

Australian Early
Development Census 2021

Northern Territory Report



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Education respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which young Territorians are educated.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of the Northern Territory and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We respect and support the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

While this report uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations people living in the Northern Territory. In this document, 'Aboriginal' should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Interpreter services

If you need an interpreter to read this document, contact one of these services, who will arrange one for you:

- Interpreting and Translating Service NT on 08 8999 8506
- the Aboriginal Interpreter Service on 1800 334 944.

For more information about interpreter services, visit www.nt.gov.au/page/interpreter-services





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Foreword by the Minister of Education

All children deserve, and must have, the best possible start in life. The evidence is clear that a child's earliest experiences shape a child's wellbeing throughout their life. Good experiences early in life enable children to thrive at school, stay healthy and socially connected, and be productive members of the Northern Territory community.

Every three years, children in Transition across the Northern Territory take part in the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). Teachers complete the census for each child in their first year of fulltime schooling to help us identify and measure the developmental needs of Northern Territory children.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to ensuring that all children have the best possible start in life. It is encouraging that the substantial investment the Northern Territory Government has made to establishing and expanding early childhood programs is gaining momentum.

Since 2010 we have increased Preschool hours, expanded Child and Family Centres and Families as First Teachers sites to improve outcomes for Northern Territory children and their families.

Whilst we have seen some success, differences in early childhood development across different regions and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, confirms that there is more work to be done to close the gap between those children who are thriving in our community and those who are facing more challenges.

The AEDC data from 2021 provides an insight into the early effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families. Across Australia, children who started school in 2021 experienced some disruption to their early learning participation. Our education systems responded and adapted their programs. For many families the pandemic enabled them to spend more time connecting with their children and their early learning experiences. AEDC data from this collection reflects both the challenges and the benefits during this time. The percentage of children developmentally on track in their early literacy skills has declined. This lost ground is most evident where there was existing developmental disadvantage. These changes in the AEDC highlight the importance of ensuring young children are well supported over the coming years to mitigate impacts for the families most affected in their access to employment, social support, and early education and care.



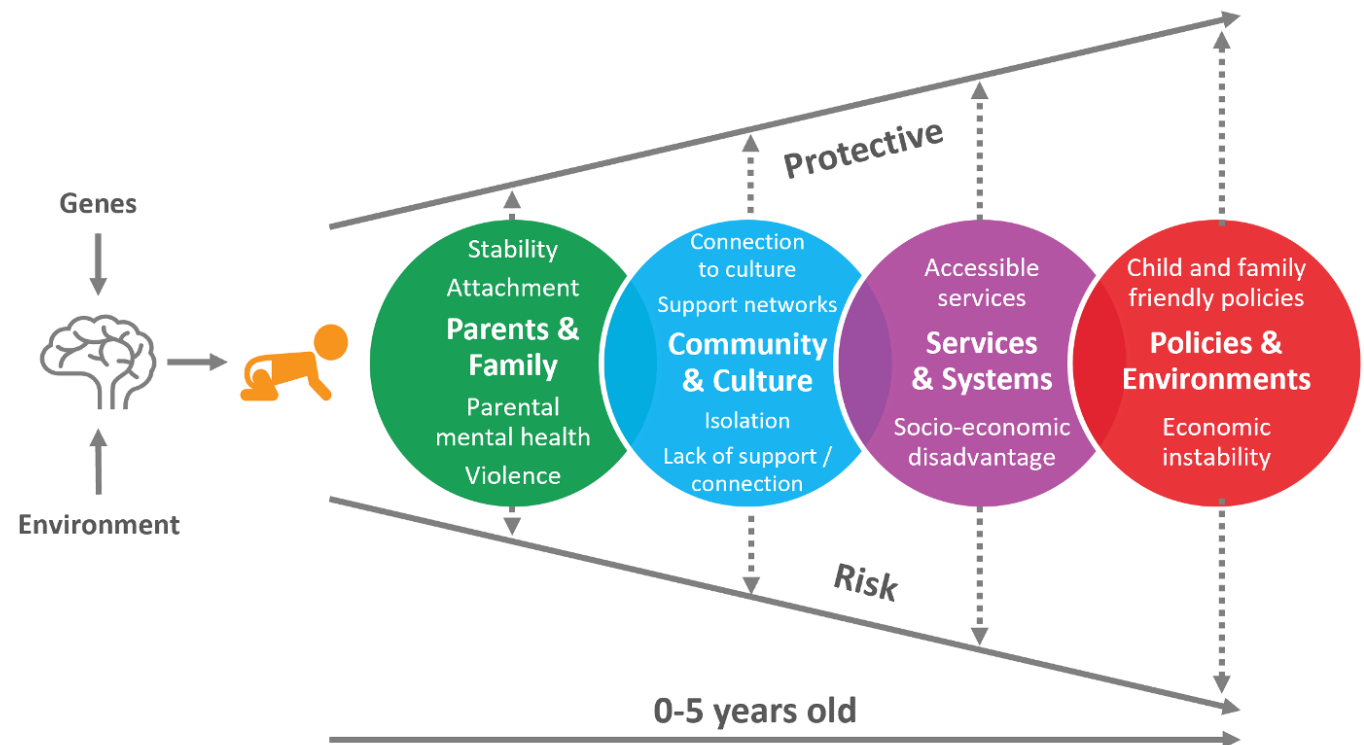
Lifting the wellbeing of our children remains one of the Northern Territory Government's key priorities. To do that effectively, and to know where we are making a difference, we need good data. This is why the AEDC data is such a good resource. The AEDC findings provide an important picture of children's development. This data helps schools, communities and governments to identify the services and resources to support the wellbeing of children who will shape the future of the Northern Territory.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, representing Hon Mark Monaghan MLA.

Hon Mark Monaghan MLA
Minister for Education

The importance of early childhood development

From birth, a child's genes and environment affect their early learning. The first five years of a child's life is a vital period of development and are fundamental to their success and wellbeing later in life. As a child continues to grow, family, peers, community, and the broader environment (such as government policies and the economy) all contribute to the child's development. Within each of these environments there are many risk and protective factors. Positive early childhood experiences shape a child's ability to thrive at school, stay healthy and socially connected, and be productive members of the community. Supporting and investing in quality early education and care services and supporting families to be safe and strong are some of the ways to lay strong foundations for children to thrive, bringing benefits for them and the whole Territory community.



About the Australian Early Development Census

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a national measure of early childhood development. The AEDC provides a snapshot of how well children and families are supported from conception through to school age. This data provides an evidence base used by governments and communities to identify what is working well and what needs to be improved to support children and their families.



The AEDC was first implemented in 2009 and has since been conducted every three years. The results can be compared across time to identify trends in early childhood development at community, regional, state, and national levels. By providing common ground, AEDC data empowers communities to collaborate to shape the future wellbeing of children.

The census includes approximately 100 questions across five domains that are predictors of good adult health, education, and social outcomes. Participation is voluntary, with data collected through the cooperation of parents and the active involvement of the Northern Territory Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors.

The census questions are answered online by teachers for every child enrolled in their first year of full-time schooling. In the Northern Territory this is the Transition year. Every Transition teacher and Aboriginal Cultural Consultant who also knows the children, answer questions together about every child in their class, based on their knowledge and observations of the children.

AEDC data is available to everyone online and is reported at local community, state, territory and national levels. The AEDC is never reported for individual children. There are publication rules to prevent children from being identified in the data.

For 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 are identified as children with special needs. At a local community level, data is reported through school profiles to the schools that participated in the collection. However, to preserve confidentiality, school profiles are not publicly released and schools with fewer than six children participating in the AEDC do not receive a School Profile report.

Domain information about children with special needs is not included in the AEDC dataset because of the already identified substantial developmental needs of this group. Demographic information on children with special needs is collected to enable communities to be responsive to all children in their community.

Is the AEDC reliable?

Studies in Canada, where the Early Development Instrument (EDI) was developed, have confirmed the reliability of teacher reporting. Prior to implementation in Australia, a series of adaptation and [validation studies](#)¹ were completed, including an Indigenous adaptation [study](#)² in 2009. To ensure consistency, teachers undertake online

training and are provided with detailed information to help them accurately complete the instrument for children in their class.

Based on the findings of the study an adapted EDI was integrated into the national Australian Early Development Census in 2009 with the following modifications:

- Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school personnel to work as Cultural Consultants with teachers in completing the Australian version of the EDI for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Inclusion of contextual information in the online teacher guide so that cultural considerations can be taken into account on certain Early Development Instrument questions.
- Inclusion of additional Early Development Instrument items of relevance to understanding the particular circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that may affect attendance and performance. These circumstances may include those relating to culture such as use of home language, sickness such as history of otitis media or hearing difficulties, or other.

These modifications have been included for all children in all AEDC data collections.

AEDC domains

The five AEDC domains below provide a holistic picture of how children are developing and are predictors of children's later health, wellbeing and academic development.



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 results

Based on the teacher and Aboriginal Cultural Consultants' answers to the census questions, children are allocated a score for each of the five AEDC domains. Using benchmark scores calculated in 2009, children are determined to be either developmentally on track, developmentally at risk or developmentally vulnerable on each domain.

Developmentally on track

Children are considered to be developing well. As such, it is desirable to see the percentage of children who are 'developmentally on track' increase with each new AEDC collection cycle.

Developmentally at risk

Children are facing challenges in some aspects of their development. Changes in the percentage of children 'developmentally at risk' need to be considered alongside changes in the percentage of children developmentally on track and developmentally vulnerable. For example, a reduction in those who are developmentally vulnerable could coincide with an increase in those developmentally at risk which would signal an overall improvement. Alternatively, a reduction in those who are developmentally on track could coincide with an increase in those who are developmentally at risk which would signal an overall decline in development.

Developmentally vulnerable

Children are facing some significant challenges in their development. As such, it is desirable to see the percentage of children who are developmentally 'vulnerable' decrease with each new AEDC collection cycle.

AEDC summary indicators

The AEDC has three summary indicators that can be used together to monitor trends in child development. Combining these three AEDC summary indicators provides a picture of how a population of children are developing overall.

Two of these summary indicators measure developmental vulnerability across the domains and help identify groups of children who are most developmentally vulnerable:

Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (DV1):

The percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on ONE or more AEDC domain(s).

Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (DV2):

The percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on TWO or more AEDC domains.

In 2021 a new strengths-based indicator, developmentally on track on five domains (OT5), was introduced. This summary indicator helps to identify where things are working well to support children's holistic development. It is the basis for the [Closing the Gap Target 4 'children thrive in their early years'](#).³

Developmentally on track on five domains (OT5):

The percentage of children who are developmentally on track on all FIVE AEDC domains.

For further information about the domains and domain characteristics please refer to the fact sheet [About the AEDC domains](#).⁴

Critical difference

Changes in AEDC data look larger in some areas than in others, especially in the Northern Territory where there are small numbers of children. To support people to consider the size of the change in their area, a method has been developed called the 'critical difference'. The critical difference can also be used to explore changes over time in the summary indicators – DV1, DV2, and OT5.

The critical difference is the minimum percentage point change required between two collection cycles for the results to represent a 'significant change' in children's development. The critical difference varies slightly for the different AEDC



indicators because it is mainly determined by the number of children in the group being compared over time (e.g., state/territory, community, school).

A comprehensive explanation of the percentiles and cut-offs is given in the fact sheet [Understanding the results](#)⁵ and the information video [Understanding the Data](#)⁶.

The 'critical difference tool' is available for use on the [AEDC website](#)⁷. For more information about the tool and tips on how to interpret results, refer to page 45.'

Using AEDC data

The AEDC can be used in conjunction with other demographic and community data by communities, schools, government and non-government agencies for informing programs and policy to support early childhood development.

AEDC data can be used both as a lead and a lag indicator. As a lag indicator, the AEDC can provide insight into how children have developed in the years prior to school entry. This can prompt consideration of what might have influenced children's development, and where improvements can be made. As a lead indicator, it can predict how well children may fare in later academic achievement and wellbeing, known as future human capability. The AEDC data helps initiate conversations and partnerships across education, health and community services through providing key stakeholders with common ground to work together to shape the future and wellbeing of children in the Territory.

Targeted resources are available for communities, schools and government and non-government agencies to assist in understanding results and guides on how to use those results to engage community members and plan actions to better support children and their families. These can be sourced from the [NT Department of Education website](#)⁸.

There is an AEDC Discussion Toolkit that was developed by the Northern Territory Department of Education and the Telethon Kids Institute. It is



a powerful community engagement tool to assist communities to explore the data and plan actions to better support children and their families.

Specifically designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to ensure it is culturally appropriate, the toolkit will guide community members through the steps they can take when thinking about how to respond to AEDC data for their community. It is designed to facilitate group discussions through respectful, strengths-based conversations and support shared decision making.

The toolkit is based on Engoori; which comes



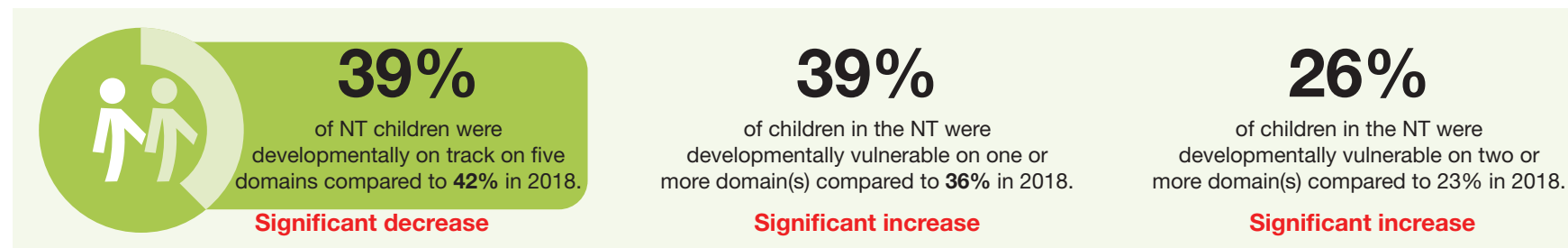
from Mithaka Country. Engoori is a process in which differences can be resolved without conflict through a strengths-based approach, moving the conversation forward on a strong foundation. Engoori shifts the conversation by asking:

- What are the things that keep you strong and make you strong?
- How do you use that strength to enable you to achieve positive results?

The toolkit can be sourced from the Northern Territory Department of Education, AEDC team on ntaedc.doe@education.nt.gov.au











Snapshot AEDC 2021 in the Northern Territory

Summary Indicators



Developmental Domains

Table 1: Percentage of children developmentally on track by domain in the Northern Territory, 2018-21

		2018		2021	
	PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	68% 2161		67% 2006	No significant change
	SOCIAL COMPETENCE	65% 2066		60% 1798	Significant decrease
	EMOTIONAL MATURITY	67% 2141		64% 1896	Significant decrease
	LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	67% 2124		65% 1946	Significant decrease
	COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	67% 2124		64% 1919	Significant decrease

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.

Transition Indicators*

62%

of children are adapting to school

54%

of children are read to at home

61%

of parents are actively engaged

*Percentage of NT children whose teacher answered, 'very true' in 2021.

Needs further assessment

24%

of children identified as needing further assessment is up from 17% in 2018.

Transition to school indicators

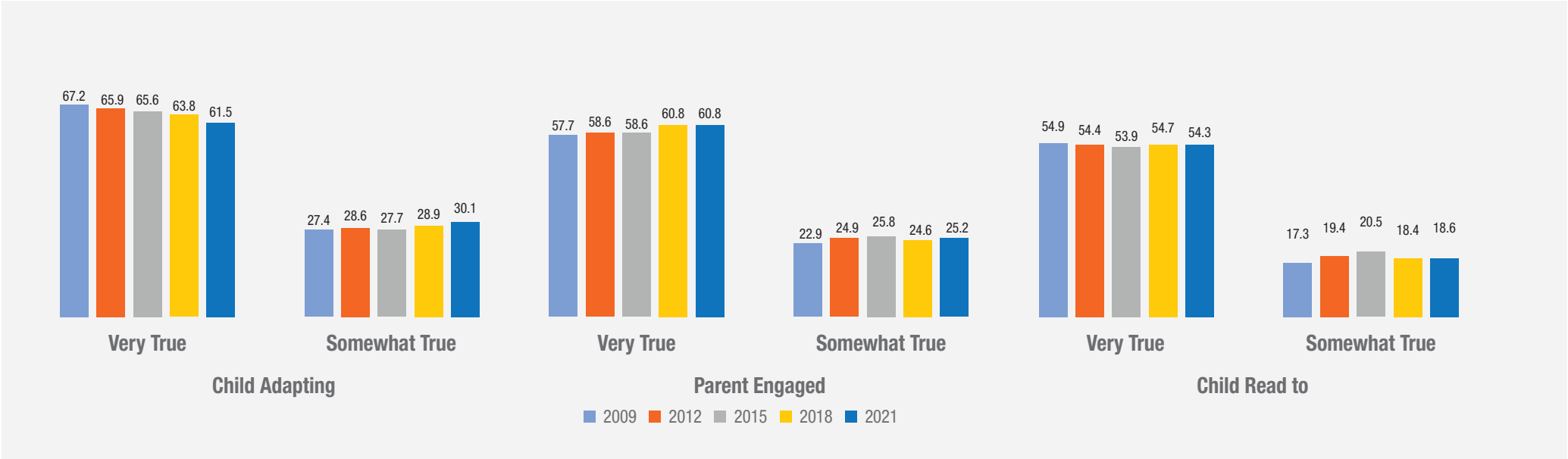
As part of the AEDC collection, teachers answer three questions known as transition indicators. These are:

- Would you say that this child is making good progress in adapting to the structure and learning environment of the school?
- Would you say that this child has parent(s)/ caregiver(s) who are actively engaged with the school in supporting their child's learning?
- Would you say that this child is regularly read to/ encouraged in his/her reading at home as far as you can tell?

Teachers are asked to answer 'very true', 'somewhat true', 'not true' or 'don't know'.

The 2021 AEDC transition indicator data tells us that the majority of children included in the 2021 collection were adapting well to school. Of all children in the NT, 60.8 per cent have parents or caregivers who are engaged with their school, and 54.3 per cent of NT children are regularly read to or encouraged to read at home.

Figure 1: Percentage of children transitioning well to school, 2021



Northern Territory Summary Indicators

Developmentally on track on five domains (OT5)

Since 2009 when the AEDC was first conducted in Australia, the proportion of NT children developmentally on track on five domains has steadily increased, reaching a peak of 42.2 per cent in 2018. In 2021, the percentage of NT children who were developmentally on track on five domains was 38.6 per cent. This is the first decrease since the AEDC began in 2009 and is 3.6 per cent lower than its peak in 2018 (Figure 2 and Table 2).

The decrease in the percentage of children in the NT who were developmentally on track on five domains was echoed in all other states and territories except for Queensland and South Australia who experienced small increases. Nationally, Australia also experienced a significant decrease in children who were developmentally on track on all five domains from 55.4 per cent in 2018 to 54.8 per cent in 2021 (Figure 2 and Table 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of children developmentally on track on five domains (OT5), 2009-21

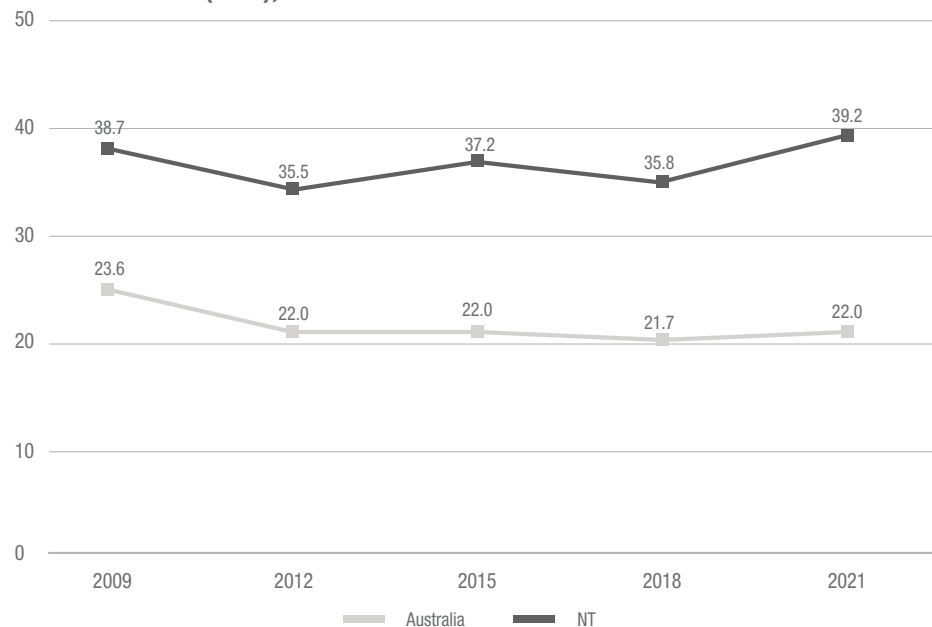
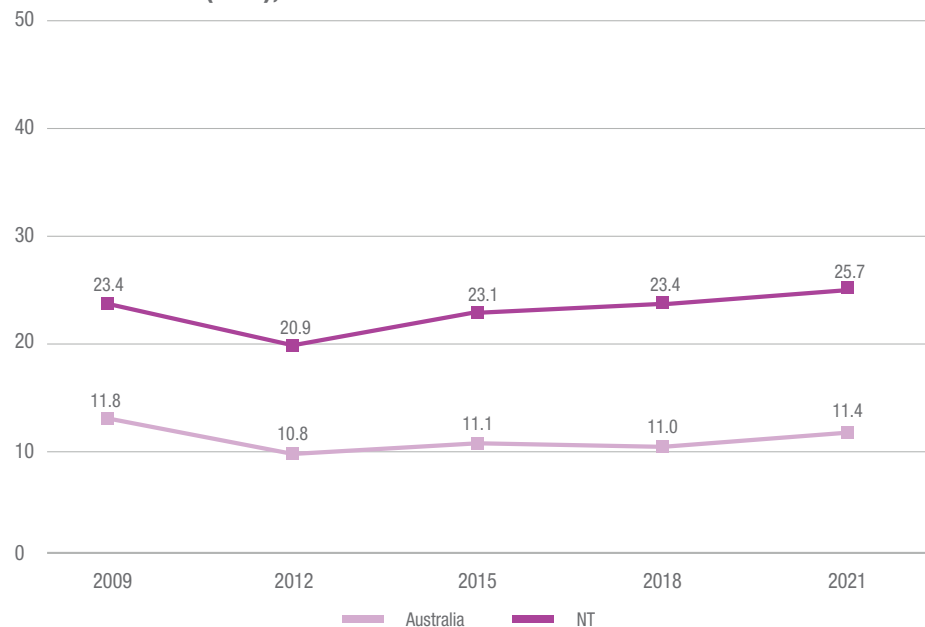


Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) (DV1)

Children in the Northern Territory in their first year of school are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable than children in other jurisdictions. In 2021, 39.2 per cent of NT children were developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains (DV1), compared to 22.0 per cent across Australia (Figure 3 and Table 2). The only jurisdiction to show a significant decline in developmental vulnerability in the 2021 collection was Queensland with all other jurisdictions increasing or remaining stable.

Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domain(s) (DV2)

The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (DV2) in the NT increased significantly from 23.4 per cent in 2018 to 25.7 per cent in 2021. The NT increase follows the national trend showing a significant increase in developmental vulnerability on two or more domains from 11.0 per cent in 2018 to 11.4 per cent in 2021 (See Figure 4 and Table 2).

Figure 3: Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (DV1), 2009-21**Figure 4: Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (DV2), 2009-21****Table 2: Changes in summary indicator results in NT and Australia**

			2009		2012		2015		2018		2021		Critical difference ¹	Significant change ² 2018 vs 2021
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
OT5	Developmentally on track on five domains	NT	1,093	38.0	1,264	40.4	1,341	41.2	1,349	42.2	1,150	38.6	1.3	Significant decrease
		Australia	125,130	50.7	146,362	53.6	155,238	54.2	162,440	55.4	157,436	54.8	0.1	Significant decrease
DV1	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s)	NT	1,109	38.7	1,106	35.5	1,207	37.2	1,141	35.8	1,164	39.2	1.2	Significant increase
		Australia	58,036	23.6	59,933	22.0	62,960	22.0	63,448	21.7	63,264	22.0	0.1	Significant increase
DV2	Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains	NT	673	23.4	653	20.9	751	23.1	745	23.4	764	25.7	0.9	Significant increase
		Australia	29,227	11.8	29,543	10.8	31,754	11.1	32,434	11.0	32,718	11.4	0.1	Significant increase

¹ Critical difference is the change required in the % of children for the change to be considered 'significantly' different to changes due to random variation in numbers. For more information on critical difference refer to page 45.

² Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black represents no change.

AEDC domains in focus

AEDC domains

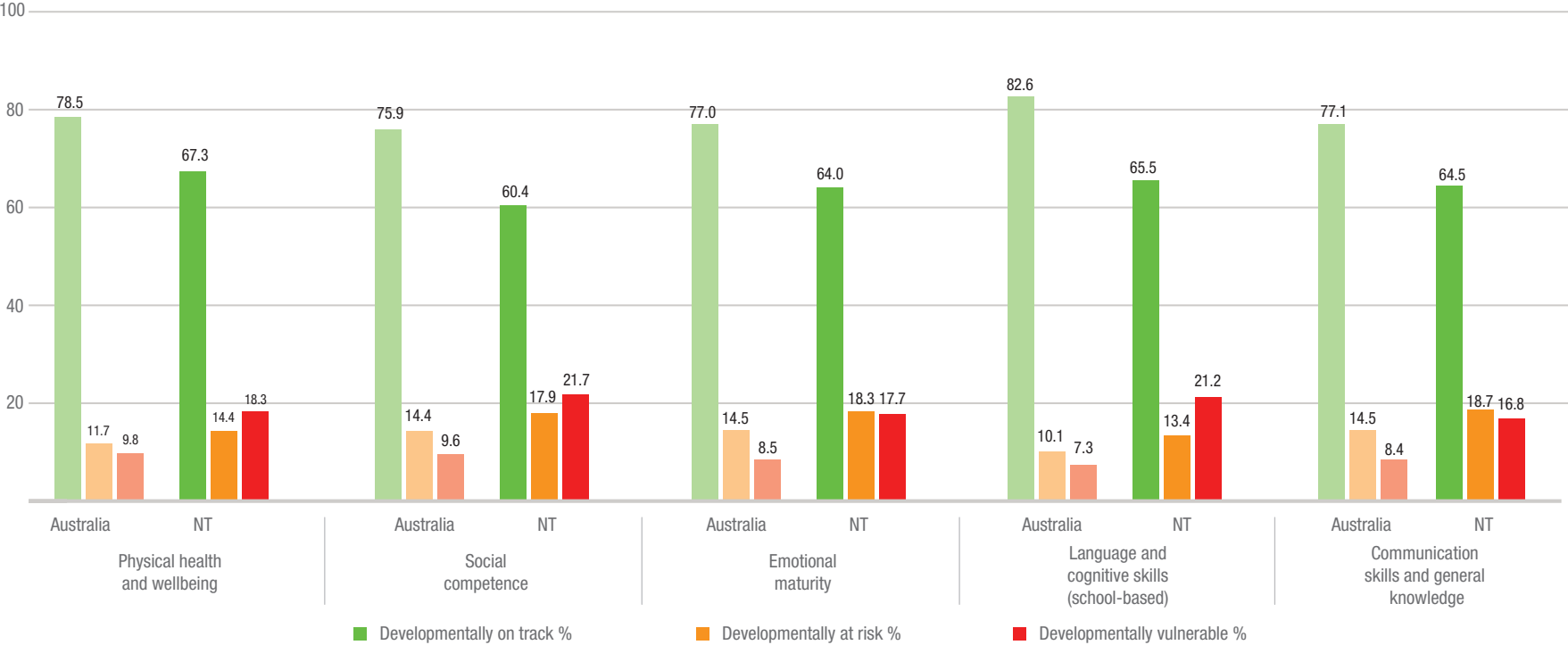
The 2021 AEDC data indicates that within each of the five domains, most children in the NT continue to be developmentally on track. The percentage of NT children developmentally on track was highest on the physical health and wellbeing domain (67.3%), and lowest on the social competence domain (60.4%). (Figure 5)

The percentage of NT children developmentally vulnerable was highest on the social competence (21.7%) and language and cognitive skills (school-based) (21.2%) domains, and lowest on the communication skills and general knowledge domain (16.8%).

The percentage of children developmentally at risk on each domain should be interpreted in context with changes in the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable and developmentally on track. The table below shows the percentage breakdowns for each domain.



Figure 5: Australia and NT Domain results, 2021



		Developmentally on track %	Developmentally at risk %	Developmentally vulnerable %
Physical health and wellbeing	Australia	78.5	11.7	9.8
	NT	67.3	14.4	18.3
Social competence	Australia	75.9	14.4	9.6
	NT	60.4	17.9	21.7
Emotional maturity	Australia	77.0	14.5	8.5
	NT	64.0	18.3	17.7
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	Australia	82.6	10.1	7.3
	NT	65.5	13.4	21.2
Communication skills and general knowledge	Australia	77.1	14.5	8.4
	NT	64.5	18.7	16.8



Physical health and wellbeing

This domain measures a child's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills.

Key Concepts

- Dressed appropriately.
- On time.
- Doesn't arrive hungry.
- Alert (not tired).
- Understand their own needs.
- Established hand preference.
- Well-coordinated.
- Display fine motor skills.
- Display gross motor skills.
- High energy levels.

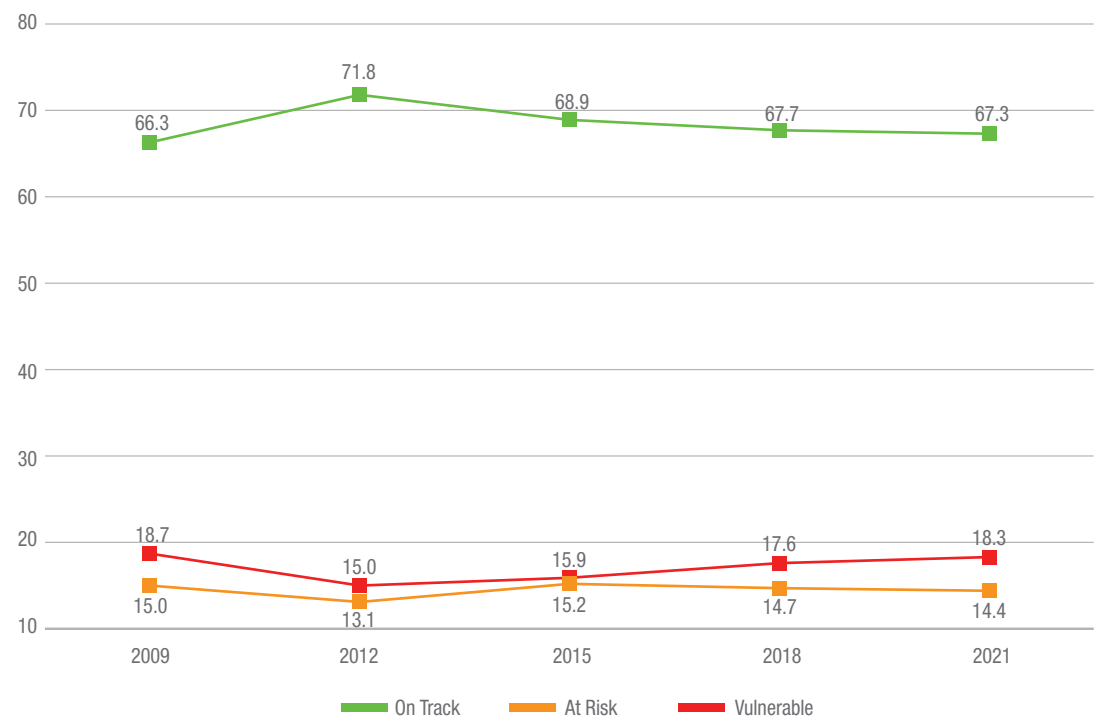
Characteristics of the physical health and wellbeing domain:

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. This 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 levels of energy during the school day.
Developmentally vulnerable	Experience a number of challenges that interfere with their ability to physically cope with the school day. This may include being dressed inappropriately, frequently late, hungry or tired. Children are usually clumsy and may have fading energy levels.

The proportion of NT children developmentally on track in the physical health and wellbeing domain has not changed since the 2009 baseline. Since 2009 the NT has seen an increase in Aboriginal children developmentally on track in the physical health and wellbeing domain and a decrease in non-Aboriginal children developmentally on track in this domain.

Nationally, results in the physical health and wellbeing domain continued to increase in both the percentage of children developmentally on track and developmentally vulnerable, whilst those assessed as developmentally at risk reduced.

Figure 6: Percentage of children developmentally on track, at risk, and vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain, Northern Territory 2009 – 2021



	Developmentally on track %	Developmentally at risk %	Developmentally vulnerable %
2009	66.3	15.0	18.7
2012	71.8	13.1	15.0
2015	68.9	15.2	15.9
2018	67.7	14.7	17.6
2021	67.3	14.4	18.3



Social competence

This domain measures overall social competence, responsibility, respect, approach to learning and readiness to explore new things. Social competence refers to a child's ability to get along with and relate to others.

Key Concepts

- Demonstrated cooperation; collaboration; sharing; confidence and independence (learning and actions).
- Take responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Able to self-manage and self-regulate; problem solve; follow rules; adjust to change.
- Show curiosity; respect for others and property; eagerness to explore new things.

Characteristics of the social competence domain:

Developmentally on track	Almost never have problems getting along; working or playing with other children; is respectful to adults; is self-confident; is able to follow class routines; and is 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.

The NT’s highest developmental vulnerability was experienced within the social competence domain. In 2021, 21.7 per cent of NT children were developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain (Figure 7).

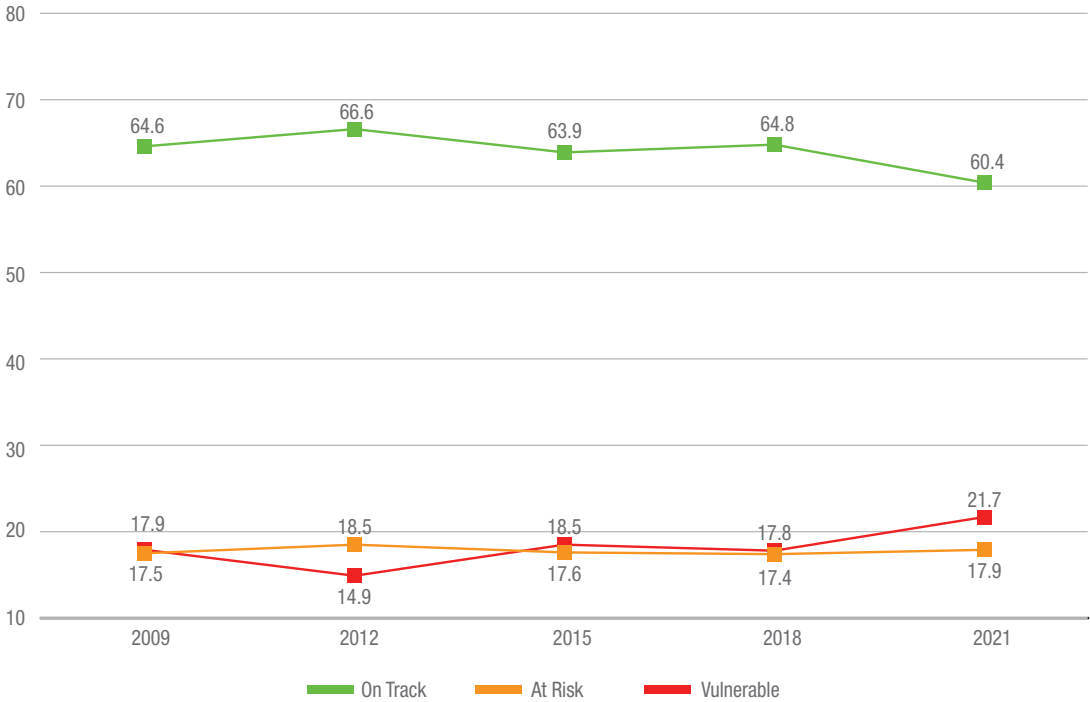
The percentage of children in the NT who are developmentally on track on the social competence domain has fluctuated over the past five collections before experiencing a significant decrease in 2021. Between 2018 and 2021 there was a sharp increase of nearly 4 percentage points in the percentage of NT children developmentally vulnerable on the social competence domain (Figure 7). While most Australian children in their

first year of school are 5 years old, in 2021, the NT had a larger percentage of 4-year-old children in their first year of schooling when the Census was collected (8 per cent of the NT Transition cohort) compared to only 3 per cent Australia wide. The reverse was true for the percentage of 6-year-olds where only 8 per cent of NT children in Transition in 2021 were aged 6 years compared to 18 per cent for all Australian children. However, the calculations of the numbers of children in each category of developmental progress is adjusted for age so that does not explain the differences across Australia.

At a national level, the social competence domain

had the opposite trend to the NT. Nationally, it is the only domain where the level of developmental vulnerability decreased in this collection by 0.2 percentage points (from 9.8 per cent in 2018 to 9.6 per cent in 2021) and the percentage of children developmentally on track improved, by 0.1 percentage points (from 75.8 per cent in 2018 to 75.9 per cent in 2021). While nationally there have been gains in social development over the past two collections, the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on this domain remains significantly higher than the 2009 baseline (9.6 per cent in 2021 compared to 9.5 per cent in 2009).

Figure 7: Percentage of children developmentally on track, at risk, and vulnerable on the social competence domain, Northern Territory, 2009 – 2021



	Developmentally on track %	Developmentally at risk %	Developmentally vulnerable %
2009	64.6	17.5	17.9
2012	66.6	18.5	14.9
2015	63.9	17.6	18.5
2018	64.8	17.4	17.8
2021	60.4	17.9	21.7



Emotional maturity

This domain measures four areas of emotional maturity: pro-social and helping behaviours, anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour, hyperactivity and inattention.

Key Concepts

- Dressed appropriately.
- Develop a sense of care, empathy, respect and resiliency.
- Become socially orientated.
- Build positive relationships.
- Understand emotions.
- Respond to the needs of others.
- Feel safe and secure.
- Develop coping strategies.
- Use problem solving to manage conflict.

Characteristics of the emotional maturity domain:

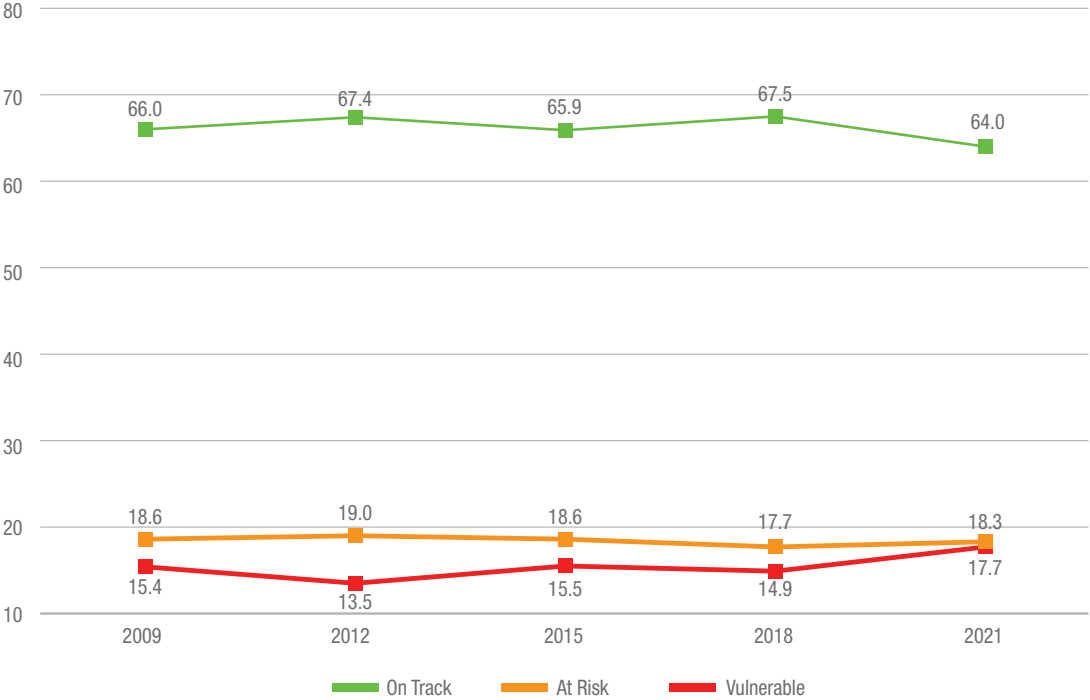
Developmentally on track	Almost never show aggressive, arduous, or impulsive behaviour. Children will have good concentration and will often help other children.
Developmentally at risk	Experience some challenges in the following areas: helping other children who are hurt, sick or upset; inviting other 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.

In the NT, trends in the percentage of children developmentally on track on the emotional maturity domain has fluctuated over the collection years and then decreased significantly in 2021 to the point where NT children were more developmentally vulnerable in 2021 than in 2009. The significant decrease in NT children developmentally on track in 2021 is attributed to non-Aboriginal children who saw a 5 percentage point decrease between 2018 and 2021 and children with a language background other than English (LBOTE) who experienced a decrease of 3 percentage points. NT Aboriginal children experienced no significant change in the

percentage of children developmentally on track within this domain in 2021 (Figure 8).

Nationally, the emotional maturity domain had the most consistent results, with no significant change in 2021 in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable, at risk, or on track compared to 2018. Unlike the NT, nationally, children’s development on this domain remains considerably more favourable than baseline (for example, 75.6 per cent of children were developmentally on track in 2009 compared to 77.0 per cent in 2021), with most of these gains occurring between 2009 and 2012.

Figure 8: Percentage of children developmentally on track, at risk, and vulnerable on the emotional maturity domain, Northern Territory, 2009 – 2021



	Developmentally on track %	Developmentally at risk %	Developmentally vulnerable %
2009	66.0	18.6	15.4
2012	67.4	19.0	13.5
2015	65.9	18.6	15.5
2018	67.5	17.7	14.9
2021	64.0	18.3	17.7



Language and cognitive skills (school-based)

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

Key Concepts

- 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.

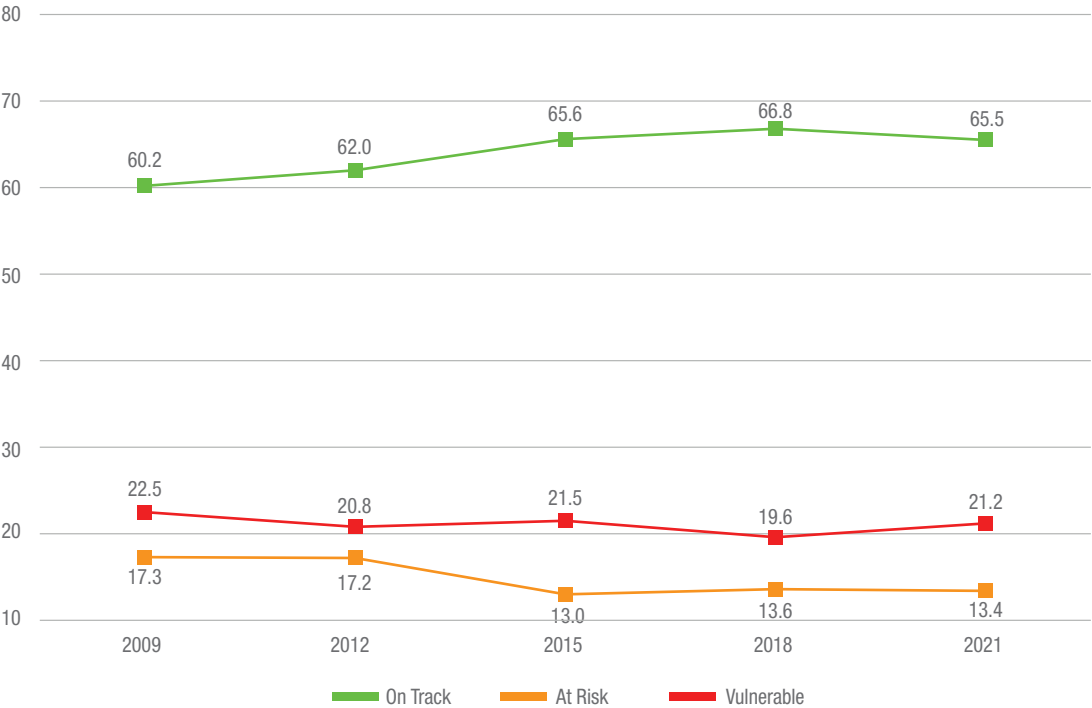
Characteristics of the language and cognitive skills domain:

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; 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; recognising and comparing numbers; and are usually not interested in numbers.

In the Northern Territory, the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain showed the greatest improvements until the 2021 collection. This most recent collection saw a significant decrease in the percentage of children developmentally on track from 66.8 per cent in 2018 to 65.5 per cent in 2021. However, as seen in Figure 9, the percentage of NT children developmentally on track is still 5 percentage points above the 2009 baseline when only 60.2 per cent of children were developmentally on track.

Nationally, the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain saw a similar trend to the NT. Nationally, this domain has experienced the greatest gains over the history of the AEDC, mostly between 2009-2012. These improvements did not continue in the 2021 collection, with developmental vulnerability increasing by 0.7 percentage points (from 6.6 per cent in 2018 to 7.3 per cent in 2021) and the percentage of children developmentally on track decreasing by 1.8 percentage points (from 84.4 per cent in 2018 to 82.6 per cent in 2021).

Figure 9: Percentage of children developmentally on track, at risk, and vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain, Northern Territory, 2009 – 2021



	Developmentally on track %	Developmentally at risk %	Developmentally vulnerable %
2009	60.2	17.3	22.5
2012	62.0	17.2	20.8
2015	65.6	13.0	21.5
2018	66.8	13.6	19.6
2021	65.5	13.4	21.2



Communication skills and general knowledge

This domain measures a child's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills measured in the school context. General knowledge refers to basic knowledge about the world.

Key Concepts

- Demonstrates excellent communication skills.
- Participates in story-telling, and imaginative play.
- Communicates easily and effectively.
- Able to demonstrate general knowledge.

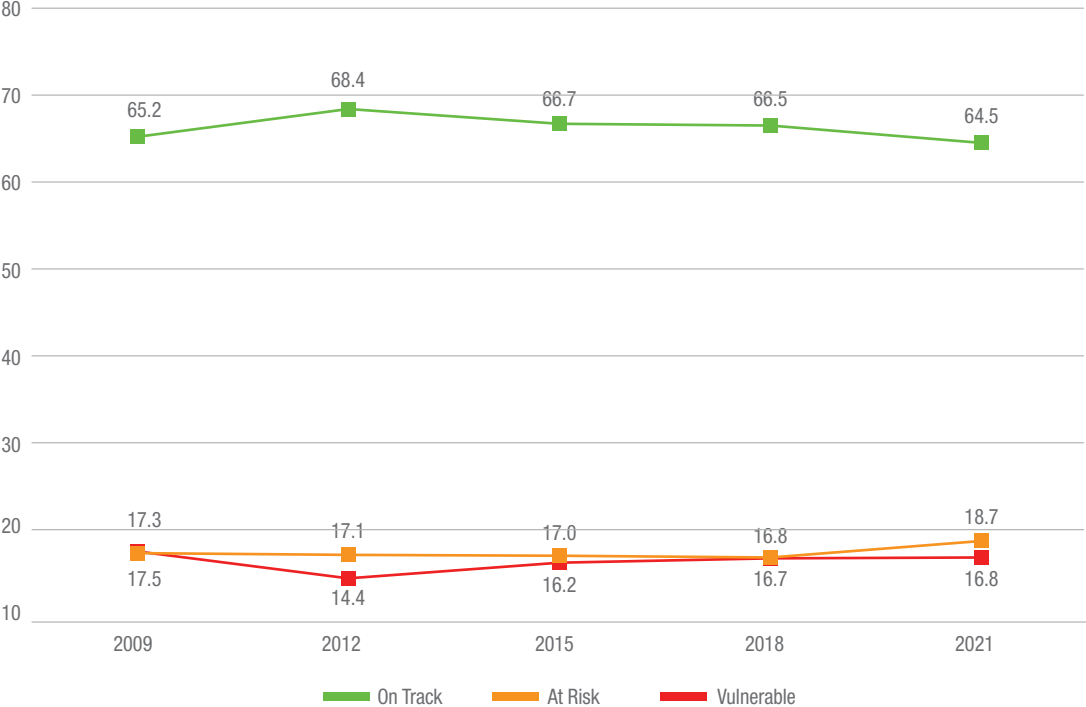
Characteristics of the communication skills and general knowledge domain:

Developmentally on track	Children will have excellent communication skills; can tell a story; 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 apple is a 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.

The percentage of NT children developmentally on track on the communication skills and general knowledge domain remained relatively the same in 2021 as in 2018. However, there has been an upward trend in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable over the four collection periods, from 14.4 per cent in 2012 to 16.8 per cent in 2021 (Figure 10).

Nationally, the steady gains made in the communication skills and general knowledge domain since 2012 did not continue in the 2021 collection, with a slight decrease in the percentage of children developmentally on track on this domain of 0.2 percentage points (from 77.3 per cent in 2018 to 77.1 per cent in 2021). There was also a small increase in developmental vulnerability on this domain of 0.2 percentage points (from 8.2 per cent in 2018 to 8.4 per cent in 2021).

Figure 10: Percentage of children developmentally on track, at risk, and vulnerable on the communication skills and general knowledge domain, Northern Territory, 2009 – 2021



	Developmentally on track %	Developmentally at risk %	Developmentally vulnerable %
2009	65.2	17.3	17.5
2012	68.4	17.1	14.4
2015	66.7	17.0	16.2
2018	66.5	16.8	16.7
2021	64.5	18.7	16.8

Impacts of COVID-19

In Australia, we have been fortunate that the direct impacts of COVID-19 on young children have not been severe. Despite climbing infection rates following the reduction of public health measures, severe illness in children is still rare. ([AEDC National Report 2021](#))⁹. Of greater concern for children aged zero to five years are the indirect impacts of COVID-19.

Indirect impacts are those that affect children's stability and security that children need for healthy growth and development. These include public health measures such as lockdowns, isolation from friends and family, and reduced access to schools and early childhood services. Other factors including job losses, financial instability and fears of contracting COVID-19 have increased "parents' stress levels" and poorer mental health which also adversely influence family functioning and children's development ([Goldfeld et al., 2022](#))¹⁰.





At a national level, the AEDC data suggests the impact of COVID-19 may not have been as substantial as expected, with modest increases in developmental vulnerability. That said, the impact was not evenly felt, with larger increases in developmental vulnerability seen for Aboriginal children and children living in the most disadvantaged areas of Australia ([AEDC National Report 2021](#)). This trend was seen in the NT where there is a high proportion of disadvantaged families, with a decrease in children developmentally on track and an increase in developmental vulnerability.

We know that children's development begins in the pre-natal stage with evidence pointing to the most critical period being the first 1,000 days. Significantly, the children who are represented in

the 2021 AEDC data experienced the effects of COVID-19 for just over one year – the year before full-time schooling. Given the complex network of interrelated factors that influence children's wellbeing during their first five years of life, it is understandable that the impact of COVID-19 on the cohort of children in the Northern Territory who are represented in the 2021 AEDC was minor. While more research and analysis will need to be undertaken to understand the impact of COVID-19 in the NT and nationally, these changes in the AEDC data highlight the importance of ensuring younger cohorts are well supported in the coming years to mitigate the impacts for families most affected in their access to employment, social support, and early childhood education and care.

Focus on equity groups

Access to high quality, inclusive early education and care services is key to creating a bright future for all children and families and is the foundation of a thriving community and a strong economy. To achieve this equity, we need to examine and understand the challenges facing some of our children more than others and look at the system through the lens of our most developmentally vulnerable children.

The 2021 AEDC data shows that developmental vulnerability is not evenly distributed across the NT. A child's likelihood of experiencing developmental vulnerability depends on various sociodemographic factors. Historical disadvantage persists among communities where families have reduced access to resources for raising children, for families whose first language is not English, and for Aboriginal children.



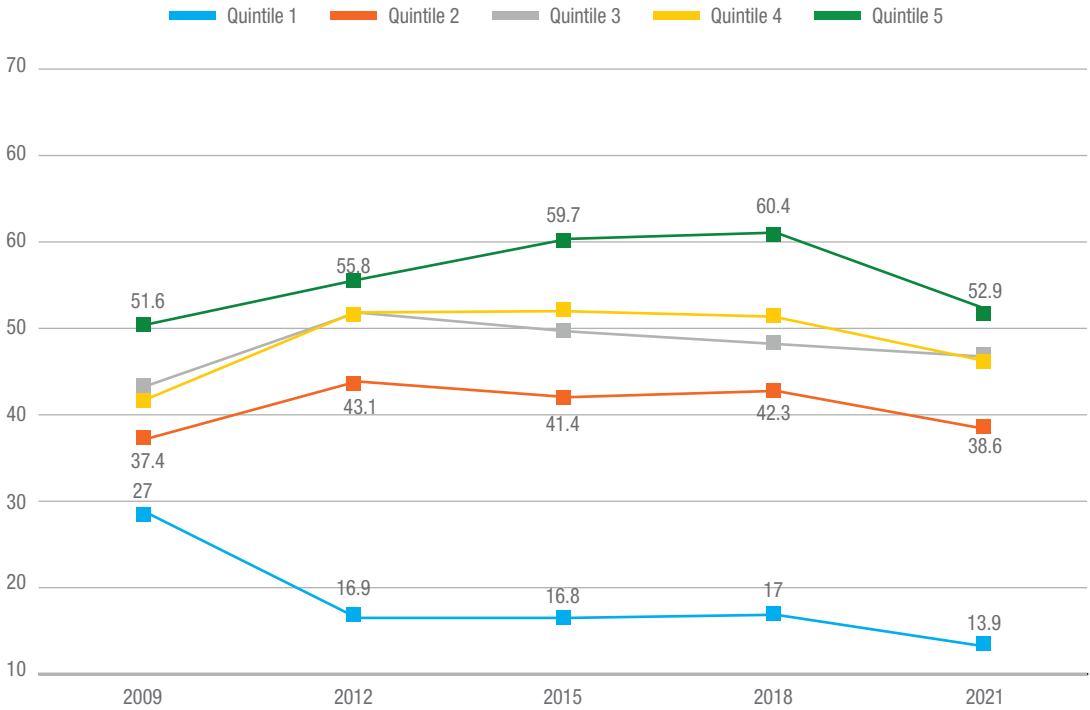
Socio-economic disadvantage (SEIFA)

AEDC data was compared to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data. SEIFA is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to rank geographical areas in Australia according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The AEDC uses the Index for Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, which ranks the disadvantage of one area against other areas in Australia. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing.

SEIFA scores are divided into quintiles, where Quintile 1 contains the lowest 20 per cent of scores and reflects the highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage and Quintile 5 contains the highest 20 per cent of scores and reflects the lowest levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Overlapping SEIFA with AEDC data provides valuable insight into the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and children’s early developmental outcomes.

Figure 11 shows that in 2021 NT children who live in communities experiencing the least socioeconomic disadvantage (Quintile 5) are nearly four times more likely to be developmentally on track on five domains than the children who live in communities experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage (Quintile 1). The AEDC data also shows that the percentage of children developmentally on track on five domains has been decreasing for all children. In the Northern Territory the biggest decrease in the percentage of children developmentally on track on five domains were seen in the communities with the least socioeconomic disadvantage (Quintile 5).

Figure 11: Relationship between SEIFA category and the percentage of children developmentally on track (OT5) in Northern Territory, 2021.



Remote areas

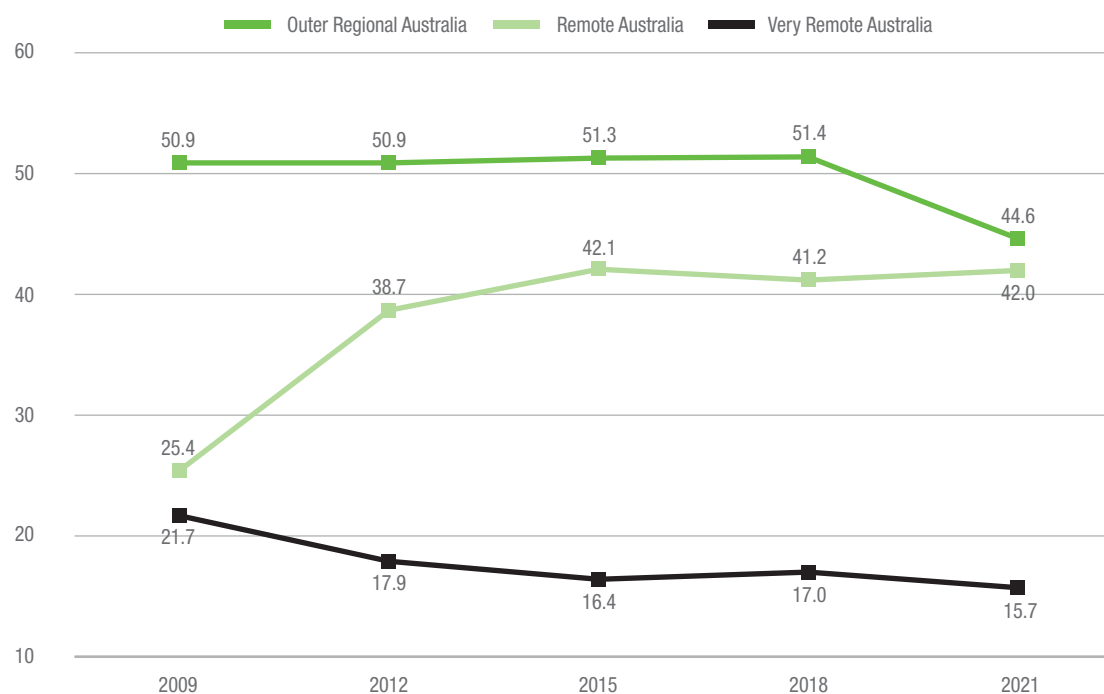
Analysis of AEDC data uses the remoteness classifications developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as part of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). The NT only has the following three of the five ASGS remoteness classifications:

- Outer Regional Australia (Darwin, Palmerston and rural only)
- Remote Australia (Alice Springs and Katherine only)
- Very Remote Australia (the remainder of NT)

In 2021, NT children living in the Outer Regional and Remote areas were nearly three times more likely than those living in Very Remote areas to be developmentally on track on five domains.

While children in Outer Regional areas had a higher chance of being developmentally on track on five domains, between 2018 and 2021 they experienced the greatest decrease from 51.4 per cent in 2018 to 44.6 per cent in 2021 (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Percentage of children developmentally on track (OT5) by remoteness in the Northern Territory, 2021.



The 2021 increase in the percentage of children living in Remote areas who are developmentally on track on five domains is attributed to a significant increase in non-Aboriginal children in the community of Alice Springs and Aboriginal children within the community of Katherine.

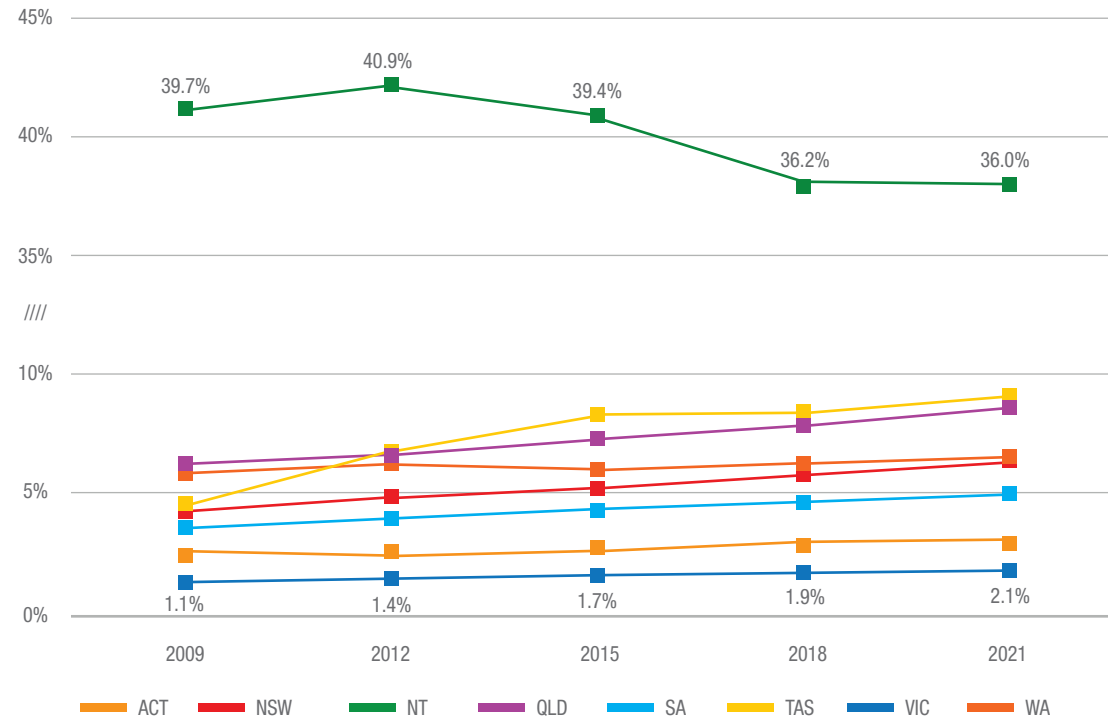
The small decrease between 2018 and 2021 in the percentage of children living in Very Remote areas who are on track on all five domains is not statistically significant.

Aboriginal children

In Australia, the percentage of children with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background included in the AEDC has been increasing since 2009. Across the country, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children varies greatly, from around 2.1 per cent in Victoria to 36.0 per cent in the Northern Territory. While the percentage has been increasing in most states and territories, the Northern Territory has seen a decline in the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children over time (Figure 13).

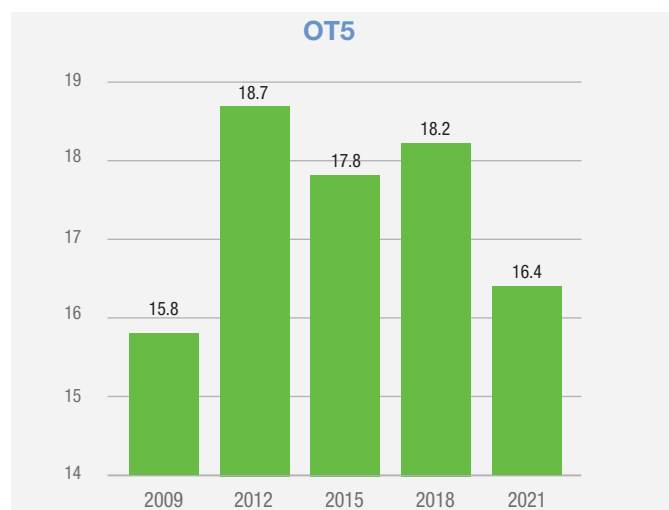
Previous AEDC publications focused on the percentage of children that were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (DV1) and two or more domains (DV2). Changes to Closing the Gap targets have prompted a shift in focus to the developmentally on track on five domains (OT5) summary indicator. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap includes a target of increasing OT5 rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to 55 per cent by 2031. The rate of NT Aboriginal children developmentally on track on all five domains decreased from 18.2 per cent in 2018 to 16.4 per cent in 2021. It is important to note this two percentage point difference does not represent a significant change and reflects a shift in population size.

Figure 13: Percentage of Aboriginal children in each jurisdiction counted in the AEDC



Source: Harman-Smith, Y., Gregory, T., Harvey, E., & Sechague Monroy, N., (2023). Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up strong (AEDC 2021 Data Story). Australian Government, Canberra. Available at www.aedc.gov.au ¹¹

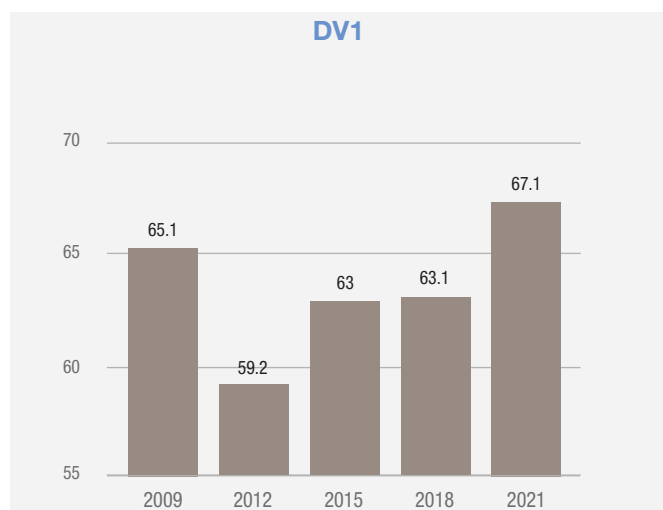
Figure 14: Percentage of Aboriginal children developmentally on track (OT5), Northern Territory 2009-21



The National Agreement on Closing the Gap includes a target of increasing OT5 rates for Aboriginal children to 55 per cent by 2031.

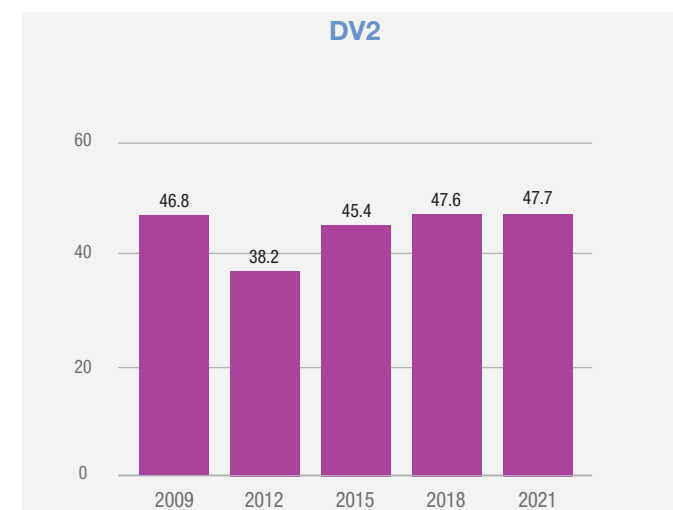
In 2021, 1,192 (36.0%) NT children included in the AEDC Census identified as Aboriginal. Most of these children (45.9%) live in Very Remote parts of the NT. Most Aboriginal children in the NT (56.9%) live in the most disadvantaged (Quintile 1) locations while only 6.7 per cent live in the least disadvantaged (Quintile 5) areas.

Figure 15: Percentage of Aboriginal children developmentally vulnerable on one or more (DV1) and two or more domains (DV2), Northern Territory 2009-21



Nationally, the percentage of Aboriginal children on track on all five domains was 34.3 per cent in 2021, meaning they are more than twice as likely to be developmentally on track on five domains than Aboriginal children living in the NT (Figure 14). This data highlights the effect of geographical, cultural and language barriers on the development of children in the NT and the importance of tailoring programs and services appropriately.

In 2021 Aboriginal children in the NT experienced the highest levels of developmental vulnerability than any other collection (67.1%) (Figure 15 shows).



Between 2018 and 2021 the percentage of NT Aboriginal children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) increased by 4 percentage points.

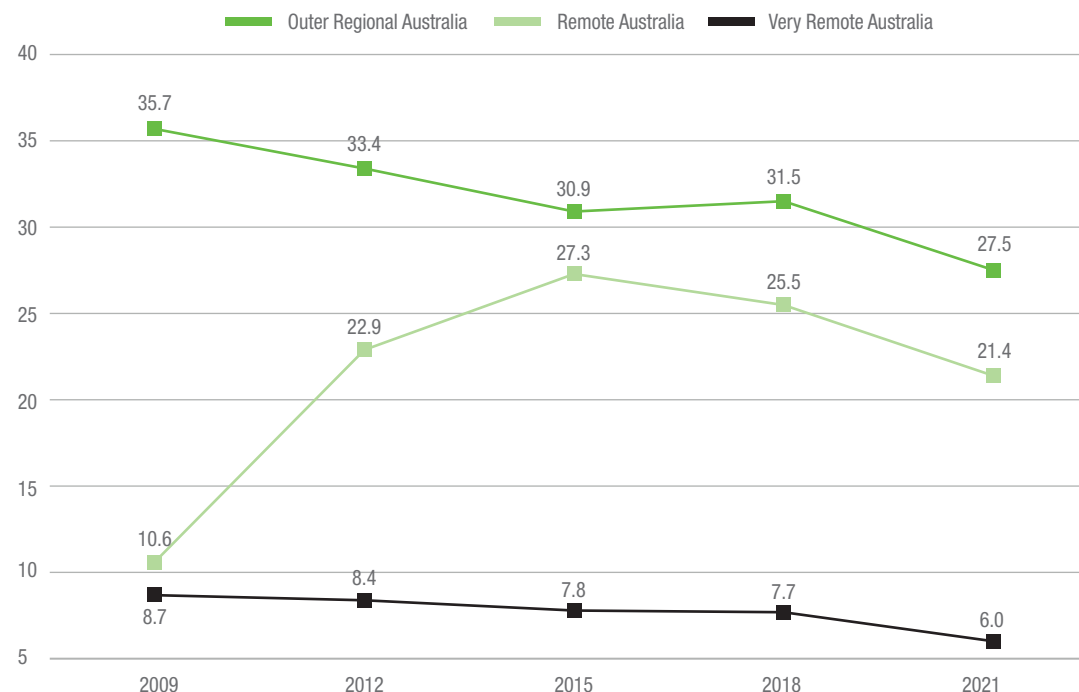
Similarly, the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains increased by 0.1 percentage points from 47.6 per cent in 2018 to 47.7 per cent in 2021.

How Aboriginal children are faring by remoteness

Figure 16 provides an overview of how Aboriginal children are faring by remoteness and outlines the following:

- Between 2018 and 2021, each area experienced a decrease in the percentage of Aboriginal children developmentally on track on five domains.
- Across all AEDC collections, while the percentage has changed, the rate of Aboriginal children developmentally on track on five domains living in Very Remote areas has remained relatively stable with no significant changes experienced. However, 2021 AEDC data shows Aboriginal children living in Very Remote areas are 4.6 times more likely to be not developmentally on track on all five domains compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who live in NT Outer Regional areas.
- The decrease of Aboriginal children developmentally on track on five domains in Remote areas is only attributed to the community of Alice Springs.
- The percentage of Aboriginal children developmentally on track on five domains living in Outer Regional areas (Darwin and Palmerston) continues to decline with the greatest decline (4 percentage points) being seen from 2018 (31.5%) to 2021 (27.5%).

Figure 16: Percentage of Aboriginal children developmentally on track on five domains (OT5) by remoteness, Northern Territory 2009-21













Trends for Aboriginal children in the AEDC domains

In 2021, NT Aboriginal children were most likely to be developmentally on track on the physical health and wellbeing domain (49.0%), and least likely to be developmentally on track on the language and cognitive skills domain 30.3% (Table 3).

The greatest decrease (4 percentage points) in the percentage of Aboriginal children developmentally on track was in the social competence domain with the least (1 percentage point) seen in the emotional maturity and communication skills and general knowledge domains.

In 2021, AEDC data shows NT Aboriginal children did not experience an increase in being classified as developmentally on track on any of the five domains. However, at a regional level, Aboriginal children in Big Rivers and East Arnhem saw significant increases in the percentage of children developmentally on track on all five domains. East Arnhem also saw an increase in Aboriginal children developmentally on track on the communication skills and general knowledge domain and Big Rivers on the physical health and wellbeing domain. The Top End region also

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	50% 550	 49% 489	No significant change
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	45% 486	 41% 410	Significant decrease
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	49% 531	 48% 474	No significant change
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	33% 361	 30% 300	Significant decrease
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	44% 478	 43% 428	No significant change

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.

saw an increase in the percentage of Aboriginal children developmentally on track on the physical health and wellbeing domain. All other regions experienced either no significant change or significant decreases.

The gap between Aboriginal children in the NT and their national counterparts was greatest for the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain, with 30 per cent in the NT compared with 59.4 per cent of Aboriginal children nationally, being developmentally on track on this domain. The gap between Aboriginal children

in the Northern Territory and Aboriginal children nationally was considerably lower in the other AEDC domains.

The 2021 AEDC data shows that the majority of Aboriginal children in the NT attended preschool (78.1%) however, less than half were adapting to school (39.7%) and less than one in three Aboriginal children in the NT have parents or caregivers who are actively engaged with their child's school (31.8%). These affirm the importance of our work to engage children and families in school education.

Language diversity (LBOTE)

The AEDC considers children to have English as a second language (ESL) where English is not their first language and they need additional instruction in English, or where English is not their first language, and they have conversational English but are not yet proficient in English. Children are considered to have a language background other than English (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. Children considered to be proficient in English have proficiency equivalent to that expected of the average monolingual English speaker in a similar phase of development.

In the NT, more than 100 languages and dialects are spoken with over 30 per cent of Territorians being born overseas and 74,546 (30%) Territorians being of Aboriginal descent. The Northern Territory has the lowest rate (58%) of people speaking only English at home than any other state or territory (ABS 2016).

The gap between NT children with a LBOTE and children with an English only background who are developmentally on track on five domains has steadily narrowed since baseline. Although in 2021, the percentage of children with a LBOTE who were developmentally on track on five domains significantly decreased by nearly 6 percentage points from 28.5 per cent in 2018 to 22.6 per cent in 2021 (Figure 17).

This same narrowing trend can be seen for children with a LBOTE who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s). Figure 18 shows there was a 15.4 percentage point decrease from 2009 to 2018 for children with a LBOTE who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s). However, reflecting the 2021 decrease in developmentally on track on five domains, the 2021 AEDC data saw a significant increase (5 percentage points) for children with a LBOTE who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s).

The percentage of children with a LBOTE who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains remained relatively unchanged since 2015.

Figure 17: Percentage of LBOTE children, developmentally on track (OT5), Northern Territory, 2009-21

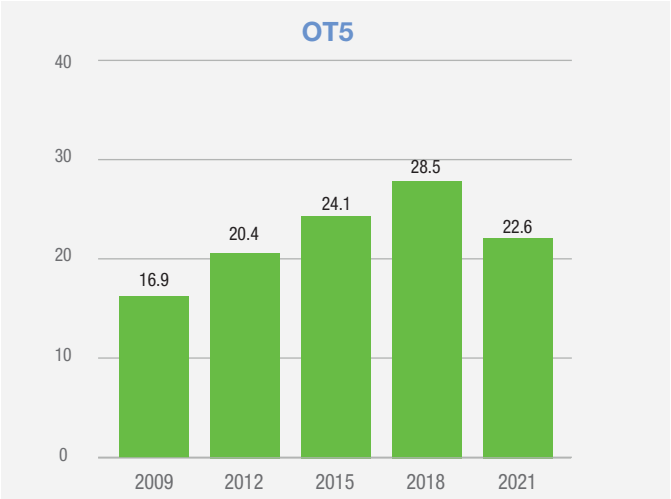
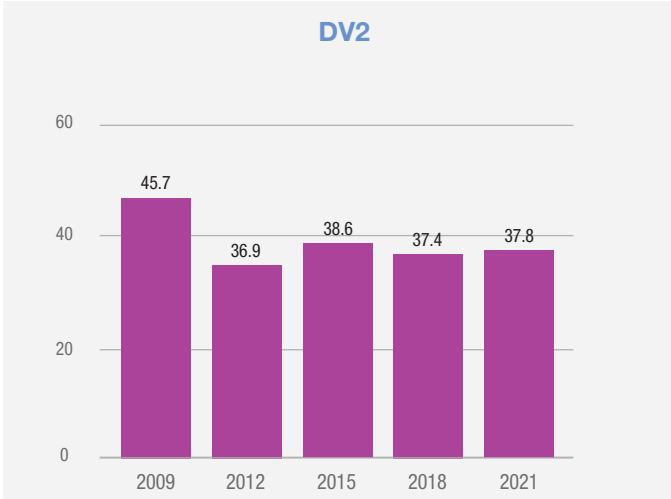
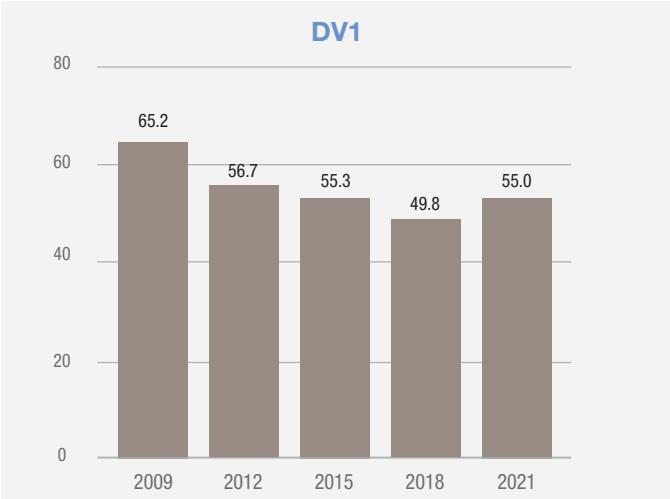


Figure 18: Percentage of LBOTE children, developmentally vulnerable on one or more (DV1) and two or more domains (DV2), Northern Territory, 2009-21



In 2021, there were significant decreases in the percentage of children with a LBOTE who were developmentally on track on all five domains (Table 4).











In 2021, NT children with a LBOTE were most likely to be developmentally on track on the physical health and wellbeing domain (56.9%), and least likely to be developmentally on track on the communication skills and general knowledge domain (45.4%).

The greatest decrease (6 percentage points) in the percentage of children with a LBOTE who were developmentally on track was in the social competence domain with the least (2 percentage points) in the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain.

The 2021 AEDC data shows that the majority of children with a LBOTE in the NT attended preschool (78.6%). However, less than half were adapting to school (48.0%) telling us more work needs to be done to ensure school readiness.

Less than half of children with a LBOTE in the NT have parents or caregivers who are actively engaged with their child's school to support their learning (43.5%).

Table 4: Percentage of LBOTE children, developmentally on track by domain, Northern Territory, 2018-21

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	60% 803	 57% 699	Significant decrease
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	55% 736	 49% 604	Significant decrease
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	59% 776	 56% 681	Significant decrease
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	48% 644	 47% 571	Significant decrease
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	49% 652	 45% 556	Significant decrease

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.

Children with disability, additional or special needs

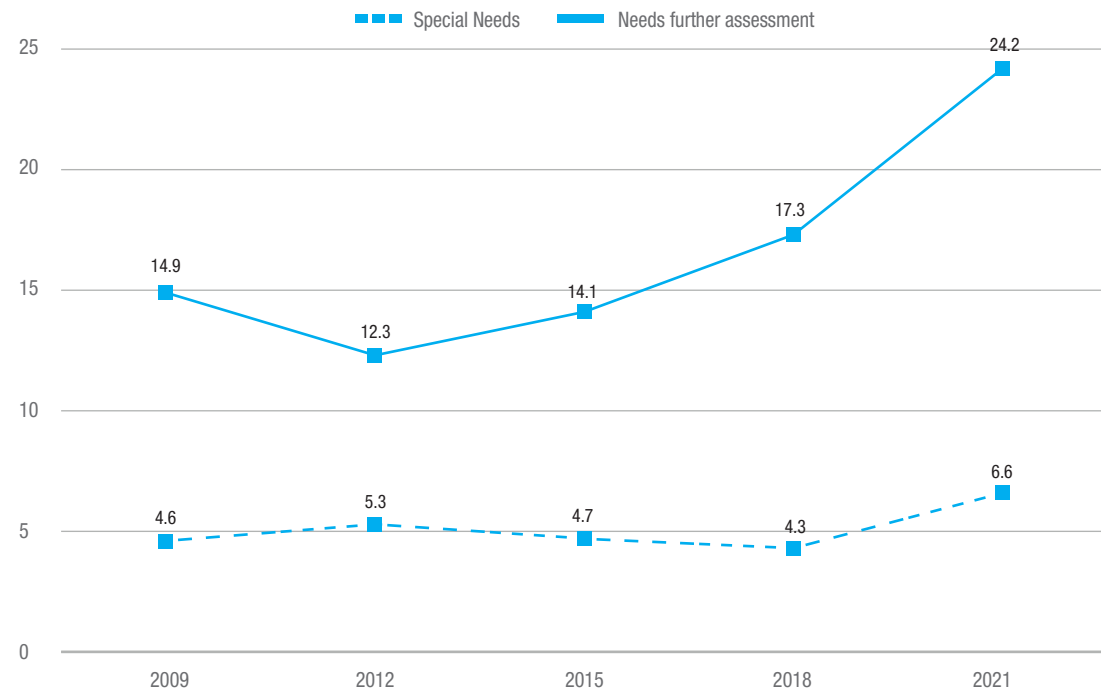
In the AEDC, children with special needs are classified as those who have chronic medical, physical or intellectual disabilities that require special assistance, based on a medical diagnosis. The number of children with special needs is recorded by the AEDC, however, these children are not included in calculations of domain scores. The purpose of collecting this demographic information is to enable communities to be responsive to all children in the community.

The percentage of children with special needs, which had declined by 1 percentage point over the 2012 to 2018 collections, increased 2.3 percentage points from 4.3 per cent in 2018 to 6.6 per cent in 2021 (Figure 19).

Children identified by teachers as 'needing further assessment' are classified as those who are currently being assessed or need further assessment (for example, medical and physical, behaviour management, emotional and cognitive development) based on information provided to the teacher by a parent/guardian, professional or through teacher observation. Children identified as needing further assessment who do not have a special needs diagnosis are included in the domain calculations.

The percentage of children identified by teachers as requiring further assessment in the Northern

Figure 19: Percentage of children with a diagnosed special need and needing further assessment, Northern Territory, 2009-21



Territory has been increasing since 2012 (12.3%) and there was a sharp increase in 2021, from 17.3 per cent in 2018 to 24.2 per cent in 2021.

These upwards trends are also echoed nationally and may reflect the impact of the Early Years Intervention approach for the National Disability

Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and/or COVID-19 when diagnostic assessments were not able to occur.






Linking AEDC to education outcomes

Linking data enables people to gain a greater understanding of what actions will be effective. It helps to identify patterns and provides an evidence base for planning, allocation of services and highlights what is working well and what needs to be improved.



This page outlines how the National Quality Standard (NQS), Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Australian Curriculum and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards are linked to AEDC. What isn't listed is the Northern Territory Progressive Achievement Test, Foundations of Early Literacy Assessment and National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), all of which can be linked to the language and cognitive skills (school-based) domain.

These frameworks and assessments not only apply to early years teachers but also to primary teachers and schools as a whole, demonstrating collaboration is vital for improving outcomes for children in the community.

				
Physical health and wellbeing	Social competence	Emotional maturity	Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	Communication skills and general knowledge
Children's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills.	Children's overall social competence, responsibility and respect, approach to learning and readiness to explore new things.	Children's pro-social and helping behaviours, and absence of anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention.	Children's basic literacy, interest in literacy, numeracy and memory, advanced literacy and basic numeracy.	Children's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad development competencies and skills measured in the school context.
<hr/> NQS Quality Areas 1, 2, 3 & 6 EYLF Outcome 3 Australian Curriculum HPE	<hr/> NQS Quality Areas 1, 5, 6 & 7 EYLF Outcomes 1, 2, 3 & 4 Australian Curriculum General Capabilities HPE	<hr/> NQS Quality Areas 1, 5 & 6 EYLF Outcomes 1, 2 & 3 Australian Curriculum General Capabilities HPE	<hr/> NQS Quality Areas 1, 3, 5, 6 & 7 EYLF Outcomes 4 & 5 Australian Curriculum General Capabilities English Mathematics Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Science Design and Technologies	<hr/> NQS Quality Areas 1, 3, 5, 6 & 7 EYLF Outcomes 4 & 5 Australian Curriculum General Capabilities English The Arts Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Science Design and Technologies
AITSL Standards for Teachers 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7	AITSL Standards for Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7	AITSL Standards for Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7	AITSL Standards for Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7	AITSL Standards for Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7
THE STANDARD FOR PRINCIPALS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading improvement, innovation and change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading the management of school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging and working with the community 	

Source: [Department of Education Western Australia \(2017\)](#)¹²

National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

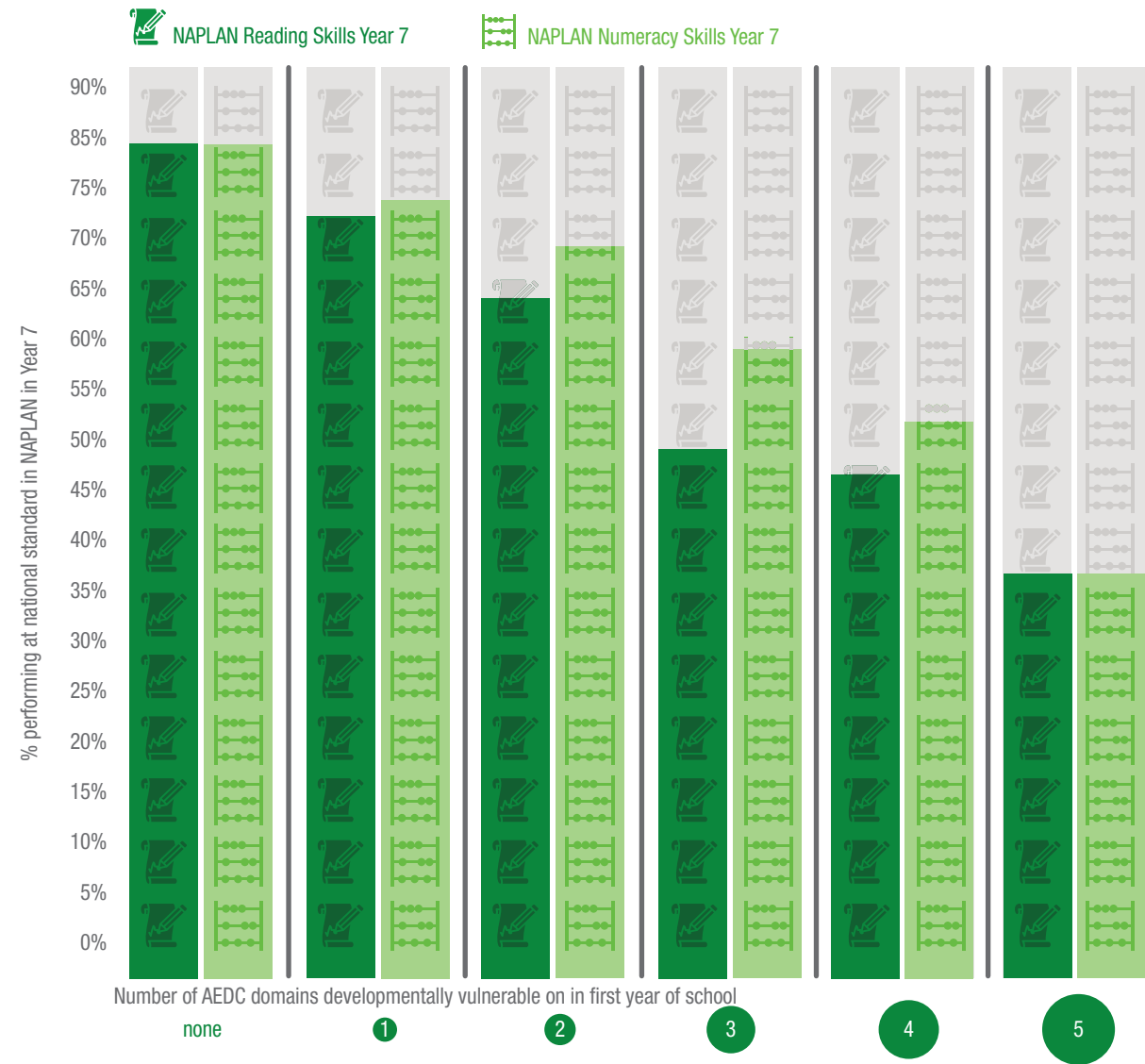
By the time children are two and four years old their vocabulary and general knowledge are predictors of third and fourth grade reading comprehension.



- Studies have shown that the AEDC is a valid and reliable predictor of children’s literacy and numeracy outcomes throughout their primary school years and later in life.
- All five AEDC domains predict literacy and numeracy outcomes for children as measured by the National Assessment Program –Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Years 3, 5 and 7 with the most prevalent linkages being to the language and cognitive skills (school-based) and the communication skills and general knowledge domains ([Adlof, Catts & Lee, 2010](#))¹³.
- A child developmentally vulnerable on any one domain is almost twice as likely as their peers with no developmental vulnerabilities to score in the bottom 20 per cent of students completing NAPLAN ([Brinkman, 2014](#))¹⁴.

Figure 20 shows the more domains a child is developmentally vulnerable on when they start school, the higher the likelihood they will perform poorly in NAPLAN in Year 7.

Figure 20: Percentage of children performing at national NAPLAN standard by number of domains developmentally vulnerable.



Northern Territory regional summaries

In this report, the AEDC data is shown by the six Northern Territory Department of Education regions (Darwin, Top End, East Arnhem, Big Rivers, Barkly and Central). Within these regions, the AEDC data is broken down by communities, usually equivalent to a Local Government Area. AEDC characterises a local community as a small area locality, usually representing a suburb or town.



AEDC data is reported at local community, state and territory, and national levels. The AEDC national website provides community profiles for eligible communities. For results to be reported, local communities must have a minimum of 15 children and two teachers participate in the collection. The community profiles present AEDC results for children living in this community regardless of where they attend school. Some local communities may not have always been included in a community profile due to there being insufficient data in any particular year.

How to compare results

Four AEDC data collections enables communities to compare the change in the percentage of children who are developmentally on track, developmentally at risk or developmentally vulnerable across collections. To assist in comparing the significance of results over time the 'critical difference' method has been developed. This method calculates the minimum percentage point change required between collections for the results to represent a 'significant change' in children's development. Each community profile contains a chart detailing whether the change in each developmental domain category represents a significant change.

When reflecting on the AEDC data the AEDC national website provides user guides, broken into categories for schools, local government, policy makers and government, and the early childhood sector. The user guides step through how to respond to the data and provide an example of a response in order to illustrate how the concepts can be applied. When reviewing the information

within a profile some of the following questions may assist in unpacking and responding to the data:

- Are there domains that show relative strengths or weaknesses – and does this reflect the context of the community?
- What is the scale of the issue? Is it affecting a large percentage of children, a large number or both?
- How does the community/school compare to other similar communities and schools, the state or territory, or the Australian average?
- What other demographic and community data would be useful to add context to the AEDC data?
- What factors may be contributing to the percentage and number of children who are developmentally vulnerable in the community/school?
- What resources and strengths can you build on both within the school and the community?
- Who are the community leaders?
- What could be done within the school and community to better support children's development in the early years?
- Who do you need to connect with to improve outcomes for children?

How to compare results across years – critical difference

Changes in AEDC data look larger in some areas than in others, especially where there are

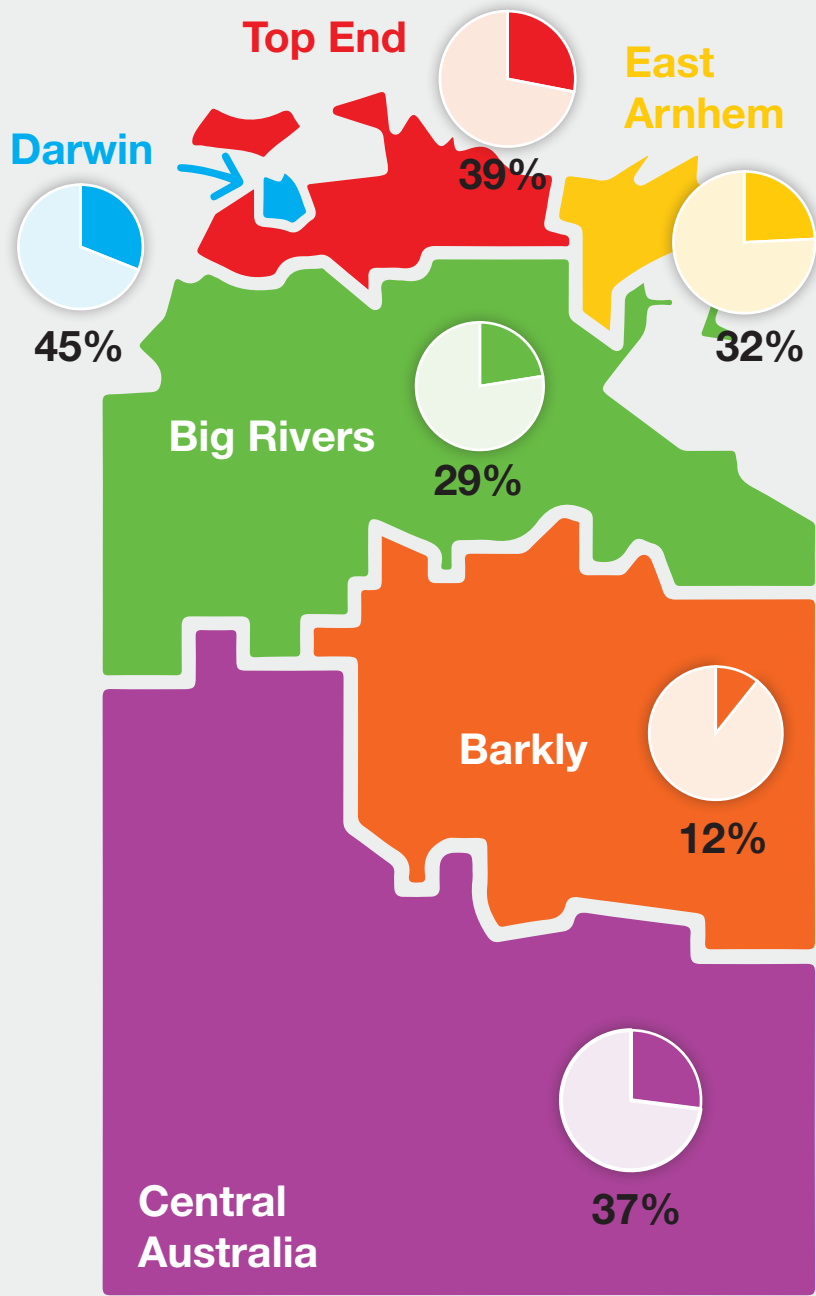
small numbers of children. To support people to consider the size of the change in their area, a method has been developed called the 'critical difference'. The critical difference can also be used to explore changes over time in the summary indicators—DV1, DV2, and OT5. The 'critical difference tool' is available for use on the AEDC website (aedc.gov.au/crit-diff-com)¹⁵.

The critical difference is the minimum percentage point change required between two collection cycles for the results to represent a 'significant change' in children's development. The critical difference varies slightly for the different AEDC indicators but is mainly determined by the number of children in the group being compared (e.g., state/territory, community, school).

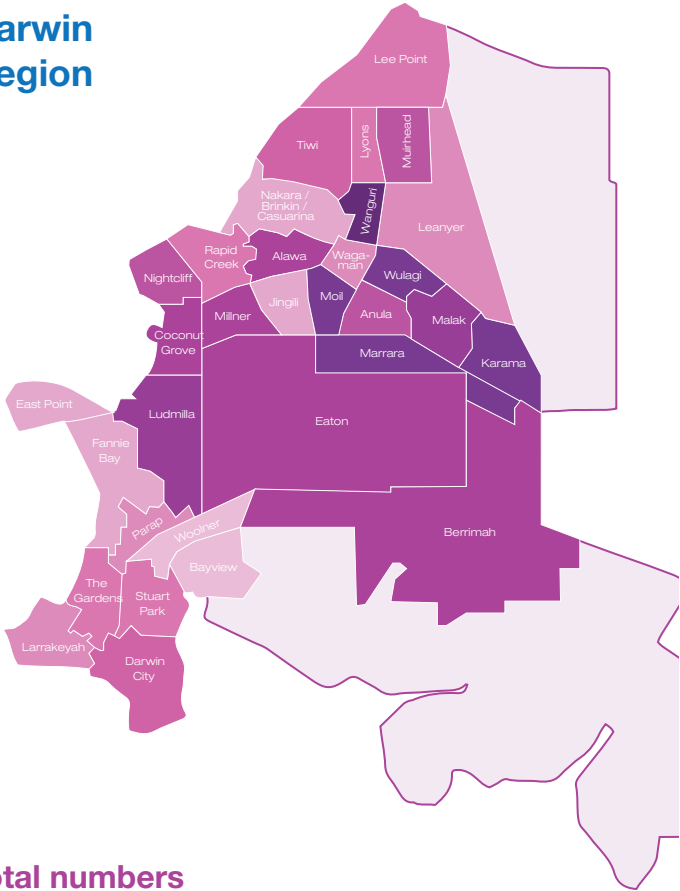
At a national level, where 260,000 children or more are captured in each AEDC cycle, the critical difference is 0.1 percentage points, so any change larger than this represents a significant change in child development. For large jurisdictions, such as New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, where 50,000 to 100,000 children are captured in each AEDC cycle, the critical difference is 0.2 to 0.3 percentage points.

For a smaller jurisdiction, such as Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, where 3,000 to 7,000 children are captured in each AEDC cycle, the critical difference is 0.5 to 1.3 percentage points. For a small community with 100 children, the AEDC results would need to shift by 4 to 7 percentage points to represent a significant shift in child development, depending on which AEDC indicator is of interest.

Percentage of children developmentally on track on five domains (OT5), in the Northern Territory by Region 2021



Darwin Region













Total numbers

CHILDREN	1011
Male	493
Female	518
Aboriginal	165
LBOTE	386
Special needs	52
Needs further assessment	198
SEIFA Quintile 1	46

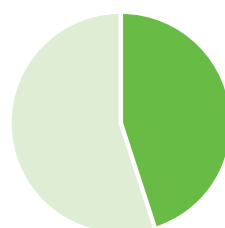
Darwin Region	2021		
Community	OT5%	DV1%	DV2%
Alawa	67.7	12.9	6.5
Anula	28.6	42.9	21.4
Bayview/Woolner	46.7	20.0	16.7
Berrimah/Eaton	40.0	40.0	28.0
Coconut Grove	53.8	34.6	15.4
Darwin City	52.4	11.9	7.1
Fannie Bay/East Point	57.6	15.2	9.1
Jingili	64.0	12.0	12.0
Karama/Marrara	30.2	39.5	20.9
Larrakeyah	53.7	24.4	14.6
Leanyer	43.6	23.6	10.9
Ludmilla	43.5	34.8	26.1
Lyons/Lee Point	40.0	32.0	20.0
Malak	35.1	35.1	24.3
Millner	57.1	25.0	17.9
Moil	55.6	25.9	18.5
Muirhead	50.7	29.6	17.1
Nakara/Brinkin/Casuarina	27.0	40.5	18.9
Nightcliff	37.0	37.0	19.1
Parap	56.4	12.8	5.1
Rapid Creek	46.5	26.2	11.6
Stuart Park/The Gardens	34.7	28.6	20.4
Tiwi	33.3	30.3	6.1
Wagaman	52.2	30.4	26.1
Wulagi	45.5	36.4	21.2

Note: Wanguri has too few teachers or children to display

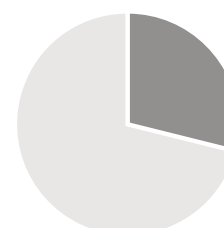
AEDC - On Track by domain

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	78% 774	 72% 688	Significant decrease
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	76% 753	 68% 642	Significant decrease
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	74% 730	 71% 676	Significant decrease
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	79% 780	 78% 743	No significant change
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	77% 757	 67% 634	Significant decrease

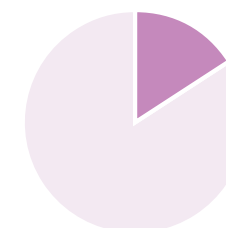
Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.



TOTAL REGION
OT5: 45%



TOTAL REGION
DV1: 29%



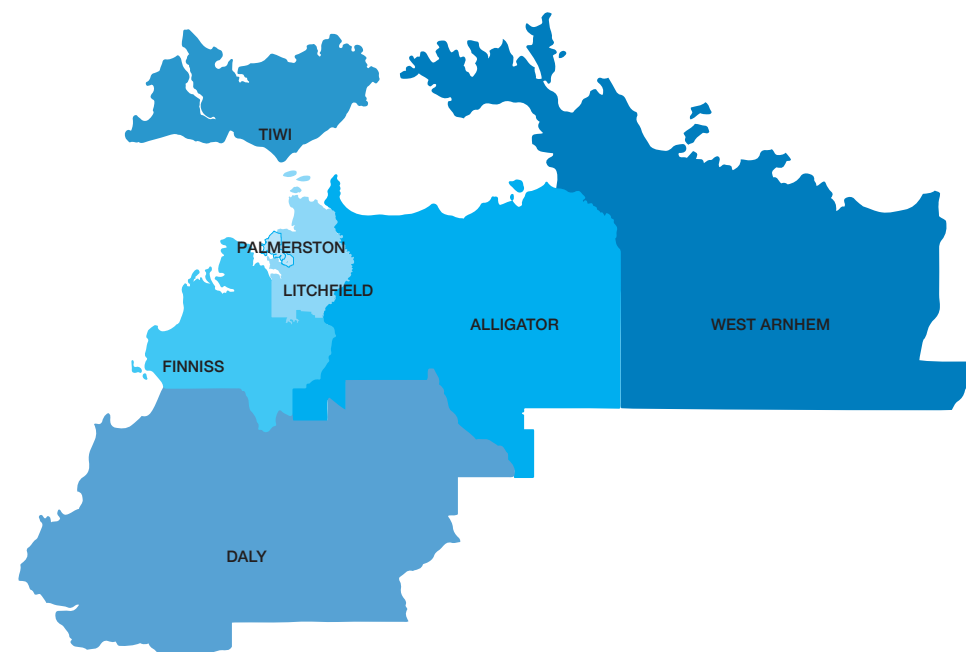
TOTAL REGION
DV2: 16%

Top End Region











Top End Region	2021		
Community	OT5%	DV1%	DV2%
Alligator	50.0	31.3	12.5
Daly	11.9	67.2	49.3
Finniss	38.9	27.8	22.2
Litchfield	50.0	32.4	20.3
Palmerston	42.5	32.4	23.4
Tiwi	3.1	≥90	81.3

Total numbers

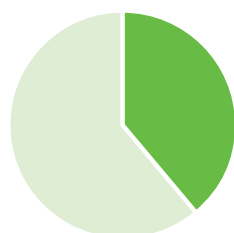
CHILDREN	1194
Male	611
Female	583
Aboriginal	377
LBOTE	404
Special needs	97
Needs further assessment	314
SEIFA Quintile 1	291



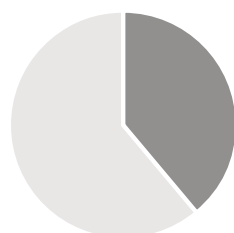
AEDC - Developmentally on track by domain

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	65% 730	 69% 735	Significant increase
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	64% 719	 60% 642	Significant decrease
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	67% 751	 62% 659	Significant decrease
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	70% 786	 67% 720	Significant decrease
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	66% 738	 66% 706	No significant change

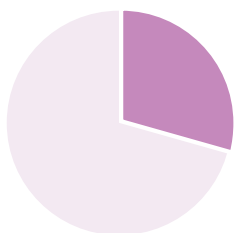
Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.



**TOTAL REGION
OT5: 39%**



**TOTAL REGION
DV1: 39%**



**TOTAL REGION
DV2: 27%**

Alligator

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	34	23	17
Number of schools contributing to the results	4	6	4

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	19	55.9	15	65.2	≤3	≤17.6
Sex - Female	15	44.1	8	34.8	14	82.4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	12	35.3	11	47.8	≤3	≤17.6
Children born in another country	≤3	≤8.8	0	0.0	0	0.0

Daly

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	112	67	70
Number of schools contributing to the results	8	7	8

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	60	53.6	33	49.3	30	42.9
Sex - Female	52	46.4	34	50.7	40	57.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	105	93.8	63	94.0	61	87.1
Children born in another country	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Children with English as a second language	103	92.0	64	95.5	60	85.7

Finniss

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	31	22	21
Number of schools contributing to the results	8	7	8

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	15	48.4	10	45.5	12	57.1
Sex - Female	16	51.6	12	54.5	9	42.9
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	15	48.4	10	45.5	8	38.1
Children born in another country	0	0.0	≤3	≤13.8	0	0.0
Children with English as a second language	10	32.3	5	22.7	6	28.6

Litchfield

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	298	297	275
Number of schools contributing to the results	30	25	26

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	150	50.3	154	51.9	137	49.8
Sex - Female	148	49.7	143	48.1	138	50.2
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	53	17.8	35	11.8	40	14.5
Children born in another country	6	2.0	8	2.7	8	2.9
Children with English as a second language	23	7.7	30	10.1	31	11.3

Palmerston

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	589	673	701
Number of schools contributing to the results	34	40	32

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	303	51.4	326	48.4	371	52.9
Sex - Female	286	48.6	347	51.6	330	47.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	111	18.8	147	21.8	157	22.4
Children born in another country	38	6.5	51	7.6	39	5.6
Children with English as a second language	96	16.3	118	17.5	151	21.5

Tiwi

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	47	26	33
Number of schools contributing to the results	3	3	3

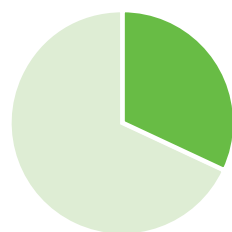
Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	27	57.4	12	46.2	15	45.5
Sex - Female	20	42.6	14	53.8	18	54.5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	46	97.9	26	100.0	32	97.0
Children born in another country	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Children with English as a second language	46	97.9	24	92.3	31	93.9

West Arnhem

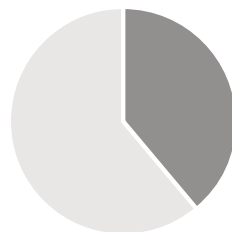
The number of children and teachers participating in the 2021 AEDC collection were too small to prevent children from being identified. For this reason, the AEDC publication rules do not allow reporting data for this community. These children are included in results for Top End region and NT.

East Arnhem Region

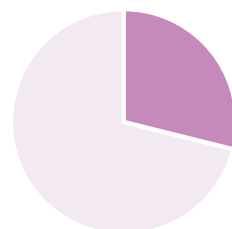
East Arnhem Region	2021		
Community	OT5%	DV1%	DV2%
Nhulunbuy	50.0	28.8	15.4
North Miwatj	12.9	71.0	38.1
South Miwatj	42.9	28.6	21.4



TOTAL REGION
OT5: 32%



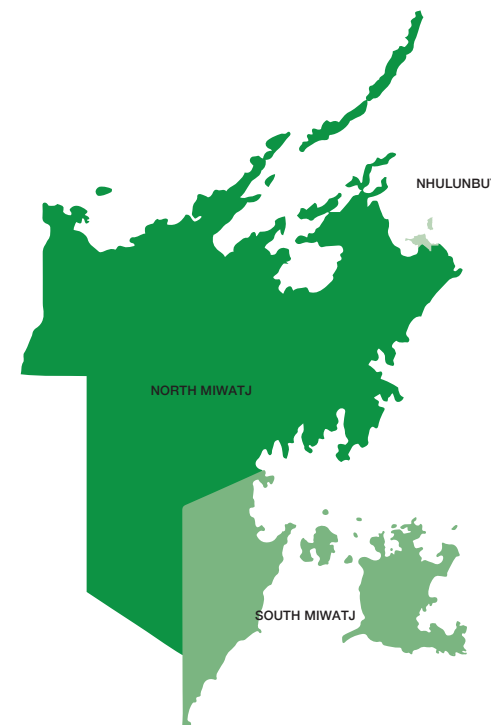
TOTAL REGION
DV1: 47%













TOTAL REGION
DV2: 27%

Total numbers

CHILDREN	164
Male	92
Female	72
Aboriginal	96
LBOTE	102
Special needs	7
Needs further assessment	23
SEIFA Quintile 1	87



AEDC - Developmentally on track by domain

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	63% 117	 73% 104	Significant increase
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	51% 93	 58% 82	Significant increase
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	57% 100	 66% 92	Significant increase
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	45% 80	 45% 64	No significant change
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	54% 99	 75% 106	Significant increase

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.

Nhulunbuy

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	55	59	56
Number of schools contributing to the results	3	4	5

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	33	60.0	32	54.2	33	58.9
Sex - Female	22	40.0	27	45.8	23	41.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	4	7.3	≤3	≤5.1	11	19.6
Children born in another country	≤3	≤5.5	≤3	≤5.1	≤3	≤5.4
Children with English as a second language	6	10.9	7	11.9	13	23.2

North Miwatj

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	140		73
Number of schools contributing to the results	13		8

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	75	53.6	-		38	52.1
Sex - Female	65	46.4	-		35	47.9
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	132	94.3	-		69	94.5
Children born in another country	≤3	≤2.1	-		≤3	≤4.1
Children with English as a second language	130	92.9	-		65	89.0

South Miwatj

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured		42	35
Number of schools contributing to the results		5	4

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	-		20	47.6	21	60.0
Sex - Female	-		22	52.4	14	40.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	-		31	73.8	16	45.7
Children born in another country	-		0	0.0	≤3	≤8.6
Children with English as a second language	-		28	66.7	18	51.4

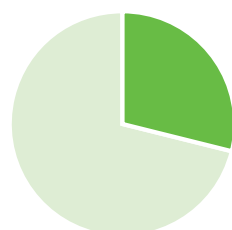
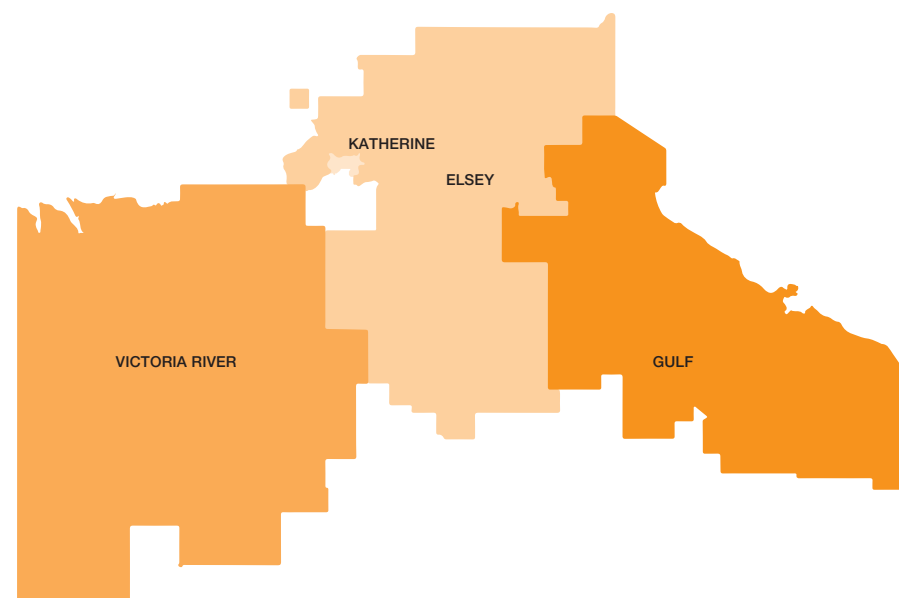


Big Rivers Region

Big Rivers Region	2021		
Community	OT5%	DV1%	DV2%
Elsey	15.4	76.9	59.3
Gulf	15.6	64.1	29.7
Katherine	42.7	36.4	18.9
Victoria River	11.4	70.5	56.8

Total numbers

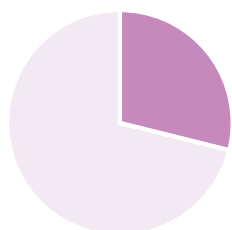
CHILDREN	323
Male	150
Female	173
Aboriginal	209
LBOTE	215
Special needs	20
Needs further assessment	88
SEIFA Quintile 1	170



TOTAL REGION
OT5: 29%













TOTAL REGION
DV1: 52%



TOTAL REGION
DV2: 31%

AEDC - Developmentally on track by domain

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	52% 163	 62% 173	Significant increase
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	48% 151	 53% 148	Significant increase
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	58% 182	 60% 167	No significant change
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	47% 148	 53% 148	Significant increase
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	53% 168	 57% 158	No significant change

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.

Elsey

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
Total number of children measured	63		52		38	
Number of schools contributing to the results	15		12		10	

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	35	55.6	27	51.9	16	42.1
Sex - Female	28	44.4	25	48.1	22	57.9
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	51	81.0	46	88.5	32	84.2
Children born in another country	0	0.0	0	0.0	≤3	≤7.9
Children with English as a second language	44	69.8	40	76.9	31	81.6

Gulf

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
Total number of children measured	74		54		68	
Number of schools contributing to the results	6		6		8	

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	38	51.4	32	59.3	29	42.6
Sex - Female	36	48.6	22	40.7	39	57.4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	73	98.6	49	90.7	64	94.1
Children born in another country	0	0.0	≤3	≤5.6	≤3	≤4.4
Children with English as a second language	54	73.0	48	88.9	64	94.1

Katherine

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
Total number of children measured	169		181		166	
Number of schools contributing to the results	6		8		6	
Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	89	52.7	80	44.2	77	46.4
Sex - Female	80	47.3	101	55.8	89	53.6
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	69	40.8	75	41.4	67	40.4
Children born in another country	≤3	≤1.8	10	5.5	6	3.6
Children with English as a second language	36	21.1	75	41.4	70	42.2

Victoria River

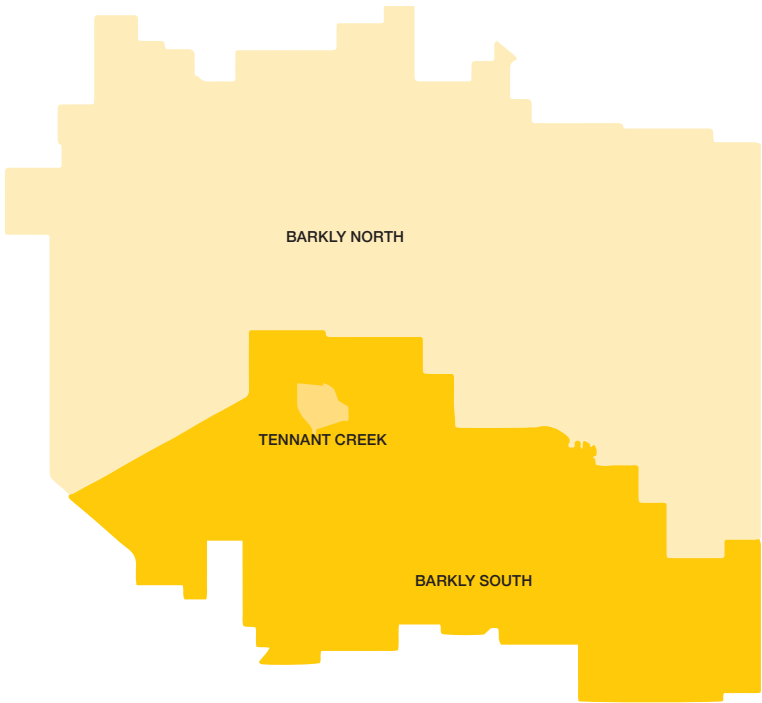
Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
Total number of children measured	61		53		51	
Number of schools contributing to the results	8		9		9	
Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	38	62.3	21	39.6	28	54.9
Sex - Female	23	37.7	32	60.4	23	45.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	55	90.2	48	90.6	46	90.2
Children born in another country	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Children with English as a second language	53	86.9	47	88.7	46	90.2

Barkly Region

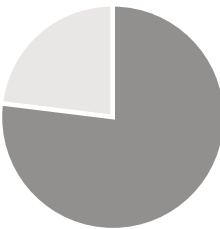
Barkly Region	2021		
Community	OT5%	DV1%	DV2%
Barkly South	14.3	81.0	52.4

Total numbers

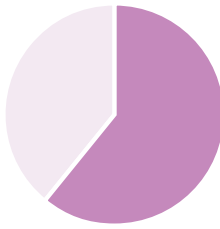
CHILDREN	83
Male	49
Female	34
Aboriginal	68
LBOTE	69
Special needs	4
Needs further assessment	6
SEIFA Quintile 1	60



TOTAL REGION
OT5: 12%













TOTAL REGION
DV1: 77%



TOTAL REGION
DV2: 61%

AEDC - Developmentally on track by domain

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	56% 38	 27% 20	Significant decrease
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	49% 33	 25% 19	Significant decrease
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	60% 41	 45% 34	Significant decrease
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	37% 25	 25% 11	Significant decrease
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	47% 32	 25% 19	Significant decrease

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.

Barkly North

The number of children and teachers participating in the 2021 AEDC collection were too small to prevent children from being identified. For this reason, the AEDC publication rules do not allow reporting data for this community. These children are included in results for the Barkly region and the NT.

Barkly South

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
Total number of children measured	37				27	
Number of schools contributing to the results	5				9	

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	10	27.0	-		15	55.6
Sex - Female	27	73.0	-		12	44.4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	35	94.6	-		24	88.9
Children born in another country	0	0.0	-		0	0.0
Children with English as a second language	35	94.6	-		24	88.9

Tennant Creek

The number of children and teachers participating in the 2021 AEDC collection were too small to prevent children from being identified. For this reason, the AEDC publication rules do not allow reporting data for this community. These children are included in results for the Barkly region and the NT.

Central Region

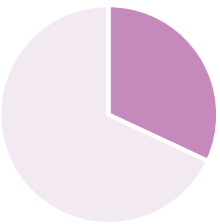
Central Region	2021		
Community	OT5%	DV1%	DV2%
Alice Springs	47.5	33.3	20.6
Sandover-Plenty	13.5	73.1	53.8



TOTAL REGION
OT5: 37%



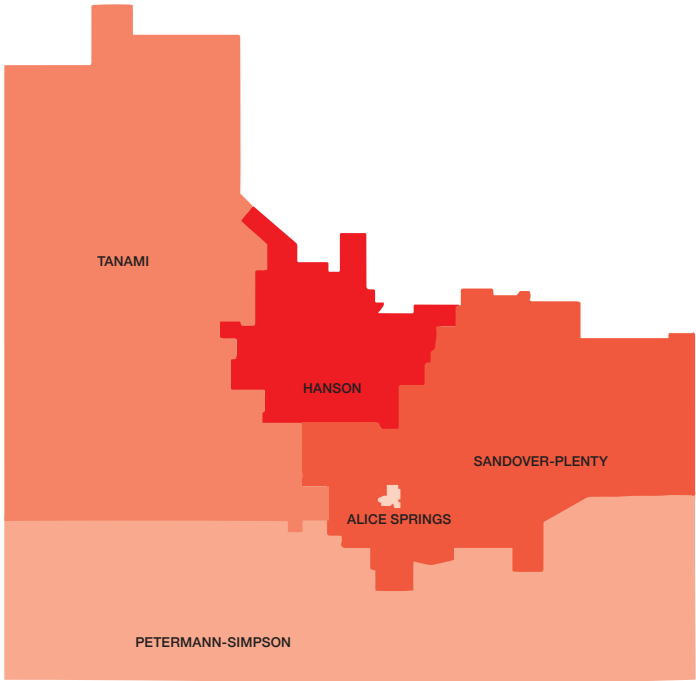
TOTAL REGION
DV1: 46%













TOTAL REGION
DV2: 32%

Total numbers

CHILDREN	539
Male	305
Female	234
Aboriginal	277
LBOTE	249
Special needs	39
Needs further assessment	104
SEIFA Quintile 1	177



AEDC - Developmentally on track by domain

	2018	2021	
 PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	66% 339	 62% 286	Significant decrease
 SOCIAL COMPETENCE	62% 317	 58% 265	Significant decrease
 EMOTIONAL MATURITY	66% 337	 58% 268	Significant decrease
 LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS (SCHOOL-BASED)	59% 305	 55% 252	Significant decrease
 COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE	64% 329	 64% 296	No significant change

Significant change has been colour coded: green text represents a positive change, red text represents a negative change, black text represents no change.

Alice Springs

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	449	372	381
Number of schools contributing to the results	12	14	13

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	234	52.1	198	53.2	215	56.4
Sex - Female	215	47.9	174	46.8	166	43.6
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	148	33.0	120	32.3	135	35.4
Children born in another country	56	12.5	35	9.4	24	6.3
Children with English as a second language	116	25.8	105	28.2	106	27.8

Hanson

The number of children and teachers participating in the 2021 AEDC collection were too small to prevent children from being identified. For this reason, the AEDC publication rules do not allow reporting data for this community. These children are included in the results for the Central region and NT.

Petermann-Simpson

The number of children and teachers participating in the 2021 AEDC collection were too small to prevent children from being identified. For this reason, the AEDC publication rules do not allow reporting data for this community. These children are included in the results for the Central region and NT.

Sandover-Plenty

Demographics	2015	2018	2021
Total number of children measured	52	54	59
Number of schools contributing to the results	13	10	13

Demographics	2015		2018		2021	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex - Male	28	53.8	30	55.6	32	54.2
Sex - Female	24	46.2	24	44.4	27	45.8
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	42	80.8	52	96.3	54	91.5
Children born in another country	≤3	≤5.8	≤3	≤5.6	0	0.0
Children with English as a second language	40	76.9	52	96.3	48	81.4

Tanami

The number of children and teachers participating in the 2021 AEDC collection were too small to prevent children from being identified. For this reason, the AEDC publication rules do not allow reporting data for this community. These children are included in the results for the Central region and NT.

Glossary of AEDC terms

AEDC term	Definition
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).
Developmentally at risk	<p>Developmentally at risk is a Domain Indicator category. AEDC domain scores are calculated for each domain for each individual child where enough valid responses have been recorded.</p> <p>In the first data collection cycle a series of cut-off scores was established for each of the five domains. Children falling between the 10th and 25th percentile were categorised as 'developmentally at risk'. 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 the three collection cycles.</p>
Developmentally on track	<p>Developmentally on track is a Domain Indicator category. AEDC domain scores are calculated for each domain for each individual child where enough valid responses have been recorded.</p> <p>In the first data collection cycle a series of cut-off scores was established for each of the five domains. Children falling above the 25th percentile 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 the three collection cycles.</p>
Developmentally vulnerable	<p>Developmentally vulnerable is a Domain Indicator category. AEDC domain scores are calculated for each domain for each individual child where enough valid responses have been recorded.</p> <p>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'. 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 the three collection cycles.</p>
Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (DV1)	The percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on one or more AEDC domains. DV1 is a Developmental Vulnerability Summary Indicator.

AEDC term	Definition
Developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (DV2)	The percentage of children who are classified as developmentally vulnerable on two or more AEDC domains. DV2 is a Developmental Vulnerability Summary Indicator.
Domains	<p>The five areas of early childhood development measured by the AEDC are called 'domains'. These five areas form the foundations for later good health, education and social outcomes. The five domains are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health and wellbeing • Social competence • Emotional maturity • Language and cognitive skills (school-based) • Communication skills and general knowledge
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 English as a Second Language (ESL) status.
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). SEIFA is a set of measures, derived from Census information that summarises 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.
Summary Indicators	Summary Indicators include 'developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (DV1)', 'developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains (DV2)', or 'on track on all five domains (OT5)'. These summary indicators are a measure of children's development across the five AEDC domains.
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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