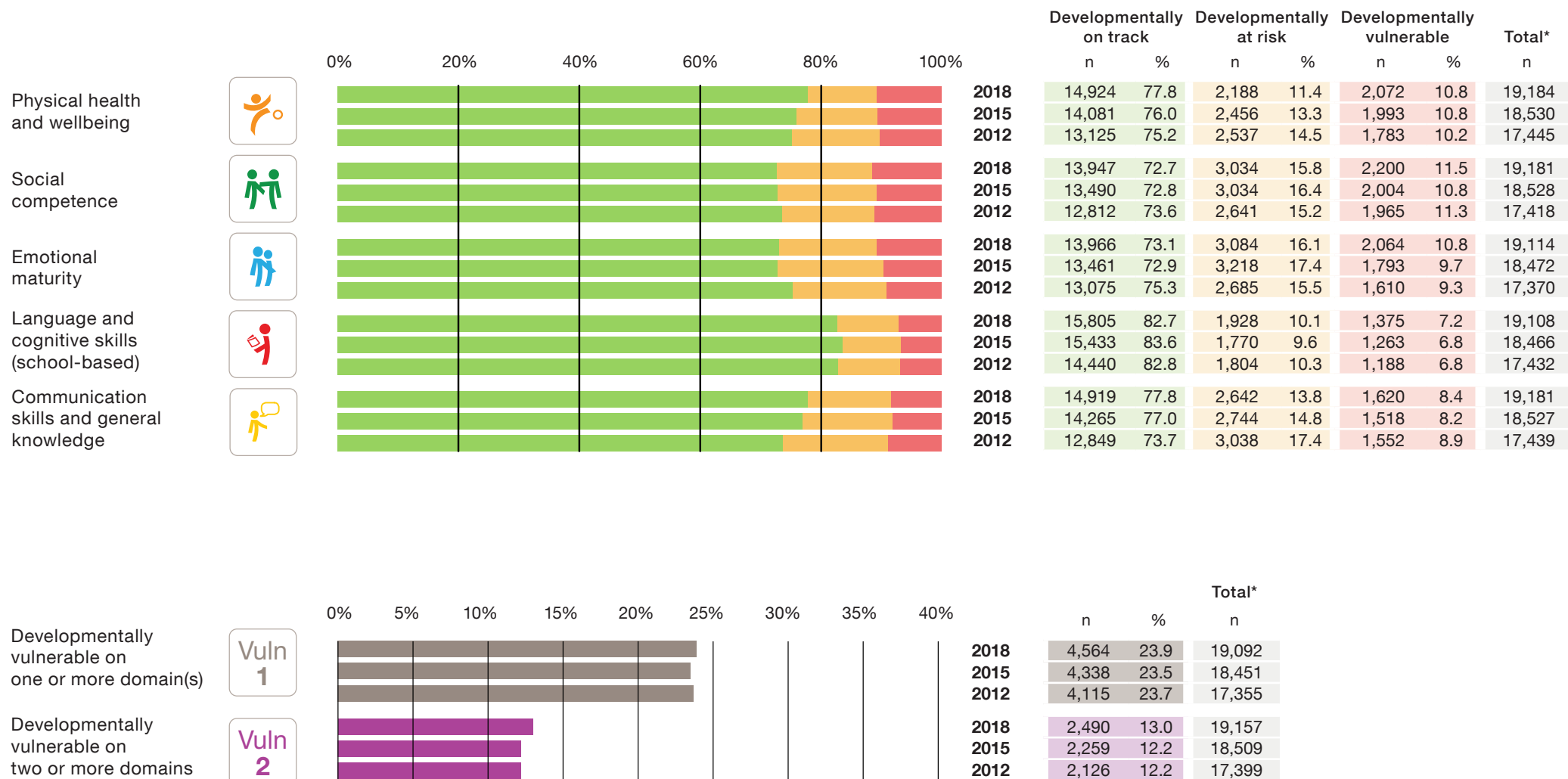
WA trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



*Total children with valid scores



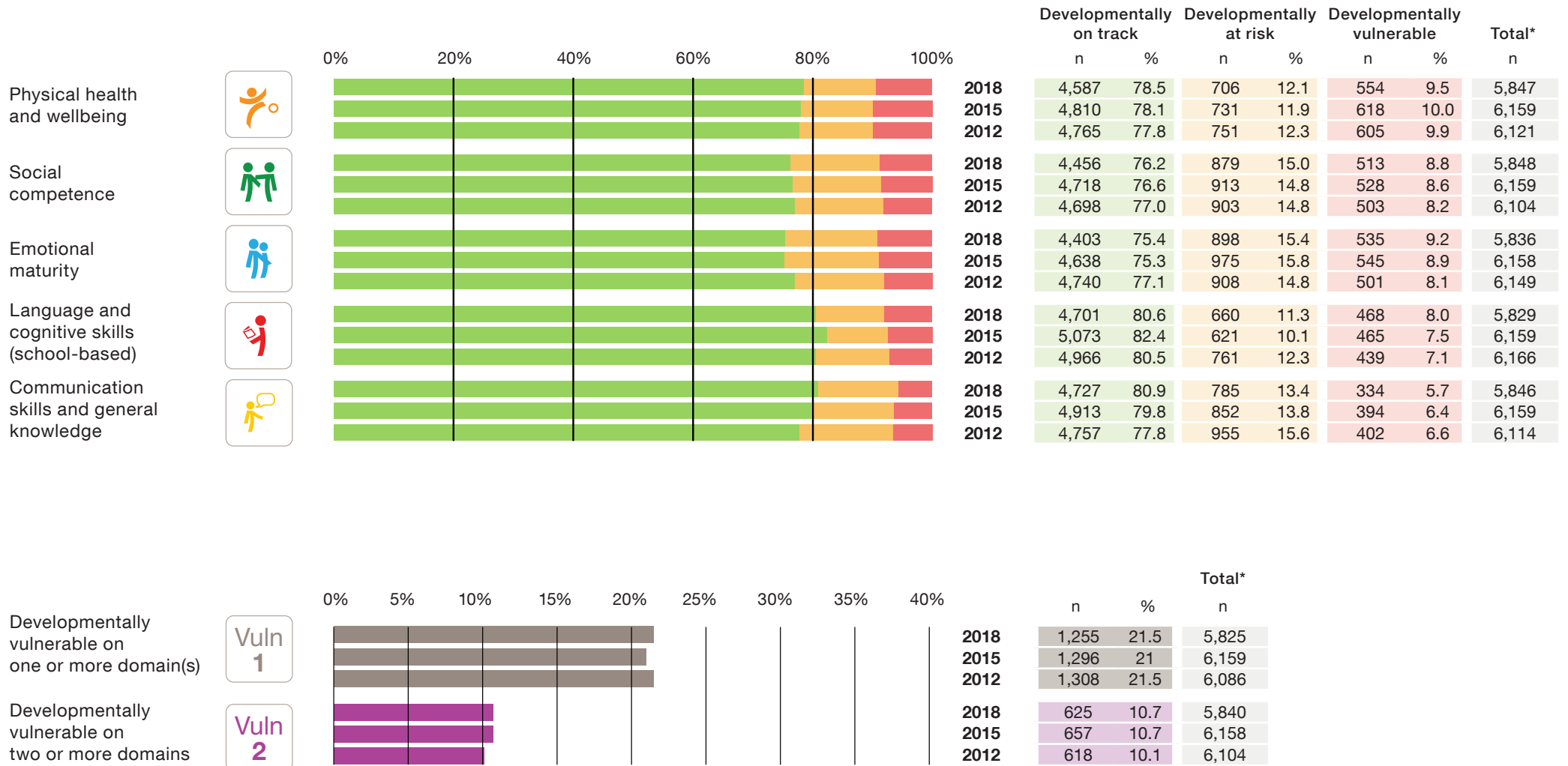
SA trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



*Total children with valid scores



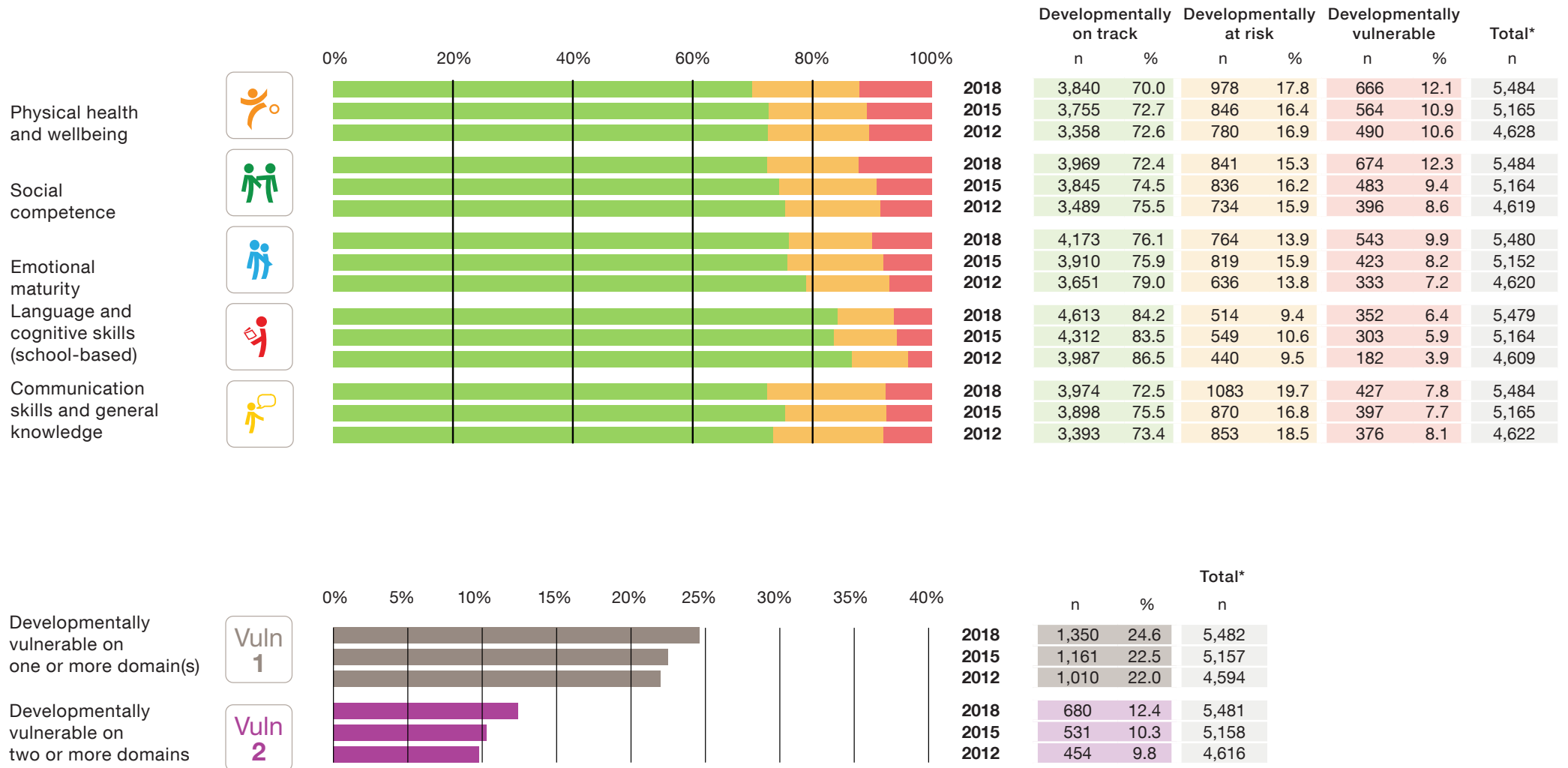
TAS trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



*Total children with valid scores



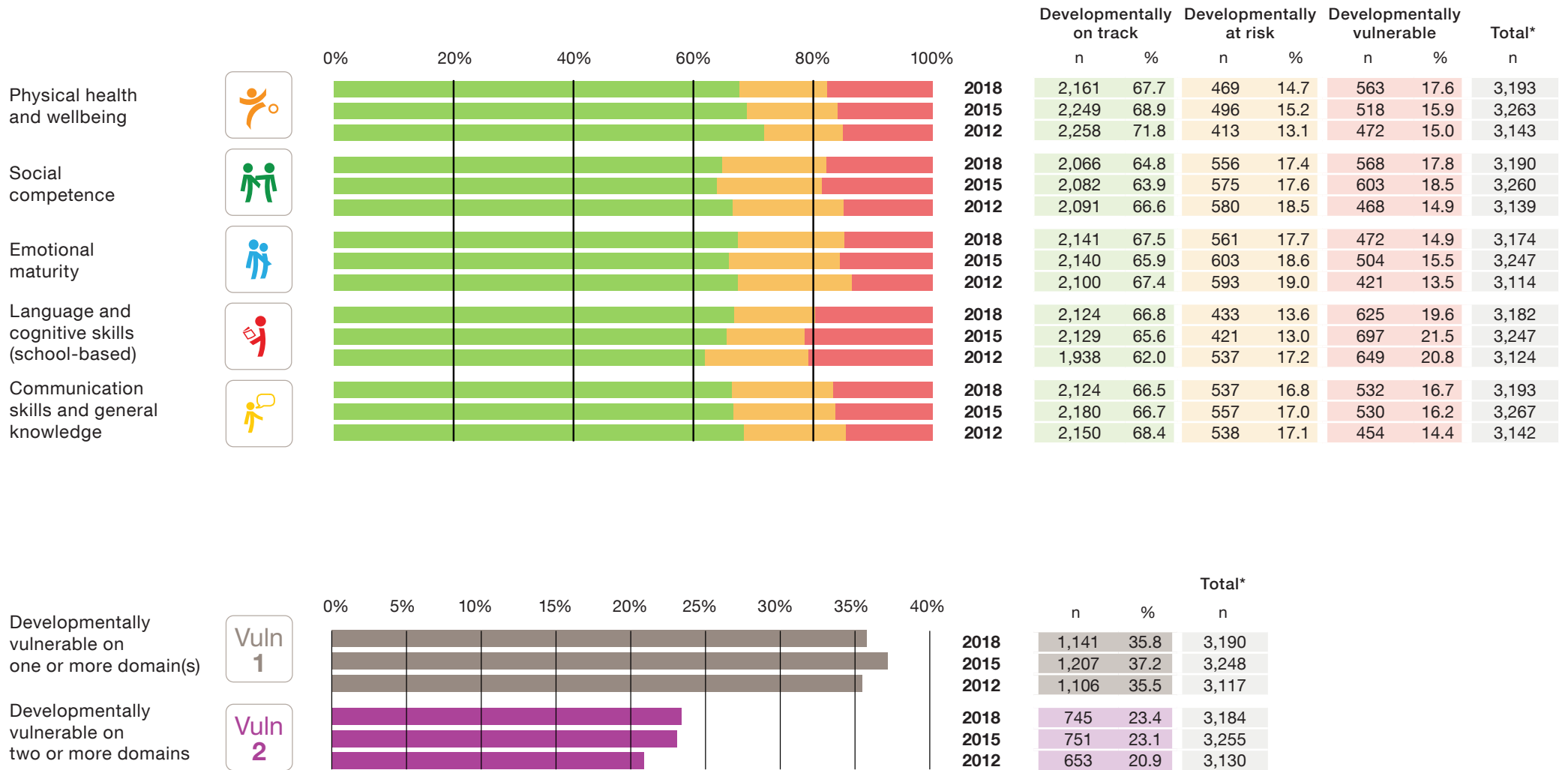
ACT trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



*Total children with valid scores



NT trends (2012, 2015, 2018)



*Total children with valid scores

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

(www.aedc.gov.au/) or alternatively by clicking on the links provided.

Refer to the **AEDC 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** (www.aedc.gov.au/unders).

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

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

AEDC videos

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

Key AEDC web pages

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

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