

# South Australian 2018 AEDC Snapshot

## Making a difference for early childhood development and wellbeing

### SA Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People

**Charter:** SA Where all children and young people grow strong and lead happy, healthy lives [childrensa.sa.gov.au](http://childrensa.sa.gov.au)

**Measure of progress:** Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more of the five domains of the AEDC when they enter school

#### What the AEDC is

The AEDC is a national census of the development of children, completed every 3 years by teachers about children in their first year of full-time school

#### Why it is important

AEDC data highlights how children have developed across five domains that support them to engage in learning and connect with peers at school

#### Who uses the AEDC

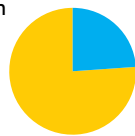
Leaders, policy makers, service providers, governments, communities, education sectors and researchers

#### How AEDC data is used

AEDC data informs local programs and services for children and families, school planning and state government initiatives, and improves our understanding of how to best support children and families

### SA compared to Australia

The percentage of Australian children developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains is improving over time. However in SA developmental vulnerability increased in 2018:



**24%** SA children were developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains compared to 21.7% in Australia, up 1.1% since 2009



**13%** SA children were developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains compared to 11% in Australia, up 1.5% since 2019

### Number of children developmentally vulnerable by domain

**1 in 9**  
2,072



**Physical health and wellbeing**

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

**1 in 9**  
2,200



**Social competence**

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

**1 in 9**  
2,064



**Emotional maturity**

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

**1 in 14**  
1,375



**Language and cognitive skills (school based)**

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

**1 in 13**  
1,620



**Communication skills and general knowledge**

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

**Vulnerability on 1 or more AEDC domains can affect lifelong education, health, and wellbeing outcomes**

There are developmentally vulnerable children in all SA communities

Some communities have seen improvement in their AEDC results over time

Children who are Aboriginal, boys or living in very remote areas are twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable

### Outcomes for South Australia's children can improve

#### The first 1000 days

Investing in the early years can reduce expenditure on special education, criminal justice and welfare, and increase national productivity

#### Predictive factors

Factors shown to predict AEDC results include perinatal, child safety, demographic and participation in playgroup and preschool

#### Supporting strategies

Child centred policy, quality early care and education, population health prevention, child safety, early intervention, strong communities

#### Using the AEDC

Inform policy, planning and service provision. Balance universal and targeted services. Evaluate policy, programs and services. Measure progress

**Turn over for more about the factors that impact early childhood development in the AEDC domains**

# Factors making a difference in early childhood development and wellbeing

In 2018 55.3% of Australia's children were developing on track compared to 53.1% in SA. We all have a role to play in influencing a child's early development from conception



A range of factors impact children's life outcomes  
The AEDC can help us understand:

- the environments children are growing up in
- what might be supporting or getting in the way of their development and wellbeing
- and where to focus our efforts to make a difference

## The first 1000 days of life are important

- 90% of a child's foundational brain development occurs before they reach school
- A child's brain develops in response to both genes and the environment, including daily experiences and relationships. Biological and social factors can have lifelong impacts on children's development, health, wellbeing and productivity

Center on the Developing Child 2010, Harvard University

## 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

## What can help families?

- community and government collaboration
- connected and integrated services
- healthy environments and access to transport
- accessible information about services
- appropriate service locations, operational hours, type and costs
- communities supporting social connection
- employment and income
- affordable safe housing

## Benefits of positive early childhood development

Developing on track reduces the likelihood of:

- school failure
- teen pregnancy
- criminality
- poor health and mental health
- premature ageing and memory loss

**Predictive factors** linked to developmental vulnerability in the AEDC domains include:

- not attending high quality education and care settings such as preschool and playgroup
- child protection notifications
- community and household poverty
- smoking in pregnancy, low birthweight and premature birth
- parental history of mental illness and or criminal offending

## Making a change

To increase the proportion of SA children developing on track, and reduce the number at risk or developmentally vulnerable by the time they start school, consider:

- using the AEDC to inform your policies, services and planning
- how you help families and support children's development
- what might be getting in the way of children's development
- ensuring families can access the right mix of universal and targeted services across all South Australian communities
- collaborative approaches and investments
- measuring change