

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)

Guide to using the AEDC

Resources for Queensland
early childhood education
and care services



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This document has been designed to support educators to understand the AEDC and how it can be used to inform curriculum programming, planning and quality improvement in Queensland early childhood education and care services.

Children's early years lay the foundation for their future. Positive early childhood experiences support children to thrive in their early years and later in life.

Early childhood education and care services have a particularly important influence on children's developmental outcomes, as most children attend long day care and kindergarten services during these first five years.

The AEDC provides evidence to support the critical work of the early childhood sector and their communities in providing the best development opportunities for children.

By providing a common ground on which people can work together, the AEDC data can help build and strengthen communities to give children the best start in life. Together with other demographic and community data, the AEDC provides a rich source of information and a powerful tool for influencing decisions about programs and planning to support early childhood development.

About the AEDC

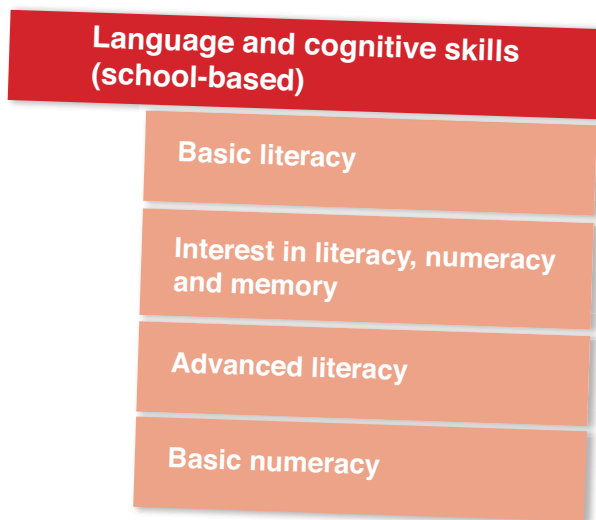
The AEDC gives communities a snapshot of how children in their local area have developed by the time they start school. Every three years AEDC data is collected by Prep teachers about each child in their class.

The AEDC measures five key areas, or domains, of child development:

- physical health and wellbeing
- social competence
- emotional maturity
- language and cognitive skills
- communication skills and general knowledge.



Each of these five domains is broken down into sub-domains. For example, the *Language and cognitive skills (school based)* domain has four sub-domains:



Improving outcomes

With each successive AEDC data collection (2009, 2012, 2015) there is an opportunity to consider how children are developing in each community. The data is provided at a community level, as a ‘whole of community’ approach is known to improve children’s outcomes.

While parents and families have a significant influence on children’s development, other factors such as peers, early childhood education and care services, school and community environments also influence children’s outcomes.

The AEDC data provides a common language for early childhood education and care services to discuss and respond to the strengths and needs of young children with their local schools and communities, particularly in supporting children’s successful transition to school.



The AEDC and the *National Quality Framework*

There are clear links between the AEDC and the *National Quality Standard (NQS)* and the *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* Learning Outcomes.

Early childhood education and care services can use the AEDC data to help identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in Quality Improvement Plans (QIP). For example, early childhood services may want to include strategies to address any community vulnerabilities demonstrated by the AEDC data in their QIP.

As there is a strong link between the AEDC domains and the EYLF Learning Outcomes in practical terms, when educators plan for the EYLF outcomes they are also responding to the AEDC domains.

AEDC Domains	The EYLF and NQS
Physical health and wellbeing	EYLF Outcome 3 (p. 32) NQS Areas: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Social competence	EYLF Outcome 1 (p. 24) NQS Areas: 1, 5, 6
Emotional maturity	EYLF Outcome 2 (p. 27) NQS Areas: 1, 2, 5, 6
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	EYLF Outcome 5 (p. 42) NQS Areas: 1, 5
Communication skills and general knowledge	EYLF Outcome 5 (p. 44) NQS Areas: 1, 5, 6, 7

Using the data in practice

Beenleigh Family Centre Child Care



Educators at Beenleigh Family Centre Child Care have begun examining the AEDC data for their community through a local network made up of school and other community representatives.

At a service level, the AEDC data has informed their practices and programs. To support children's language and cognitive development the team have adopted a whole of environment approach, with quality literature, words, signs and props intentionally and visibly placed to foster language use and growth.

The hub service also started a 'feed and read' program. Families stay with their child and are offered breakfast and a story time, which aims to boost language, literacy and speech. Centre Director, Mellenie Mathieson, explains: 'We're supporting families to not only know more about how to start conversations or keep conversations flowing but also to encourage access to literacy and reading.'

A Head Start Children's Centres Currumbin and West Burleigh



Educators at A Headstart Children's Centres at Currumbin and West Burleigh use AEDC community data to inform their observations and responses to children of all ages

throughout the centre. Jodie Gimellaro, Director at West Burleigh, explains: 'It's not something that we start as soon as the kids get into the preschool room; it's something that we implement from the babies room'.

Taking a longitudinal view of children's development, educators are mindful of how their responses inform and build children's levels of security and safety. Educators share strategies with families to support children's transitions within the centre, as well as when they move into the school environment. Transition statements prepared for children beginning school mirror the AEDC domains and EYLF outcomes.

Springfield Child Care and Early Education Centre



Director, Kristy-Lee Hudspith, worked collaboratively with the staff team at Springfield Child Care and Early Education Centre to search for resources as well as use their own knowledge and expertise to develop strategies for supporting children's development. The centre included a focus on the AEDC in their QIP, particularly strategies to support children's physical health and wellbeing.

While they identify that getting started was initially challenging, their progress has been positive. Partnering with sport associations, the centre has incorporated a tailored physical education program. The educators provide group game and yoga opportunities for children, as well as open-ended provisions such as loose parts and recycled materials. Kristy-Lee explains: 'We use an outdoor classroom approach to promote physical activity and encourage extended periods of physical play through our outdoor environment.'

Key concepts

Children's development is recorded on a scale of 1 to 10 for each domain.

Children developmentally 'on track' score above the 25th percentile (in the top 75 per cent) of the national AEDC population.

Children 'developmentally at risk' score between the 10th and 25th percentile of the national AEDC population.

Children 'developmentally vulnerable' score below the 10th percentile (in the lowest 10 per cent) of the national AEDC population.

Children who are developmentally vulnerable demonstrate a much lower than average ability in the competencies in that domain.

The data is also reported as the proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s and two or more domains.

Example

If a child is 'on track' in basic numeracy, they have all the basic numeracy skills and can count to 20, recognise shapes and numbers, compare numbers, sort and classify, use one-to-one correspondence and understand simple time concepts.

If a child is 'developmentally vulnerable', they have marked difficulty with numbers, cannot count, compare or recognise numbers, may not be able to name all the shapes and may have difficulty with time concepts.



Considerations in using and interpreting AEDC data

The data shows progress against the developmental milestones of children in the first year of school. Younger children should not be expected to reach this point as they are still developing and are still reaching other foundational milestones. Early childhood services can support young children's individual development to optimise their outcomes by the time they reach school age.

AEDC data is not available for individual children. Services can utilise other tools or professionals to help assess children's individual development and measure individual children's outcomes.

The AEDC is not the only source of information about children in your community. AEDC data can be used with other socio-demographic and community indicators to provide an overall picture of children's development.



Reflection questions

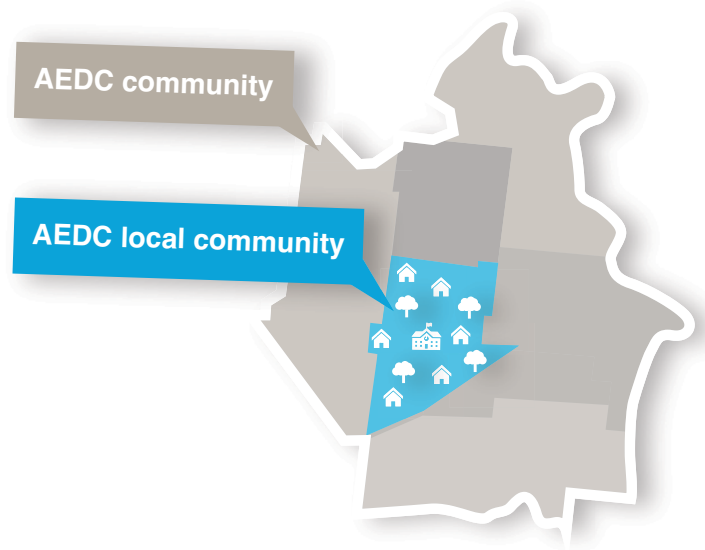
- In which domains are most children 'on track' and 'developmentally vulnerable' in the local community?
- Does the data reflect your experience of the development of children in your service?
- Do the characteristics of the community, socioeconomic factors, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children, and community environments help to understand the data?
- How could areas of strength or vulnerability in your community help to inform programming, planning and quality improvement in the service?
- What explanations might there be for differences between the AEDC data and other information?
- Are there local networks, organisations or services that you can work with to review the data or form partnerships with to improve children's outcomes?
- How can the data assist in improving children's successful transition to school?



How to access the AEDC data

AEDC data is collated and reported at different levels including:

- AEDC local community (generally suburb level)
- AEDC community
- state/territory
- national.



AEDC data is published in a range of formats including tables, maps and the community profiles on the AEDC website: www.aedc.gov.au. To access the data for your community, click on the data tab and search for your suburb.

The 'AEDC Community Profile' is a key document for early childhood education and care services. It provides a breakdown of the data by 'community' and 'local community' across the five domains and sub-domains.



Further resources

Further resources on the AEDC developed for Queensland early childhood education and care services include:

- linking the AEDC with *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework*
- linking the AEDC with the *National Quality Standard*
- guides to each of the AEDC domains
- case studies on kindergarten and long day care services using the AEDC in practice.

The resources, including videos and fact sheets are available at: www.dete.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood and on the companion DVD.

These resources are proudly funded and supported by the Queensland and Australian Governments.

To access the AEDC data please visit: www.aedc.gov.au.

For any other queries please contact the Queensland AEDC Coordinator in Queensland Government, Department of Education, Training and Employment at: AEDC@dete.qld.gov.au.



