

# Everyone has a responsibility to support better outcomes for all children in the community

**Loxton Waikerie, Berri Barmera and Renmark  
Paringa Councils community stakeholders**

3 May 2023

# Acknowledgement of Country

We wish to acknowledge that the lands we meet on today are the traditional lands of the first people of the River Murray and Mallee Region and that we respect their spiritual connection to country.

Also acknowledging the first people of the River Murray and Mallee Region as the traditional custodians of the region and that their cultural and spiritual beliefs are still important to the living River Murray and Mallee Region people today.

Due to the Kinship Structure within Aboriginal communities, many Elders take on the role as primary carer of young children and provide the necessary support needed to thrive in their early years. They are their kin, they are their providers, they are their cultural guides and they are their first teachers.

In paying respects to the River Murray and Mallee Region Elders, past and present, we also acknowledge the important role they play in cultural maintenance and nurturing the children of today to grow strong in their identity and become strong leaders tomorrow.



**Part 1 – Setting the scene**

**Part 2 – About the AEDC**

**Part 3 – 2021 AEDC results (Loxton Waikerie, Berri Barmera, Renmark Paringa and SA)**

**Part 4 – Connecting with community**



**Part 5 – Audience voice, reflection and discussion**



# **Part 1**

## **Setting the scene**



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- With no significant shift in South Australia's AEDC results over the last 13 years, the Department for Education's Office for the Early Years has been established to drive reductions in childhood development vulnerabilities
  - The 2021 AEDC results show that despite slight improvements, the proportion of developmentally vulnerable children has increased since 2009. Most other jurisdictions have seen a decrease in vulnerability in the same period
  - Our challenge is to consider the AEDC trends and 2021 results in our policy settings to support improved balance between universal and targeted service provision, reduced barriers to access to services and increased reach of early intervention approaches
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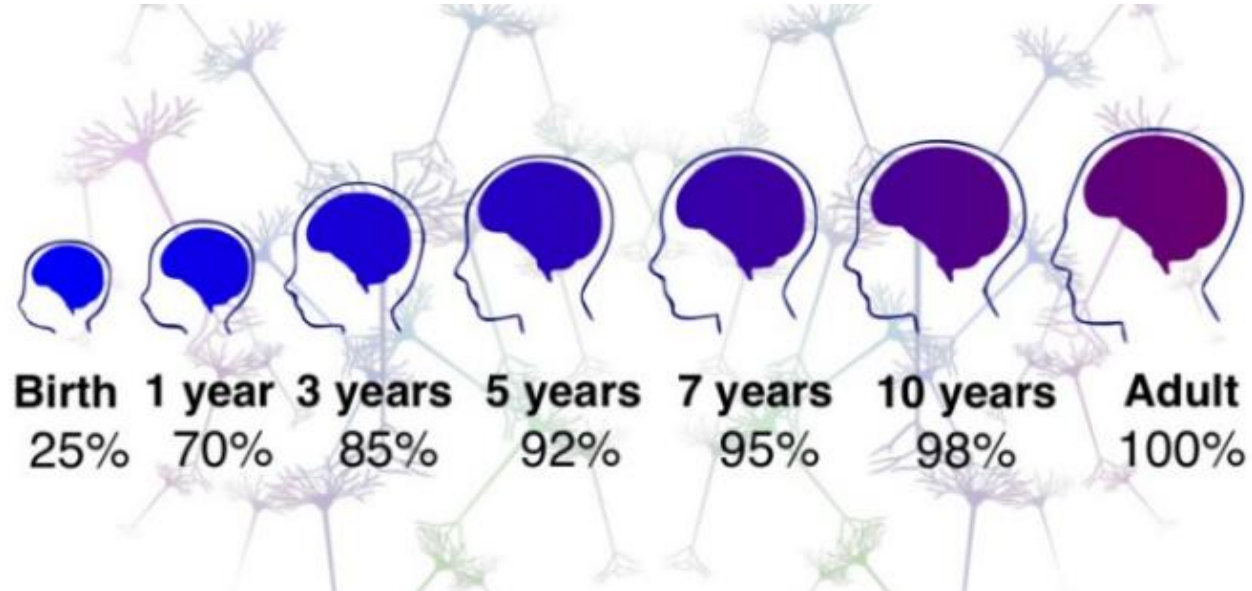
What is your  
community's  
vision for  
children?



# Why the first 5 years matter

*All children deserve the best start to life, and if we can get it right in those first 2000 days then we are more likely to see better outcomes for children, for families, and for society.*

*Professor Helen Skouteris*



A child's brain develops in response to both genes and the environment. It is the interaction between the genes and environment that really shape the developing brain; a dance between biology and experience. While genes provide the initial map for development, it is the experiences and relationships babies and children have every day that literally shape their brains. Families have an extremely important ongoing influence on children's development. The community and service environments in which children and families interact also play a key role in supporting optimal development

# SA Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People

Dimension	Outcome
1: Health	physically, mentally and emotionally healthy
2: Safety	safe and nurtured
3: Wellbeing	happy, inspired and engaged
4: Education	successful learners
5: Citizenship	participate actively in society

To progress the vision of South Australia being a state where the conditions exist for all children and young people to thrive, the framework is organised around a Charter for Children and Young People and 5 key life dimensions.

Note: The development of this framework was guided by the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016 (Act)* and the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Regulations 2017 (Regulations)*

[Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People \(childrensa.sa.gov.au\)](http://childrensa.sa.gov.au)



# Making a difference

It takes a range of stakeholders across our communities to provide the environments, services and conditions most needed by families for their children to thrive

## **Children do better when families:**

- Engage with quality early learning programs and experiences
- Provide responsive and positive caregiving
- Provide security and safety
- Provide quality nutrition and healthy routines
- Connect with other families in their community
- Access services when needed

## **Some factors that can help families:**

- Community and government collaboration
- Healthy environments and access to transport and green spaces
- Connected and integrated services
- Accessible information about services
- Appropriate service locations, operational hours, type and costs
- Communities supporting social connection
- Employment and income
- Affordable safe housing

# TALK



**Talking with a young child is one of the most important things a parent can do. Simple back-and-forth conversation is important for brain structure and function, reading skills, and socio-emotional development.**

**Talk to and with your baby, allow for the child's response and respond with interest.**

**Your facial expressions, body language and words will show your child that you're interested in what they are doing and communicating.**

#### **TALK FROM THE BEGINNING.**

Babies learn to communicate by watching your face and your mouth, they are born ready to learn to communicate.

#### **FACE TO FACE.**

Chat with your baby about what you are doing while you are changing their nappy or clothes, giving them a bath, feeding, or when having a cuddle.

#### **HOME LANGUAGE.**

Talk in the language that you are comfortable with. Babies need to hear fluent speech to learn the sounds and words they will be using when they start to speak.

#### **LISTEN AND REPEAT.**

Babies need to make a range of sounds and use these before they are developmentally ready to talk. Make sounds together throughout the day.

#### **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!**

Babies and toddlers need time to practice new skills. The more words a child hears, the more they will know when they can understand and later use them.

**WORDS GROW MINDS**

Learn more at  
[wordsgrowminds.com.au](http://wordsgrowminds.com.au)

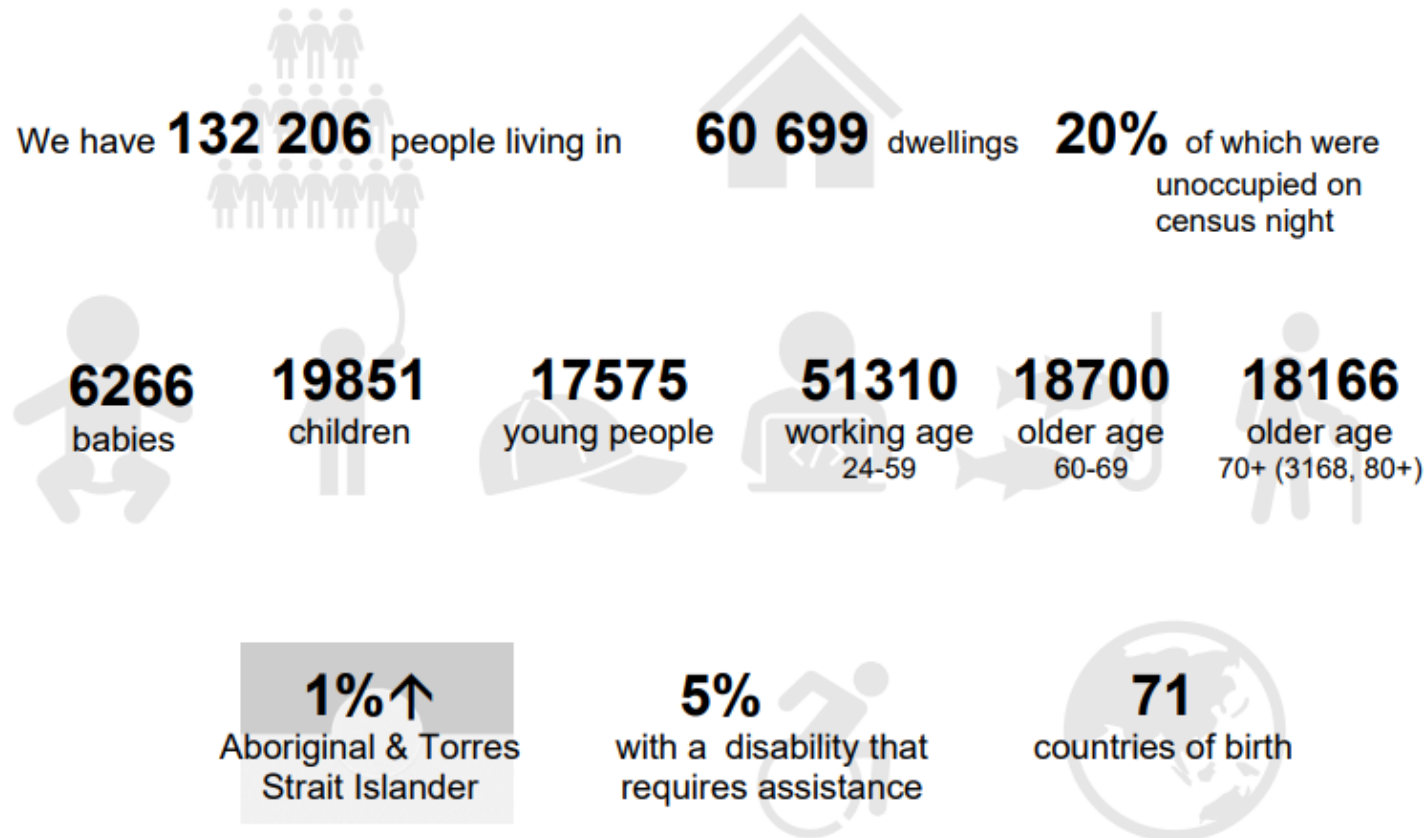


# Future proofing communities



# Data for informing health and wellbeing planning

## *Snapshot of our communities*



# Discussion

- Do you know
  - if children in your communities are developing on track in their first 5 years?
  - if the right conditions are in place to best support families and their children?
- Is your organisation putting their resources and efforts in the right place?
- What other sources of information were you drawing on that prompted you to focus there?



# Actions that can help

- A child centred approach in business as usual for all stakeholders with a role to play in supporting early childhood development
- A stakeholder group to retain focus and direction, monitor, evaluate, ensure optimisation of resources and shared direction and collaboration
- Maintaining the connections



# **Part 2**

## **About the AEDC**



# What is the AEDC?

- Nationwide census
- Data collected every 3 years since 2009
- Teacher completed instrument (100 questions)
- Children entering their first year of full-time school
- Schools and children in 3 education sectors
- Collects data on 5 developmental domains
- Validated for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children



In 2021, 20,259 (97.8%) children from 601 schools took part, the highest child participation rate to date in SA



# Why is the AEDC important?

## The AEDC:

- is the most comprehensive collection of its kind in the world
- provides a snapshot of children's early development in their first 5 years
- data can help identify what is working well and areas for improvement
- helps governments, communities and support services improve understanding of how to best support children and families
- provides vital information to help shape the future and wellbeing of our children

## Global

- [Sustainable development goals](#)
- [UNICEF Rights of the Child](#)

## National

- [Closing the Gap](#) – 55% on track by 2031
- Early childhood policy and data linkage research

## State

- [SA Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People](#)
- [State Public Health Plan](#)
- [Early Learning Strategy](#)

## Local

- [Regional Public Health Plan](#)

## Government

- Strategic plan & Accountability plans

## Community

- Community services policy and service provision
- Partnership approaches in response to AEDC results

## ECEC & schools

- ECEC and school improvement planning, programs and policies

# AEDC Domains



Physical health and wellbeing

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



Social competence

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



Emotional maturity

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



Language and cognitive skills (school based)

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



Communication skills and general knowledge

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

## AEDC indicators

- For each domain, children receive a score from 0 to 10
- Using 2009 data, cut-offs (0-10) were set to define 3 categories of development for each domain:
  - **Developmentally vulnerable** (below 10th percentile)
  - **Developmentally at risk** (10th to 25th percentile)
  - **Developmentally on track** (above 25th percentile)
- The cut-offs (0-10 scale) are fixed over time, this allows us to track changes in the % of children who are developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable on each domain for successive cohorts of children

Summary indicators	Meaning
OT5	Developmentally on track on five domains
DV1	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)
DV2	Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

Relevant links: [About the AEDC domains \(aedc.gov.au\)](http://aedc.gov.au)  
[Understanding the results \(aedc.gov.au\)](http://aedc.gov.au)

# Our vision – all SA children start school on track

A child who is 'on track' as measured by the AEDC:

- can physically cope with their school day
- is independent and confident
- has excellent motor skills
- gets along, works and plays with others well
- can follow routines and concentrate
- helps others
- is calm, kind and thoughtful
- likes to and can read, write simple sentences
- can count, recognise shapes and do math
- communicates and expresses themselves well, tells stories



# Looking at the data and research



# Australia and the AEDC



The number of children included in the AEDC has increased over the years, from over 260,000 in 2009 children to over 305,000 in 2021

In total, around 1.5 million children were included over the last 5 cycles

# Research tells us

AEDC results can be **predicted by:**

- Perinatal indicators
- Preschool attendance
- Playgroup attendance
- Child protection contacts

AEDC results can **predict:**

- NAPLAN
- Academic achievements
- Wellbeing
- Life course outcomes

If a child attends **playgroup** or **preschool** they are less likely to be measured as developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more or 2 or more domains

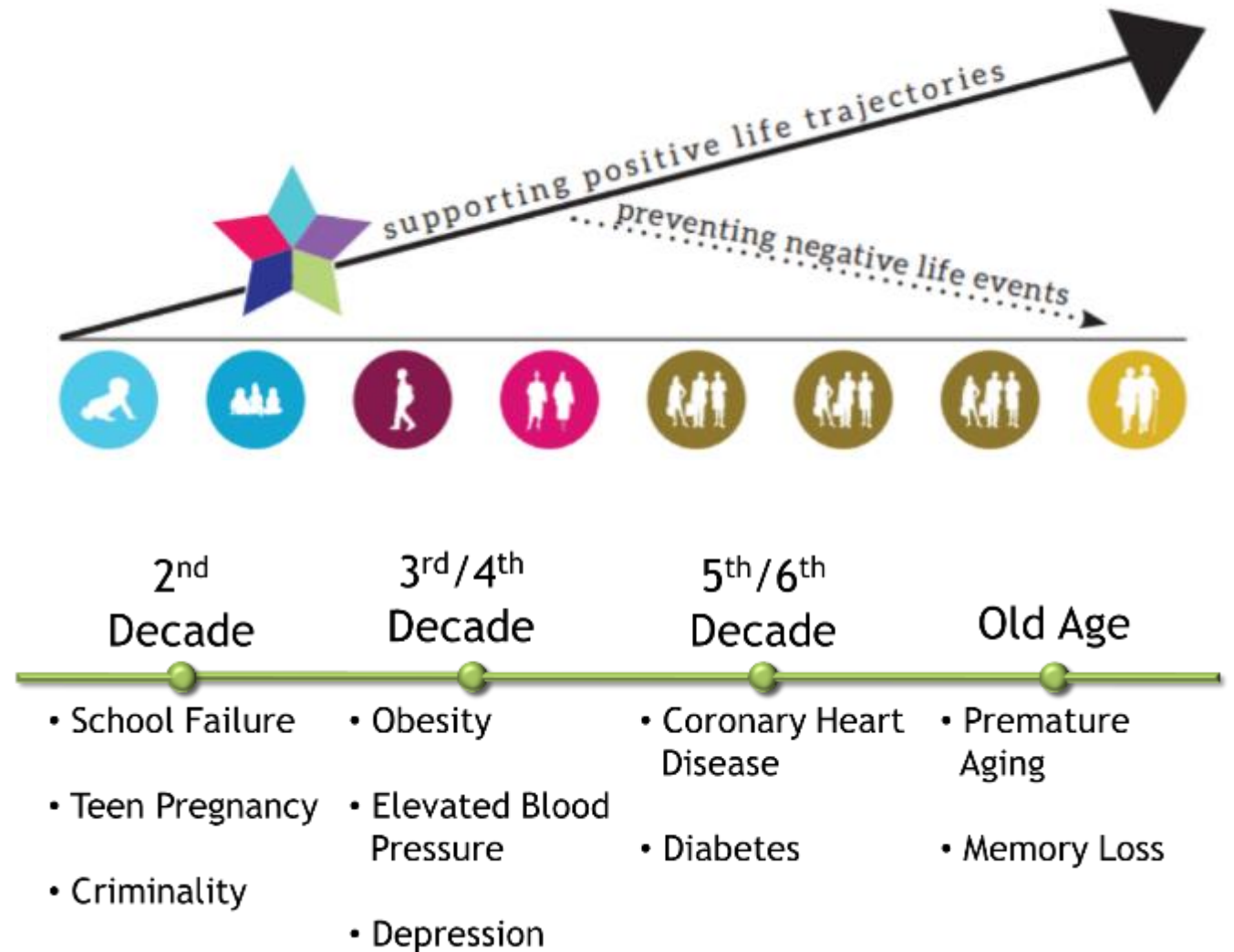
If a child experiences **out of home care** they are 3 times more likely to be measured as developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains as they start school and to perform poorly in Year 3 NAPLAN

If a child is measured as developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains they are 2 times more likely to score in the bottom 20% of students completing NAPLAN

# AEDC predicts Life course outcomes

## Research tells us:

- Early intervention and the prevention of developmental vulnerability leads to improved outcomes in health, wellbeing and academic success.
- Children that are developmentally 'on track' are more likely to experience a positive life trajectory, reducing negative events.



Source: Hertzman 2011

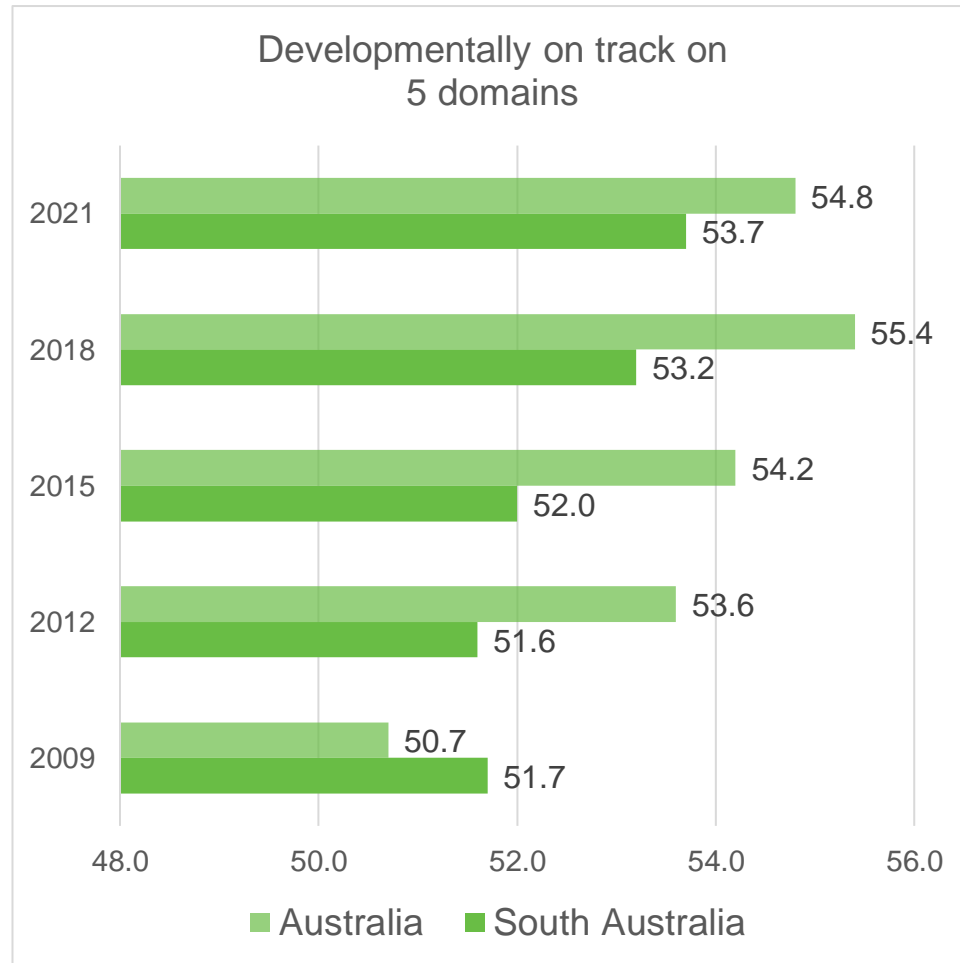
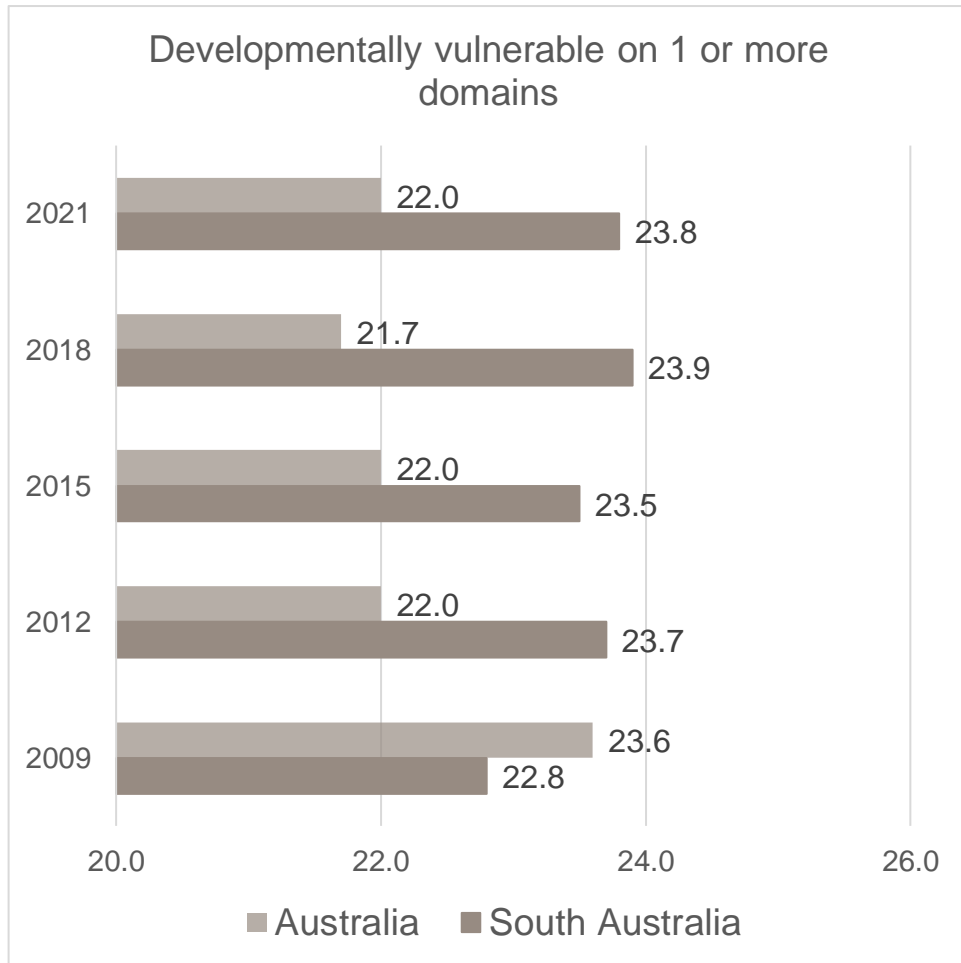
# **Part 3**

**2021 AEDC results  
(Loxton Waikerie, Berri Barmera, Renmark  
Paringa and SA)**





# National and SA summary indicators



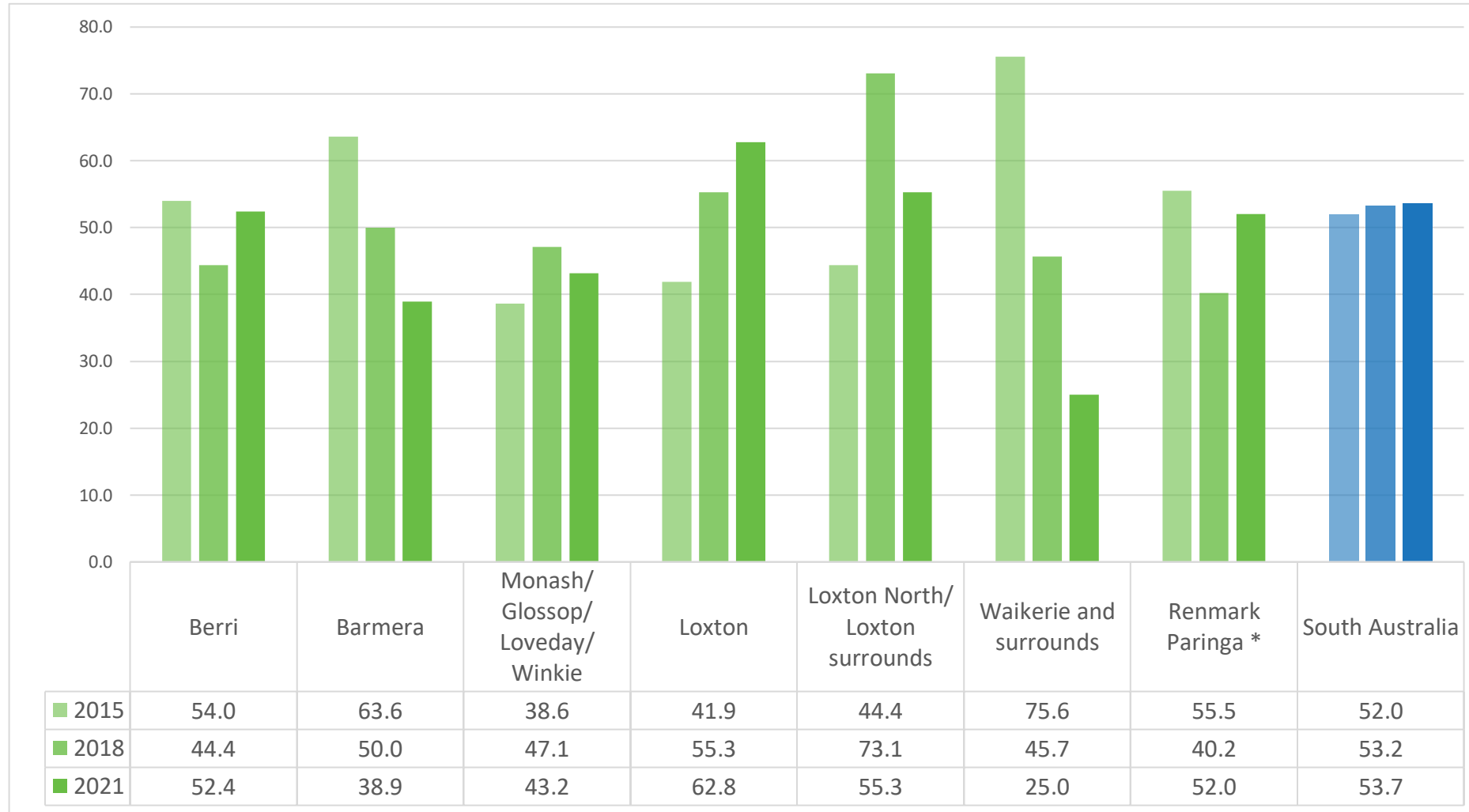
Nearly 1 in 4 children are developmentally vulnerable when starting school in SA

SA % of DV1 remains higher than the national results

In SA, OT5 has continued improving since 2012

# Developmentally on track on 5 domains (2015-2021)

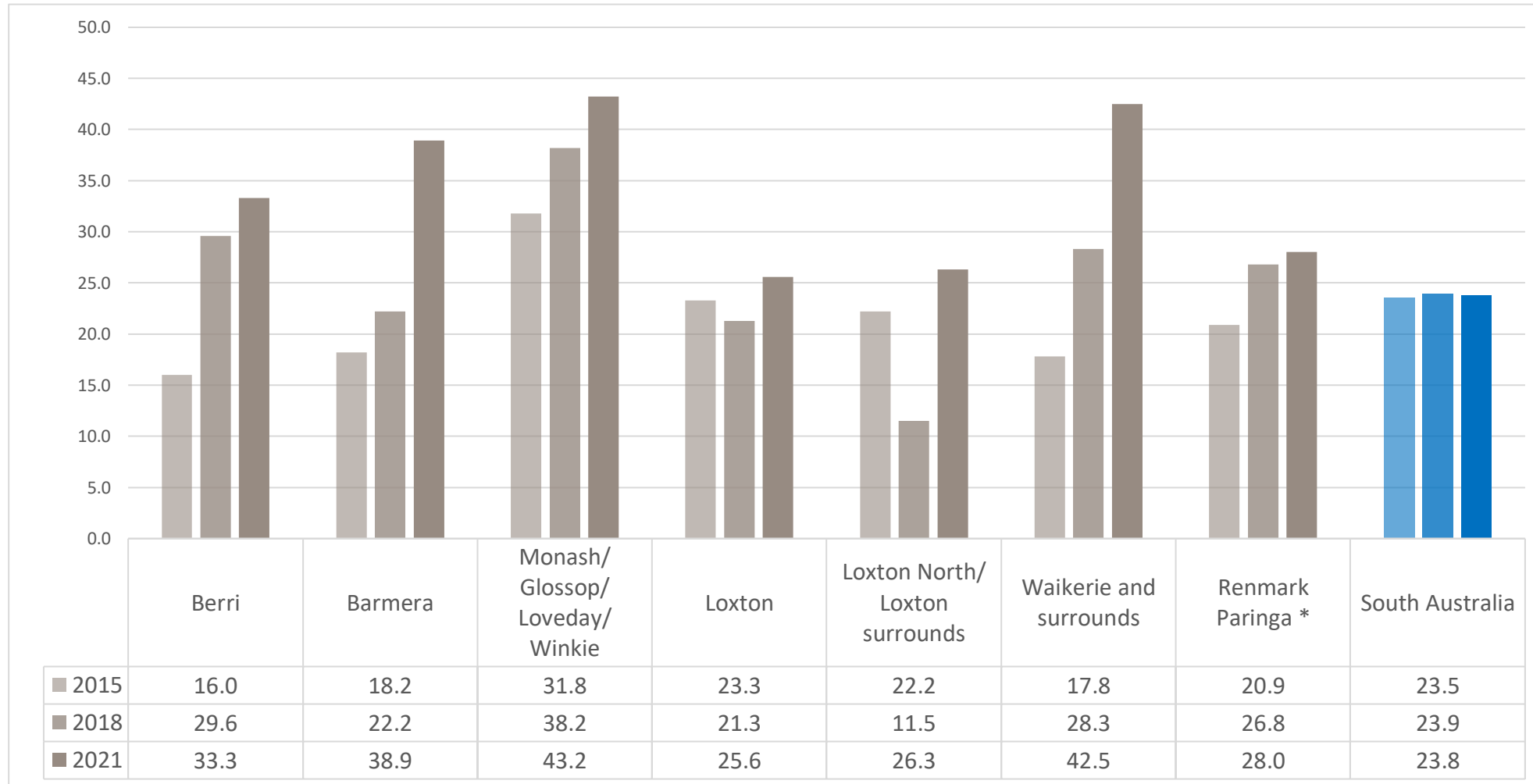
## Local communities



\* Data for Renmark Paringa is displayed at a community level

Source: AEDC SA Cycle 5 Power BI

# Developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domain(s) (2015-2021) Local communities



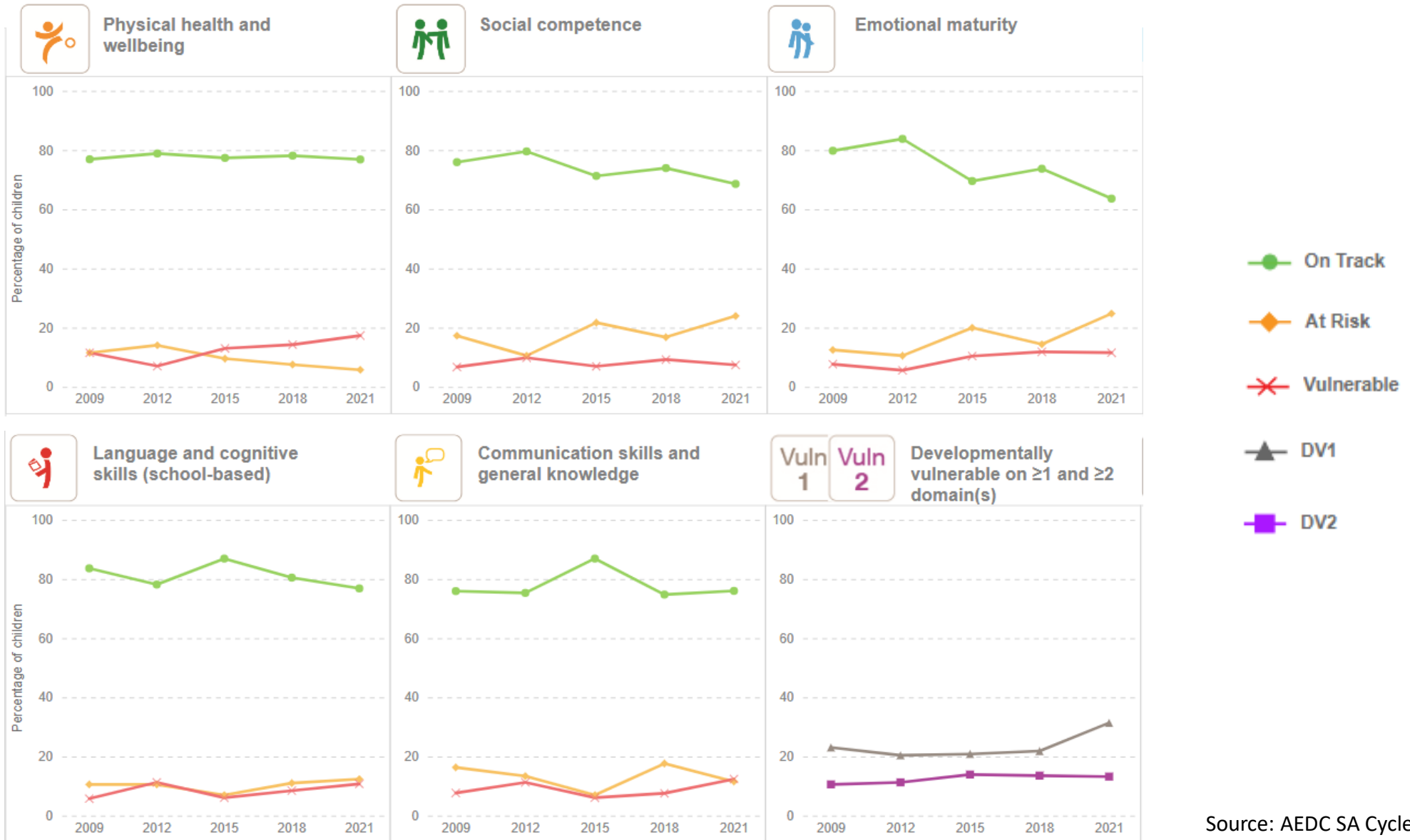
\* Data for Renmark Paringa is displayed at a community level, due to too few teachers or children to display in the Paringa and surrounds local community

Source: AEDC Data Explorer

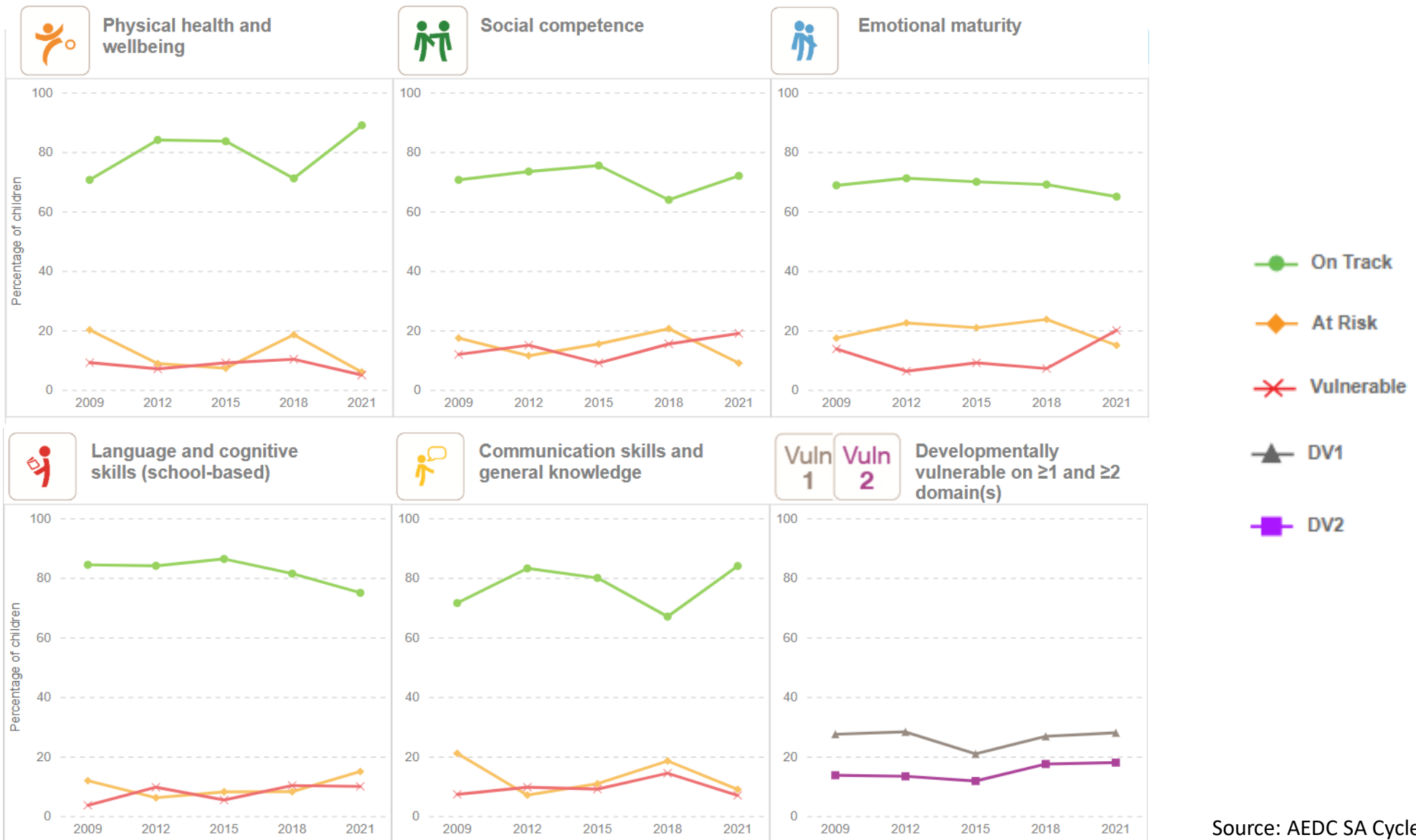
# AEDC trends from 2009-2021 – Berri Barmera



# AEDC trends from 2009-2021 – Loxton Waikerie



# AEDC trends from 2009-2021 – Renmark Paringa



# Questions to explore after looking at data

Look at domains that sit under the % and # of children DV1 or DV2

What might be the barriers?

Access to healthy food?

Access to health services?

Access to child development checks?

Balance between universal approach with a more targeted approach

- Balance is needed to ensure better outcomes for all children in the community
- Universal combined with targeted ensures a minimum level of support for all families
- Universal services allow for a non-stigmatising way for service providers to identify and connect with families who may require extra support

Where are the strengths – what is working well and what might be supporting this?

What are key needs in the community?

How are families finding out about what is important?

# How to find the data for your community?



ABOUT | PRIVACY | RESOURCES | RESEARCH | FAQs | CONTACT | SIGN IN

Our Children · Our Communities · Our Future

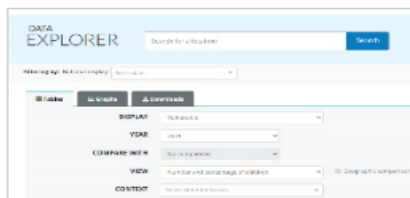
PARENTS | EARLY CHILDHOOD | COMMUNITIES | SCHOOLS | RESEARCHERS | DATA | Search

You are here: [Home](#) > [Data](#)

The AEDC census data provides a snapshot of children's development that can inform communities and support planning, policy and action.

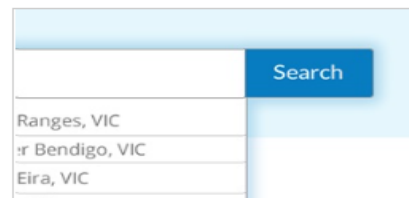
## How the data can be viewed

### DATA EXPLORER



Explore results by AEDC community and local community and compare with jurisdictional and national results. Download 2021 Community Profiles.

### DATA PRODUCTS



Access additional data products such as time series public tables by LGA, SA2, SA3, SA4, GCCSA, Remoteness, GIS data and SEIFA

### KEY FINDINGS



Key findings, with an interactive chart showing trends in the AEDC for individual domains and summary indicators from 2009 to 2021 at the national and jurisdictional level

<https://www.aedc.gov.au/data-explorer/>

[Navigating the AEDC data](#)



# AEDC stories in South Australia

Stories from SA schools and communities are available on the AEDC National website

The most recent ones are:

- [School Story: Focus on early literacy - Port Augusta-Quorn Education Partnership](#)
- [Community Story: Early Learning Strategy in South Australia](#)
- [Community Story: Mid Murray Family Connections](#)
- [Community Story: Strengthening parent participation in children's early development](#)
- [Community Story: A focus on supported playgroups – Lower Mid North Education Partnership](#)
- [School Story: St Joseph's School Hindmarsh](#)

**Mid Murray  
Family  
Connections**  
AEDC story

[Click here to  
watch the  
video](#)

**Supported  
Playgroups**  
Lower Mid North  
AEDC story

[Click here to  
watch the  
video](#)



# AEDC community story - Mid Murray Family Connections



# **Part 4**

## **Connecting with community**



# Why communities use the AEDC

Provides a common language around children's development and wellbeing

- Supports people to come together to work toward a common goal

Provides reliable data to support groups to reflect on the context of children and families and plan their services and supports

- Informs an approach to localised needs assessment: consider the scale and intensity of support needs and how these differ across communities
- Reflect on the experience of families in accessing the system of supports available
- Reflect on the strengths and protective factors that already exist in communities
- Develop collaborative and place-based approaches to improving outcomes for children and families



# Complementary data

- AEDC is just one dataset
- Combine AEDC data with other datasets to create a better understanding of the community, including:
  - [Australian Bureau of Statistics \(ABS\)](#), including QuickStats
  - [Social Health Atlases of Australia \(PHIDU\)](#)
  - [Community profiles and population forecasts \(.id\)](#)
  - [South Australian Government Data Directory \(Data.SA\)](#)
  - [Location SA Map Viewer](#)
- Also ask yourself:
  - What data do you already have access to in your line of work?
  - What community engagement data is available for your local area?
  - What anecdotal information is available?
  - What information may local partners be able to provide to help in creating the community context picture?



# Using the data to inform your planning

- Raise awareness of the needs of children you are supporting or providing services for
- Increase understanding of the community/environment children grow up in
- Plan for transitions
- Support continuity of learning
- Inform services/programs that builds on children's capacities

# My Local Services app

My Local services app is a smartphone application designed to deliver localised council information to residents of South Australia. It's free to download and easy to use on any Apple or Android smartphone device.

You can:

- personalise the app to only show information of your local council
- check which waste bin is due each week
- report an issue (broken bins, or pavement failures)
- receive weekly waste collection reminders the night before
- find out what's on in your local area
- locate your nearest council facility including community centres, libraries, playgrounds, toilets, and council buildings



# Local partners

Partners provide better understanding of the community context

Involving partners early is important

Consider who needs to be involved. This may include:

- community members
- local businesses
- state government
- local government partners
- early childhood service providers (including private sector)
- cultural authorities
- NGOs.

Consider how you will work with partners. For example, a collective impact framework, which involves five key conditions:

- a common agenda; continuous communication; mutually reinforcing activities; backbone support; and shared measurement.





# The improvement approach

1. Review your data
2. Map the strengths in the community
3. Bring together community partners
4. Agree on your area of focus
5. Develop a plan (actions that each partner will do)
6. Implement agreed approach(s)
7. Monitor & evaluate progress



# Practical approaches in action

When preschools and schools work with stakeholders to respond to their AEDC and other data this can work toward improved children's development and learning outcomes, shared resources, reduced duplication and focussed effort where it is most needed.

Stakeholders can include families, volunteers, community organisations, government agencies, children/young people, local councils/libraries and staff.

Consider the benefit of universal responses and when targeted approaches are needed.

Some ideas:

- Parenting programs such as Circle of Security
- Breakfast programs
- Lunchtime clubs / activities run by volunteers
- Adult learning opportunities on site
- Playgroups on site, in the community, in and out of preschool/school hours, universal and targeted, facilitated or community lead
- Sharing/swapping items eg community book / produce swap box
- Spare uniform wardrobe/ laundry on site
- Flexible and mixed parent engagement methods used eg site leader at the front gate, home visits, targeted social media, scheduled phone calls, translations of materials/information on a range of platforms, use of apps
- Optimising supervised access to local natural spaces eg at lunch time



# Practical approaches in action (continued)

- Bilingual preschool support, cultural celebrations
- Trauma informed practice training and whole of school implementation
- Consistent transition to school approaches
  - ✓ Primary school teachers engaging with preschool families in the preschool and school setting to foster early and strong relations with families prior to the start of school
  - ✓ Connecting with Long Day Care services and non-government schools to provide effective transition support for children and families as children enrol into preschools and schools and transition from ECEC to school
- Optimising site facilities use by stakeholders fostering a sense of belonging, intergenerational relationships and familiarity with sites
- Professional learning focussed on challenges of practice that the AEDC results have highlighted eg parent engagement, language development
- Changes to outdoor areas to better support children's development in the 5 AEDC domains eg: spaces that enable gross motor skill development, foster social connections, support emotional regulation, and imaginative play
- Using the AEDC results to inform Quality Improvement Plans and School Improvement Plans
- Looking at the AEDC results alongside NAPLAN and Wellbeing and Engagement collection results can help to track cohorts of children and evaluate the effectiveness of responses, policies, planning and programs



There are a range of stories from [ECEC/ Schools](#) and [Communities](#) that you can look at for further examples

# Resources

Links to:

[2021 AEDC National Report](#)

[Early Childhood Sector User Guide \(aedc.gov.au\)](#)

[AEDC Fact sheet – Choosing effective interventions](#)

[AEDC Community stories \(aedc.gov.au\)](#)

[AEDC fact sheets](#)

[Data explorer](#)

[Resources for Communities \(aedc.gov.au\)](#)

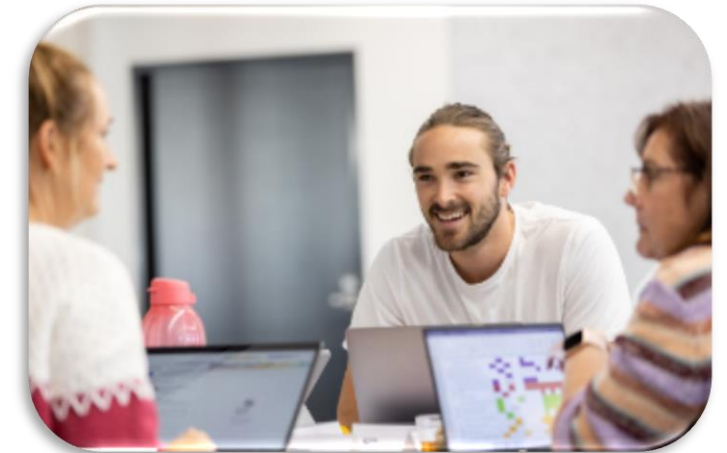
[FAQ's](#)



# AEDC online professional program

- Available on [Plink](#)
- **This program will help you:**
  - understand how to access and use AEDC data
  - reflect on what is driving or obstructing children's development and learning in your community by using the AEDC data and other data sets
  - analyse AEDC data so you can make change and improve outcomes for children in your ECEC or school
  - identify your strategic partners
  - plan for programs, transitions and partnerships
  - identify issues, opportunities and key actions to inform your improvement planning
  - monitor and measure progress.
- Approximately 1.5 hours to complete all 4 modules

plink.



# Resources for parents

- [Raising Children Network](#), has expert parenting information from pregnancy onwards.
- [Open your world](#) provides South Australians and their families with valuable resources, tools and information to support improving wellbeing by staying healthy, active and connected.
- [Parenting SA](#) has practical guides and short videos about raising children.
- [Learning Potential](#) has tips and ideas about helping your child's learning.
- [Starting Blocks](#) provides parents with information about early childhood education and care.
- [Great Start](#) provides everyday ideas for learning.
- [Our Learning SA](#) has resources to help families and children to continue learning between school and home.
- [The free Bright Tomorrows app](#) has 1000s of ideas to help build a child's brain.
- [The Let's Read](#) website has tips and tools to promote reading with young children.
- [Visit the National Disability Insurance Scheme website](#) for information about accessing support if you have concerns about your child's development.



# Resources for communities

- [2021 AEDC National Report](#)
- [AEDC Fact sheet – Choosing effective interventions](#)
- [AEDC Early Childhood Sector User Guide \(aedc.gov.au\)](#)
- [AEDC Community stories \(aedc.gov.au\)](#)
- [AEDC fact sheets](#)
- [AEDC Data explorer](#)
- [AEDC Resources for Communities \(aedc.gov.au\)](#)
- [AEDC FAQ's](#)
- [Centre for Community Child Health : Platforms \(rch.org.au\)](#)
- [The Australian Physical Literacy Framework \(pescholar.com\)](#)



# **Part 5**

## **Audience voice, reflection and discussion**





# Group activity

## Consider your role

- What services do you offer?
- To whom? (service criteria)
- What are your referral pathways?
- Who do you frequently see?
- Who are services not seeing? Why?
- What are your experiences with children and families? Does service data reflect this?
- For whom does the service make the most difference?



<b>Barriers to access</b>	<p><i>What is getting in the way of utilisation of existing supports and services – are services and supports culturally appropriate?</i></p> <p><i>Do people know about what is available?</i></p> <p><i>Is there a stigma attached to service use?</i></p> <p><i>Do families feel like services are working with them or ‘doing to them’?</i></p> <p><i>Do services welcome all children and families?</i></p> <p><i>Do families have access to transport?</i></p> <p><i>Are services located in transport corridors?</i></p> <p><i>Are services affordable?</i></p> <p><i>Are wait times prohibitive?</i></p> <p><i>Are there competing priorities?</i></p>
<b>Building local partnerships</b>	<p><i>Who do you need to connect with to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>- Get a better understanding?</i></li><li><i>- To connect with families early?</i></li><li><i>- To develop a shared response?</i></li></ul>



# Group activity

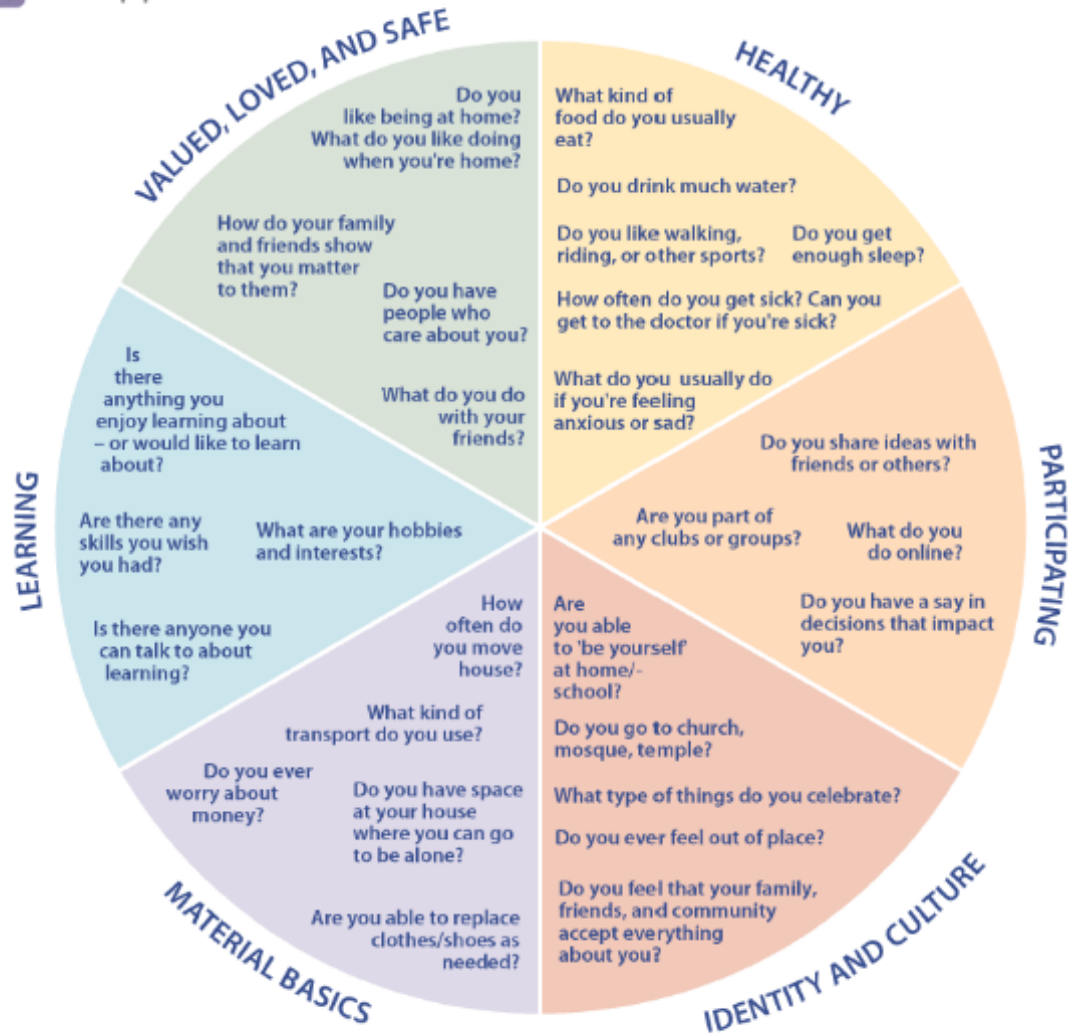
## Community data story

In small groups, use the information in the AEDC community profile and what you already know about your community.

- What is getting in the way for children and families?
- Are there others who could help fill knowledge gaps, or support you to engage 'hard to reach' families?
- To what extent does the AEDC data reflect the protective factors at the family and community level?
- What are the strengths and potential protective factors within your community?
- What might be supporting development at the family level?
- To what extent does the AEDC data reflect challenges families might be facing?
- What will you do next?



# Wellbeing Prompts - Talking with young people



## Holistic

Am I covering every wellbeing area?

## Child-centred

What is the young person's perspective?

## Strengths-based

What is going well that might help the areas of need?

## Working in partnership

Are we working together with everyone involved?

# Questions for further reflection

- **Strengths and protective factors**
  - What is working well for children and families in your community?
  - What might be contributing to this?
  - Are there protective factors that can be strengthened or expanded within the community?
- **Understanding local families and children:**
  - How well are children's contexts reflected in your existing policies and programs?
  - What might be getting in the way of families benefiting from supports?
- **Connecting with community:**
  - What can you draw on in the community to support young learners and families?
  - Is there a community partner/stakeholder who can help you?
- **Further investigation:**
  - Is there any information that you think is missing from today's presentation or areas that could be further investigated?
  - How might you find this additional information?

# What will you do next?

- Do you need to speak with others to find out more information (such as, community engagement)?
- Are there others you have heard from today who are working toward the same vision (how could you share information/develop referral pathways/reduce complexities of accessing services for families)?
- Are there potential benefits in exploring a joint initiative (sharing resources/knowledge/expertise)?



# Provocations for reflection and further discussion

Think about what stands out for you from this presentation:

- \* What surprised you?
- \* What inspired you?
- \* Where to now – what next?



The key to flourishing neighbourhoods is to strengthen local assets and social capacity, while also tackling vulnerabilities and disadvantage.

***Rebecca Haynes***

**A/State Coordinator, Australian Early Development Census  
Early Childhood Services and Strategy**

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w [About AEDC in SA](http://AboutAEDCinSA) | w [www.education.sa.gov.au](http://www.education.sa.gov.au) | w [aedc.gov.au](http://aedc.gov.au) |

Note: national results drawn from the 2021 AEDC National report and SA data sourced from the SA 2021 AEDC Pivot Table  
Quote from Inclusive SA (State Disability Inclusion plan 2019-2023)







Thank you

*Children are not a  
distraction from  
more important  
work.*

*They are the most  
important work.*

*CW Lewis*