

# 2012 Australian Early Development Index Results for the ACT



**ACT**  
Government

## Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. The ACT Government acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

## Acknowledgements

The Australian Early Developmental Index (AEDI) acknowledges the Australian Government and state and territory governments who are working in partnership with The Royal Children's Hospital Centre for Community Child Health, the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research to deliver the AEDI. The Social Research Centre is managing the AEDI.

## Accessibility

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues accessible to as many people as possible.

- If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format—such as large print or audio—please telephone (02) 6205 0619.
- If English is not your first language and you require translating and interpreting services—please telephone 131 450.
- If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the TTY typewriter service—please telephone (02) 6205 0888.

## Disclaimer

Each reader waives and releases the territory to the full extent permitted by law, from any and all claims relating to the usage of material or information documented in the report. Subject to any terms implied by law which cannot be excluded, in no event shall the territory be liable for any losses or damages, including incidental or consequential damages, resulting from use of the material or reliance on the information.

While care has been taken to ensure that information contained in the territory's publications is true and correct at the time of publication, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information. The territory gives no warranty or assurance, and makes no representation as to the accuracy or reliability of any information or advice contained in the report, or that it is suitable for your intended use.

The report contains reference to external documents and internet sites. The external websites are outside the territory's control. It is the responsibility of internet users to make their own decisions about the accuracy, currency, reliability, and correctness of information found. While care is taken to provide links to suitable material, the nature of the internet prevents the territory from guaranteeing the suitability, completeness or accuracy of any material that this report may be linked to.

Enquiries about this publication should be directed to:

Community Services Directorate  
Early Intervention and Prevention  
Services  
GPO Box 158  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone: 133 427  
Email: [children@act.gov.au](mailto:children@act.gov.au)  
Website: [www.children.act.gov.au](http://www.children.act.gov.au)

ISSN  
2202-6797 (Print)  
2202-6800 (Online)  
May 2014  
© ACT Government (2014)



**ACT**  
Government



Australian Early Development Index

# Message from the Minister



The ACT Government is committed to helping all children reach their potential. The Australian Early Developmental Index (AEDI) provides a comprehensive picture of how children are developing in their early years. *The 2012 Australian Early Developmental Index Results for the ACT* summarises the results for ACT's children from both the 2009 and 2012 AEDI data collections.

All ACT schools participated in the 2012 AEDI data collection. This would not have been possible without the support of the Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors. The high response rate means that we have an accurate picture of what is working well and what needs to be improved to better support children and their families.

The report shows that the majority of children are doing well, although it highlights some areas for improvement. A child-friendly city keeps a constant check on the state of its children and this report represents a whole-of-government commitment to monitor and respond to the developmental needs of young children within our community.

The AEDI assists in creating a snapshot of early childhood health and development in communities across Australia.

The extensive information available highlights the value of the AEDI and confirms the vital role it plays in strengthening our early childhood evidence base. The AEDI also informs early childhood policy development, including education, health and community services.

The information in this report will play an important part in helping us prioritise the needs of children. By doing this, we can help ensure the ACT continues to promote the optimal health, wellbeing, learning and development of all children in the ACT.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joy Burch'.

**Joy Burch MLA**

Minister for Disability, Children and Young People

# Executive summary

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) was completed nationwide for the first time in 2009. All schools in the ACT participated in the 2009 data collection. In 2012, the ACT once again had 100% of schools participate, capturing information on 5,106 (99.9%<sup>1</sup>) children attending kindergarten in the ACT, 4,898 of which live in the ACT.

- The AEDI is a teacher-completed checklist based on the teacher's knowledge and observations of the children in their class.
- The AEDI examines early childhood development across the community; the results are reported at the community level based on where the child lives rather than on where they go to school.
- The AEDI results provide information across five domains of early childhood development: Physical Health and Wellbeing; Social Competence; Emotional Maturity; Language and Cognitive Skills; and Communication Skills and General Knowledge.



## Profile and demographics of ACT children surveyed in 2012

- Total number of kindergarten children living in the ACT: 4,898
- Total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: 117 (2.4%)
- Total number of children with a language background other than English: 962 (19.6%)
- Average age of children: 5 years 8 months

<sup>1</sup> This figure represents the proportion of children in kindergarten as reported through the 2012 February school census.

## Summary of key findings for the ACT



The majority of children are developmentally on track



Children are least likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the 'Language and Cognitive Skills' domain (3.9%)



Children are most likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the 'Physical Health and Wellbeing' domain (10.6%)



Overall, 22.0% of ACT children are vulnerable on one or more domain and 9.8% of children are vulnerable on two or more domains



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more than twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children



The proportion of male children (28.1%) in the ACT who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain is higher than that of females (15.5%)



The proportion of developmental vulnerability varies across the ACT communities. Localities with the highest proportions of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain are Tuggeranong (24.6%), Gungahlin (22.3%) and Weston Creek (22.0%)



Communities with the lowest proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain are North Canberra (17.7%) and South Canberra (19.5%)



Between 2009 and 2012, the ACT experienced an improvement in four out of the five developmental domains: Social Competence; Emotional Maturity; Language and Cognitive Skills; and Communication and general knowledge. On each of these four domains, the ACT compares favourably to the rest of Australia

# Contents

<b>Overview</b>	<b>1</b>
What is the AEDI?	1
How is the AEDI administered?	1
What does the AEDI measure?	1
What can the AEDI tell us?	2
How is vulnerability defined and reported?	2
<b>Profile of ACT's children</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ACT regional overview</b>	<b>6</b>
Physical Health and Wellbeing	7
Social Competence	7
Emotional Maturity	8
Language and Cognitive Skills	8
Communication Skills and General Knowledge	9
Developmental vulnerability	10
ACT comparisons between 2009 and 2012	11
<b>ACT results for population groups</b>	<b>13</b>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	13
Language diversity	14
Gender	14
Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) and developmental vulnerability	15
<b>The AEDI in the future</b>	<b>17</b>
For further information	17

# Overview

**It is understood that life success, health and emotional wellbeing have their roots in early childhood. Research shows that investing resources to support children in their early years of life brings long-term benefits to them and to the whole community. Early childhood development outcomes are therefore important markers of the welfare of children, and can predict future health and human capital.**

**It is within this context that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has recognised the need for all communities to have information about early childhood development, by endorsing the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) as a national progress measure of early childhood development.**

Population monitoring of early childhood development, with measures such as the AEDI, was recommended in the 2010 Status Report on the United Nations Convention on the Rights on the Child (UN General Assembly 2010). The ACT publishes information annually on children's health and wellbeing. Outcomes are measured using the *ACT Children and Young People Outcomes Framework* and are reported annually in *A Picture of ACT's Children and Young People*.

## What is the AEDI?

The AEDI is a population-based measure of how young children are developing in different communities across Australia as they enter school. In the ACT, this first year of school is kindergarten. The purpose of the AEDI is to measure the health and development of populations of young children to assist communities and governments to plan and assess the effectiveness of their efforts in supporting young children and their families.

The results from the AEDI help communities, governments and policy-makers to pinpoint the types of services, resources and support that young children and their families need to give children their best possible start in life.

The AEDI is an adapted version of the Canadian Early Development Instrument (EDI), developed in response to communities' increasing interest in knowing how their children were developing. As a population measure, the AEDI focuses on all children in the community, providing a picture of early childhood development across the whole community. Moving the focus from the individual child to all children in the community can make a greater difference in supporting efforts to create optimal early childhood development.

## How is the AEDI administered?

The AEDI began in 2009 and is administered once every three years. The AEDI is a teacher-completed checklist based on the teacher's knowledge and observations of the children in their class. It is completed for all children in Australia in their first year of school. In the ACT the first year of school is kindergarten.

The AEDI national implementation is an Australian Government initiative that works in collaboration with state and territory governments. The ACT government has responsibility for administering the AEDI in the ACT and working with communities within the ACT to understand and utilise the results.

## What does the AEDI measure?

The AEDI measures five domains of early childhood development: Physical Health and Wellbeing; Social Competence; Emotional Maturity; Language and Cognitive Skills; and Communication and General Knowledge (refer to Figure 1). Information collected through a teacher-completed checklist. These domains are key areas of child development and are closely linked to the predictors of adult health, education and social outcomes.

The AEDI is a 'summary indicator' of children's progress, reported for the community where the children live, not where they go to school. The AEDI is most suited to mapping patterns of relative need, particularly geographical comparisons and providing communities with a picture of their strengths and vulnerabilities. It provides a valuable resource in planning service delivery for children and families.

Figure 1: The five domains of the AEDI



## What can the AEDI tell us?

The AEDI examines early childhood development across the community and is a 'summary indicator' of children's progress. It is reported for the community where the children live, not by where they go to school. This enables the monitoring of early child development at a community level, provides an important evidence base for community initiatives that support healthy child development and contributes to understanding how local circumstances might be changed to improve children's life chances.

The AEDI is most suited to mapping patterns of relative need, particularly geographical comparisons and providing communities with a picture of their strengths and vulnerabilities. It provides a valuable resource in planning service delivery for children and families.

## How is vulnerability defined and reported?

The AEDI results are reported for each domain as average scores, where zero is the lowest score and 10 is the highest. For each AEDI domain these scores are then used to define the proportions of children whose development is considered to be either 'on track', 'at risk', or 'vulnerable' (as described in Figure 2). To determine which children fall into these groupings, AEDI cut-offs have been set for each domain. The cut-offs have been created on the basis of the results of all children who participated in the AEDI nationally in 2012.

Figure 2: Children who are developmentally 'on track', 'at risk', or 'vulnerable'

 <b>On track</b> Above 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	 <b>At risk</b> Between 10 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile	 <b>Vulnerable</b> Below 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile
Children whose domain score is above the 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile of the AEDI national population.	Children whose domain score is between the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> percentiles of the AEDI national population.	Children whose domain score is below the 10 <sup>th</sup> percentile of the AEDI national population.

# Profile of ACT's children

The ACT is a regional centre and borders towns in New South Wales, thus several students attending school in the ACT may not be residents of the ACT. While 5,106 kindergarten children were surveyed in the ACT, 4,898 of these children actually live in the ACT.

There were 238 children in the ACT identified as having special needs. Children with special needs are those who have chronic medical, physical or intellectual disabilities that require special assistance. Teachers were asked to base their response on medical diagnosis. Information about children with special needs is not included in the AEDI results because of the already identified substantial developmental needs of this group.

Across domains, both nationally and within the ACT, the majority of children are developmentally on track according to the AEDI results. Overall, the 2012 results show that the ACT compares favourably to the 2012 national results, with only the domain of physical health and well being showing a higher percentage of children developmentally vulnerable compared to national percentages (See Table 2). However, 22% of ACT children are considered to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more of the five AEDI domains. Furthermore, 9.8% are considered to be developmentally vulnerable on two or more of the five AEDI domains.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the children surveyed both in the ACT and Australia, 2012**

Selected characteristic	ACT	Australia
Children surveyed living in the ACT	4,898*	289,973
Average age of children	5 years 8 months	5 years 7 months
Teachers involved in completing the checklist	284	16,425
Schools where checklists were completed	106	7,417
Children who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	117 (2.4%)	15,490 (5.3%)
Children with a language background other than English	962 (19.6%)	55,489 (19.1%)
Children born outside Australia	502	21,698
Children reported as having special needs	238	14,173
Children identified by teachers as requiring further assessment	394	29,628

\* This figure represents the proportion of children attending kindergarten and residing in the ACT.

ACT children are least likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the Language and Cognitive Skills domain, and ACT children fare better than those in all other states and territories (refer to Table 3).

ACT children have similar levels of developmental vulnerability on the Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, and Communication Skills and General Knowledge domains as their Australian peers.

**Table 2: Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable by each AEDI domain, on one or more and two or more domains, ACT and Australia, 2012**

Domain	ACT	Australia
 <b>Physical Health and Wellbeing</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	9.3%
 <b>Social Competence</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	9.3%
 <b>Emotional Maturity</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	7.6%
 <b>Language and Cognitive Skills</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	6.8%
 <b>Communication Skills and General Knowledge</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	9.0%
 <b>Developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domain</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	22.0%
 <b>Developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	10.8%

Table 3: Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on each AEDI domain, for each state and territory, 2012

	AUST	ACT	NSW	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	VIC	NT
 <b>Physical Health and Wellbeing</b>	9.3%	<b>10.6%</b>	8.3%	11.6%	9.8%	10.2%	9.9%	7.8%	15.0%
 <b>Social Competence</b>	9.3%	<b>8.6%</b>	8.5%	11.5%	8.4%	11.3%	8.2%	8.1%	14.9%
 <b>Emotional Maturity</b>	7.6%	<b>7.2%</b>	6.2%	9.3%	8.3%	9.3%	8.1%	7.2%	13.5%
 <b>Language and Cognitive Skills</b>	6.8%	<b>3.9%</b>	4.8%	9.1%	8.6%	6.8%	7.1%	6.1%	20.8%
 <b>Communication Skills and General Knowledge</b>	9.0%	<b>8.1%</b>	8.5%	10.7%	9.1%	8.9%	6.6%	8.0%	14.4%
 <b>Developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domain</b>	22.0%	<b>22.0%</b>	19.9%	26.2%	23.0%	23.7%	21.5%	19.5%	35.5%
 <b>Developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains</b>	10.8%	<b>9.8%</b>	9.2%	13.8%	11.2%	12.2%	10.1%	9.5%	20.9%

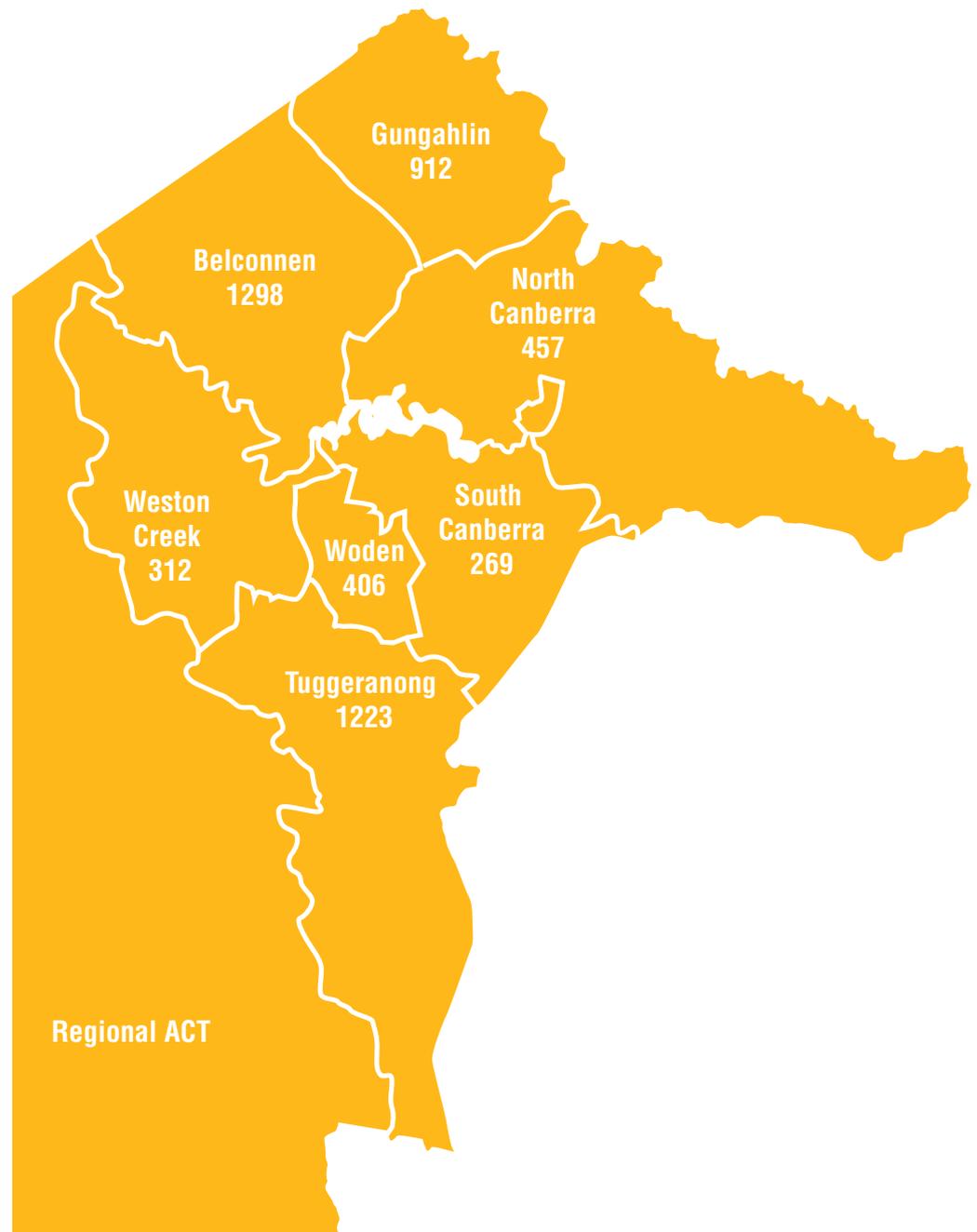


# ACT regional overview

The ACT comprises of seven regions: Belconnen; Gungahlin; North Canberra; South Canberra; Tuggeranong; Weston Creek and Woden (refer to Figure 3). This report provides data for each of these seven regions.

Further information on the local communities (suburbs) within these regions can be found in community profiles and online maps from the AEDI website at [www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au).

**Figure 3: Number of children surveyed in each community within the ACT, 2012**



Note that data is not reportable for Regional ACT due to the small number of children residing in this community.



## Physical Health and Wellbeing

**Whether a child is healthy, independent, ready for school each day**

Belconnen, Gungahlin, North Canberra and Weston Creek all presented with higher proportions of developmental vulnerability in Physical Health and Wellbeing relative to the ACT average. South Canberra, Tuggeranong and Woden presented with higher proportions of children on track in Physical Health and Wellbeing relative to the ACT average (refer to Table 4).

**Table 4: Physical Health and Wellbeing**

Location	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN:		
	✔ On track	⚠ At risk	❗ Developmentally vulnerable
<b>ACT</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
Belconnen	71.4%	16.8%	11.7%
Gungahlin	68.9%	20.3%	10.9%
North Canberra	70.4%	18.9%	10.7%
South Canberra	84.2%	7.3%	8.5%
Tuggeranong	72.8%	16.9%	10.3%
Weston Creek	71.2%	16.0%	12.7%
Woden	79.9%	13.3%	6.8%



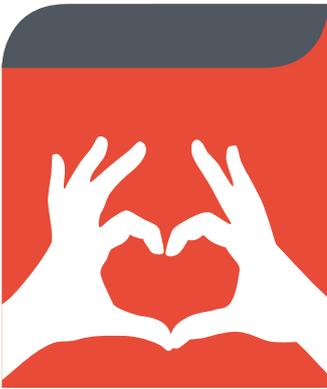
## Social Competence

**Whether a child is self-confident, gets along with others and shares, how a child plays**

Gungahlin and Tuggeranong displayed higher proportions of developmental vulnerability in Social Competence relative to the ACT average. Results in Belconnen, North Canberra, South Canberra and Woden demonstrated higher proportions of children who were on track in Social Competence relative to the ACT average (refer to Table 5).

**Table 5: Social Competence**

Location	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN:		
	✔ On track	⚠ At risk	❗ Developmentally vulnerable
<b>ACT</b>	<b>75.5%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
Belconnen	77.2%	14.7%	8.1%
Gungahlin	74.1%	17.2%	8.7%
North Canberra	76.6%	16.1%	7.2%
South Canberra	80.7%	12.7%	6.6%
Tuggeranong	73.2%	16.1%	10.7%
Weston Creek	74.8%	16.7%	8.5%
Woden	77.3%	16.4%	6.3%



## Emotional Maturity

Whether a child is able to concentrate, help others, is patient, not aggressive or angry

North Canberra and Tuggeranong showed higher proportions of developmental vulnerability in Emotional Maturity relative to the ACT average. Gungahlin, South Canberra, Weston Creek and Woden displayed higher proportions of children on track in Emotional Maturity relative to the ACT average (refer to Table 6).

Table 6: Emotional Maturity

Location	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN:		
	✔ On track	⚠ At risk	⚠ Developmentally vulnerable
<b>ACT</b>	<b>79.0%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
Belconnen	77.8%	15.1%	7.1%
Gungahlin	79.6%	13.3%	7.1%
North Canberra	78.8%	13.8%	7.5%
South Canberra	80.7%	13.5%	5.8%
Tuggeranong	78.2%	12.6%	9.2%
Weston Creek	82.0%	15.1%	3.0%
Woden	81.0%	13.0%	6.0%



## Language and Cognitive Skills

Whether a child is interested in reading and writing, can count and recognise numbers and shapes

South Canberra, Tuggeranong and Weston Creek showed higher proportions of developmental vulnerability in Language and Cognitive Skills relative to the ACT average. Belconnen, Gungahlin, North Canberra and Woden had higher proportions of children on track in Language and Cognitive Skills relative to the ACT average (refer to Table 7).

Table 7: Language and Cognitive Skills

Location	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN:		
	✔ On track	⚠ At risk	⚠ Developmentally vulnerable
<b>ACT</b>	<b>86.5%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
Belconnen	87.1%	9.2%	3.7%
Gungahlin	87.6%	9.6%	2.8%
North Canberra	89.5%	7.9%	2.6%
South Canberra	85.5%	9.4%	5.1%
Tuggeranong	84.5%	9.9%	5.5%
Weston Creek	83.9%	11.2%	4.9%
Woden	87.1%	10.0%	2.9%



# Communication Skills and General Knowledge

Whether a child can tell a story, communicate with adults and children, articulate themselves

Gungahlin, South Canberra, Tuggeranong and Woden displayed higher proportions of developmental vulnerability in Communication Skills and General Knowledge relative to the ACT average. Belconnen, South Canberra, Tuggeranong and Woden presented with higher proportions of children on track in Communication Skills and General Knowledge relative to the ACT average (refer to Table 8).

**Table 8: Communication Skills and General Knowledge**

Location	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN:		
	✔ On track	⚠ At risk	! Developmentally vulnerable
<b>ACT</b>	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
Belconnen	74.0%	19.6%	6.4%
Gungahlin	66.7%	22.8%	10.4%
North Canberra	71.7%	22.2%	6.1%
South Canberra	77.1%	12.0%	10.9%
Tuggeranong	76.0%	15.6%	8.5%
Weston Creek	73.2%	20.6%	6.2%
Woden	78.9%	11.7%	9.4%



# Developmental vulnerability

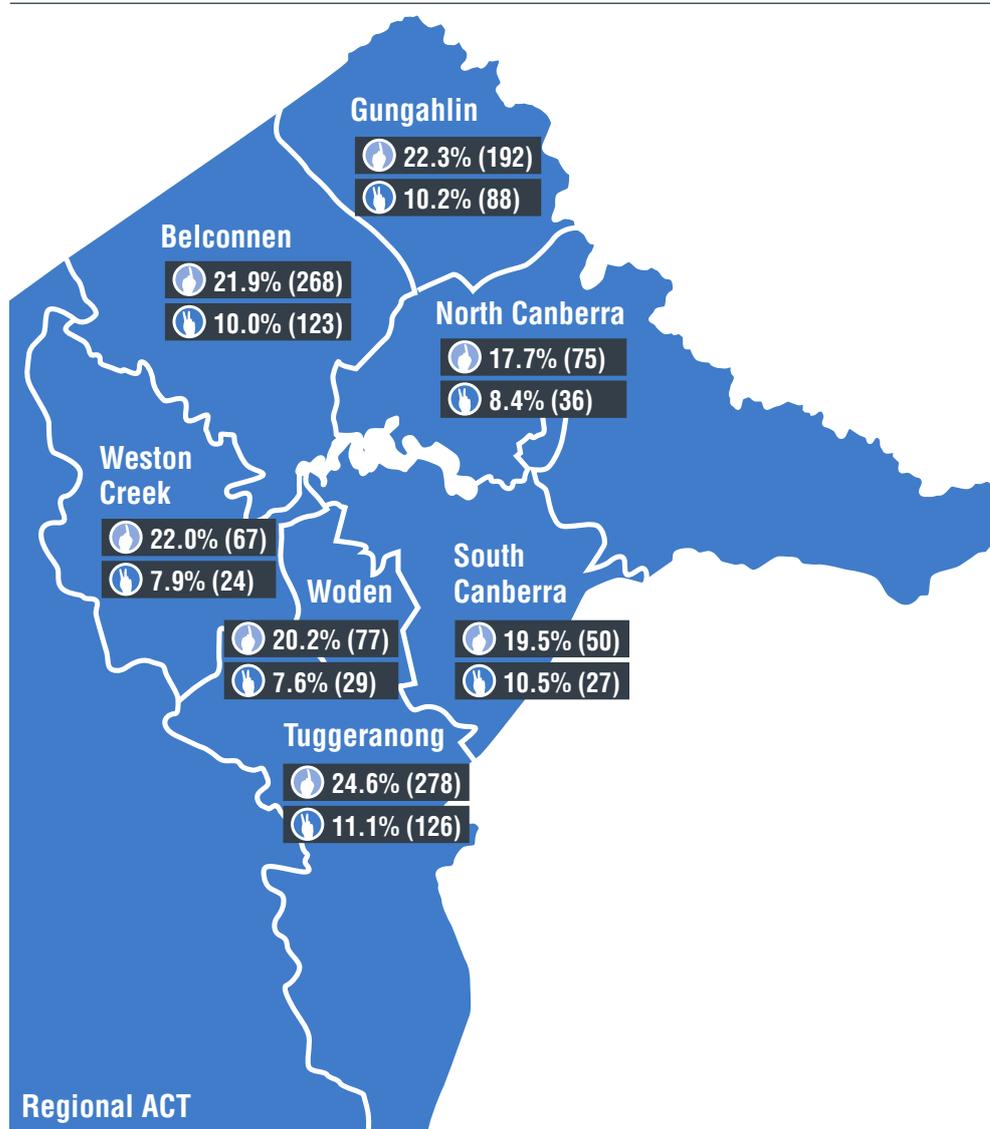


## Whether a child is developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains

As shown in Figure 4, the proportion of developmental vulnerability varies across the ACT communities. Tuggeranong (24.6%), Gungahlin (22.3%) and Weston Creek (22.0%) have higher proportions of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain. When looking at proportions of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains, the communities with the highest levels are Tuggeranong (11.1%), South Canberra (10.5%), Gungahlin (10.2%) and Belconnen (10.0%).

Areas with the lowest proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain are North Canberra (17.7%) and South Canberra (19.5%). Weston Creek (7.9%) and Woden (7.6%) have the lowest proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.

**Figure 4: The proportion and numbers of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more and two or more domains of the AEDI in each community within the ACT (2012)**



### Key

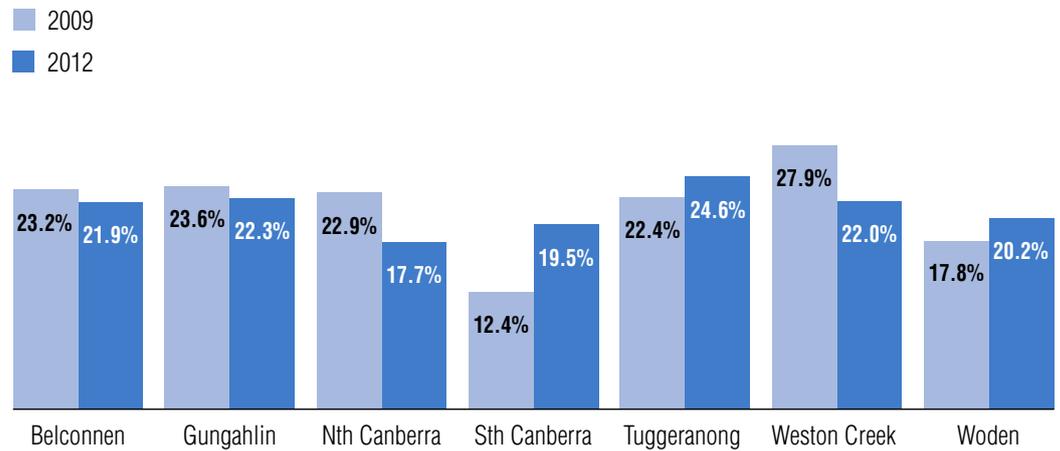
- % (number) of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains
- % (number) of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

## ACT comparisons between 2009 and 2012

Four of the seven regions within the ACT saw a drop in developmental vulnerability on one or more domain between 2009 and 2012 (refer to Figure 5). This was statistically significant in North Canberra and Weston Creek.

There has been an increase in vulnerability in South Canberra, Tuggeranong and Woden. This increase is statistically significant in South Canberra and Tuggeranong.

**Figure 5: Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain, within the ACT regions, between 2009 and 2012**



Between 2009 and 2012, there was a decrease in developmental vulnerability for all domains except Physical Health and Wellbeing (refer to Table 9). The Physical Health and Wellbeing domain displayed an increase in the proportion of ACT children developmentally vulnerable from 9.4% in 2009 to 10.6% in 2012. The percentage of ACT children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain or two or more domains has remained fairly similar between 2009 and 2012.

**Table 9: Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable by each AEDI domain, on one or more and two or more domains, ACT and Australia, 2009–2012**

Domain	ACT		Australia	
	2009	2012	2009	2012
 Physical Health and Wellbeing	9.4%	<b>10.6%</b>	9.3%	<b>9.3%</b>
 Social Competence	8.9%	<b>8.6%</b>	9.5%	<b>9.3%</b>
 Emotional Maturity	9.0%	<b>7.2%</b>	8.9%	<b>7.6%</b>
 Language and Cognitive Skills	5.7%	<b>3.9%</b>	8.9%	<b>6.8%</b>
 Communication Skills and General Knowledge	8.9%	<b>8.1%</b>	9.2%	<b>9.0%</b>
 Developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domain	22.2%	<b>22.0%</b>	23.6%	<b>22.0%</b>
 Developmentally vulnerable on 2 or more domains	10.9%	<b>9.8%</b>	11.8%	<b>10.8%</b>

# ACT results for population groups

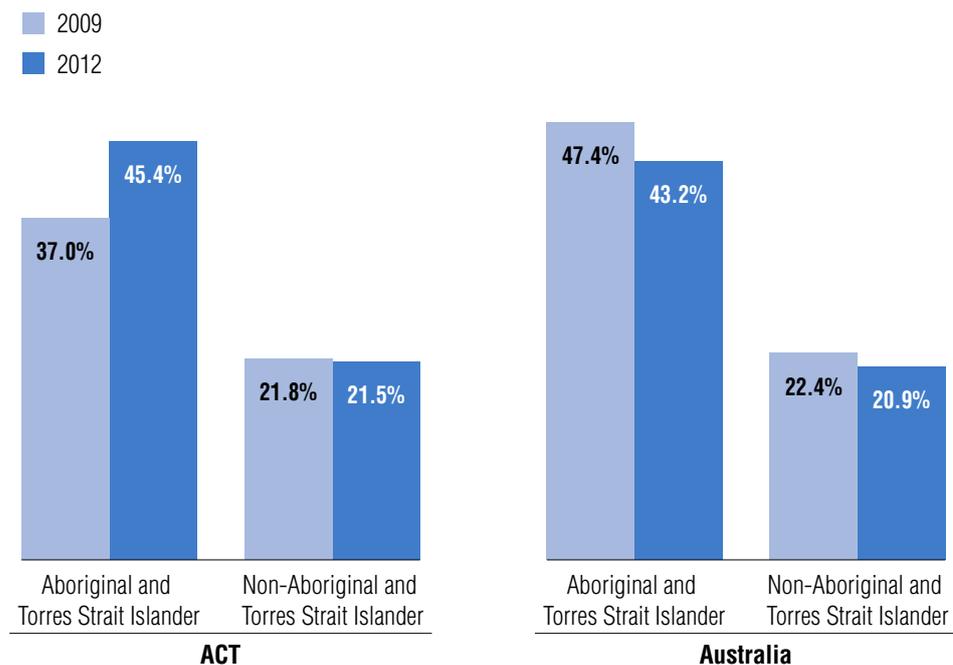
The following section examines AEDI results for population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a language background other than English, males/females and socio-economic status. Breaking down the AEDI data in this way is a valuable resource to inform policy and service delivery for children and families.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

There were 117 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children surveyed in the ACT. This represents 2.4% of ACT children participating in the AEDI. For 33 children living and attending school in the ACT, the AEDI Checklist was completed collaboratively with an Indigenous Cultural Consultant.

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are developmentally on track on each of the five AEDI developmental domains. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more than twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

**Figure 6: Comparison of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain, 2009–12**



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the ACT experienced an increase in developmental vulnerability between 2009 and 2012, from 37% in 2009 to 45.4% in 2012. Over this same time, there was a national decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children developmentally vulnerable in Australia from 47.4% to 43.2%.

The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain is higher in the ACT than nationally, with 45.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children vulnerable in the ACT compared to 43.2% in Australia.

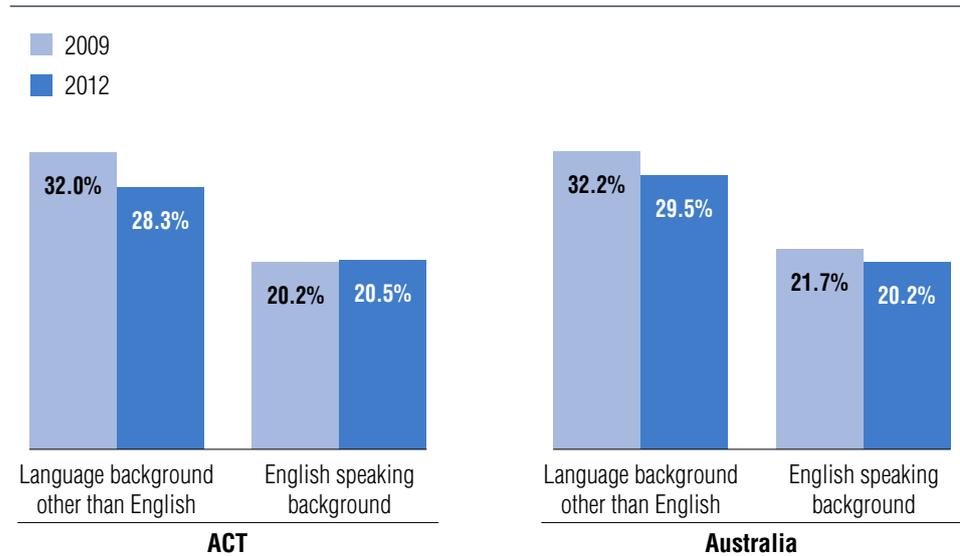
If a classroom teacher is non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and completing a checklist for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child it is recommended that the checklist be completed with an Indigenous Cultural Consultant. The Indigenous Cultural Consultant role is to support teachers in their rating of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children because of their understanding of the ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children may learn and behave from a cultural point of view.

## Language diversity

There were 962 children with a language background other than English (LBOTE) that were surveyed in the ACT. This represents approximately 1 in 5 (19.6%) ACT children surveyed.

The proportion of ACT children with a LBOTE that are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain is higher than children with an English speaking background. The percentage of children with a LBOTE who are developmentally vulnerable has significantly decreased since 2009 in both the ACT and nationally.

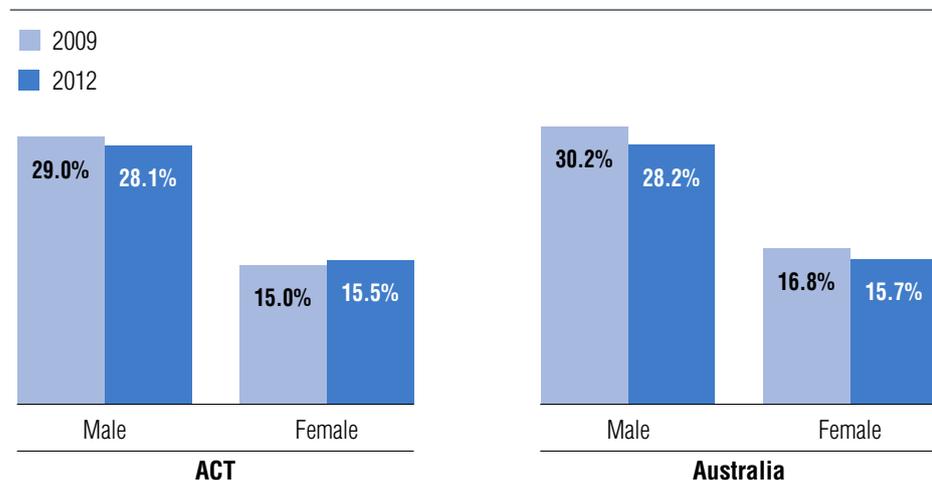
**Figure 7: Comparison of children with a language background other than English, developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain, 2009–12**



## Gender

The proportion of male children both in the ACT and nationally who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain is higher relative to females. There has been a significant decrease in the number of males developmentally vulnerable in both the ACT and nationally between 2009 and 2012. Whilst there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of females developmentally vulnerable between 2009 and 2012 at a national level, the ACT has seen an increase in developmental vulnerability.

**Figure 8: Comparison of female and male children, developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain, 2009–12**



## Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) and developmental vulnerability

Using AEDI data together with Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) information it is possible to examine the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and developmental vulnerability. SEIFA was developed by the Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to rank areas of Australia according to relative socio-economic disadvantage using Census data.

The SEIFA Index for Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage summarises a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. Each geographic area in Australia is given a ranking according to its level of disadvantage and enables areas to be grouped into quintiles (a quintile is a 20 per cent range).

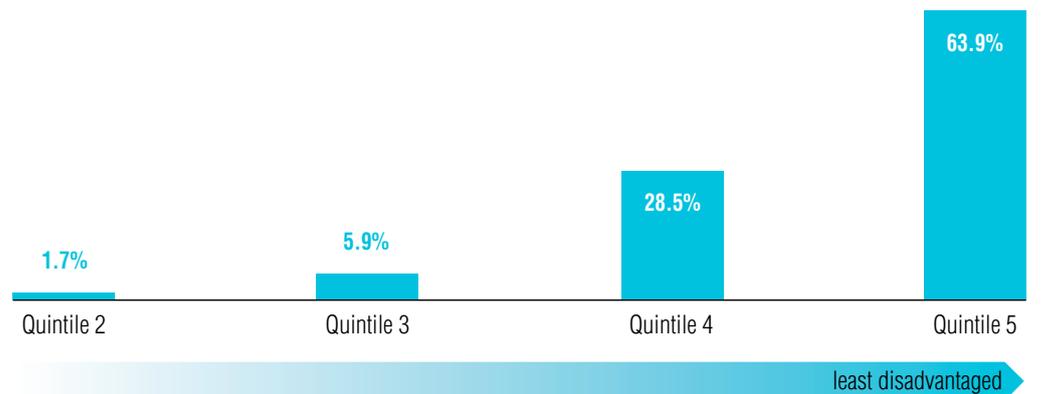
Quintile one represents areas with the greatest socio-economic disadvantage, while quintile five represents areas with the least socio-economic disadvantage. Note that due to small numbers in both 2009 and 2012, the figures for the most disadvantaged quintile (quintile 1) have been excluded to ensure confidentiality.

The following tables and figures display the number of children living in SEIFA quintiles and also the proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain for 2009 and 2012 by quintile. Due to changes in how SEIFA was collected, the following results for 2009 and 2012 cannot be compared.

According to the 2009 and 2012 results, the majority of ACT children live in areas with the least level of disadvantage (quintiles four and five).

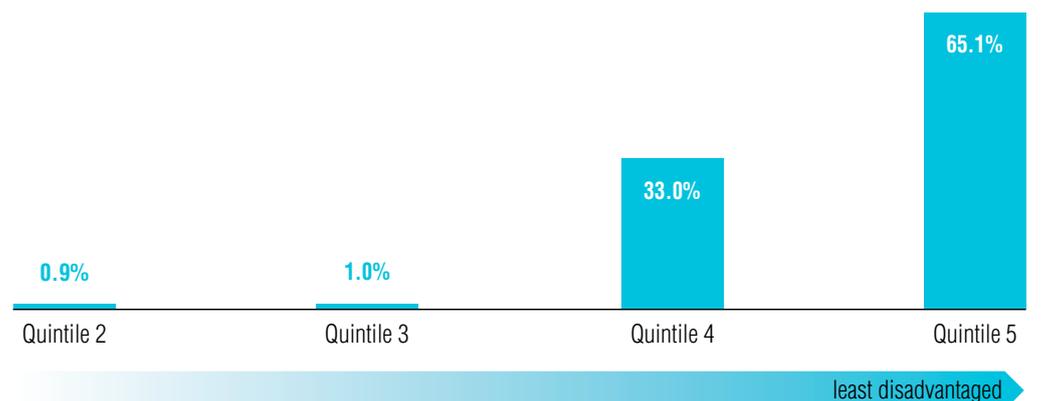
In 2009, 63.9% of children were living in the least disadvantaged quintile (quintile 5), 28.5% in the second least disadvantaged quintile (quintile 4), 5.9% in quintile 3 and only 1.7% in second most disadvantaged quintile (quintile 2).

**Figure 9: Percentage of children across quintiles two to five for 2009**



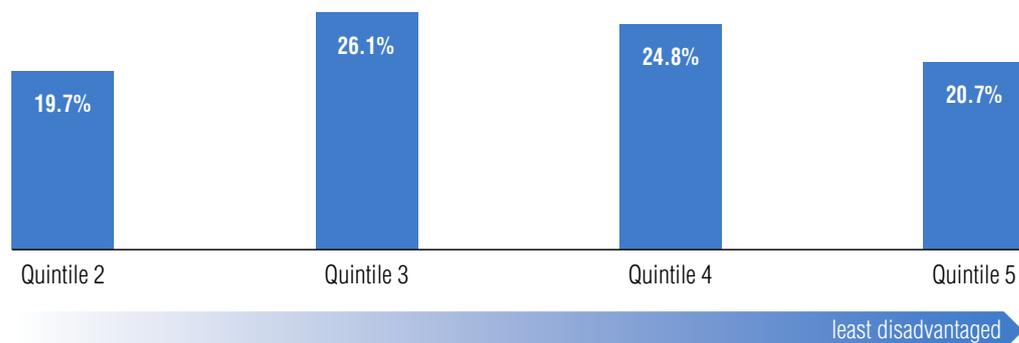
In 2012, 65.1% of children were living in the least disadvantaged quintile (quintile 5), 33.0% in the second least disadvantaged quintile (quintile 4), 1.0% in quintile 3 and only 0.9% in the second most disadvantaged quintile (quintile 2).

**Figure 10: Percentage of children across quintiles two to five for 2012**



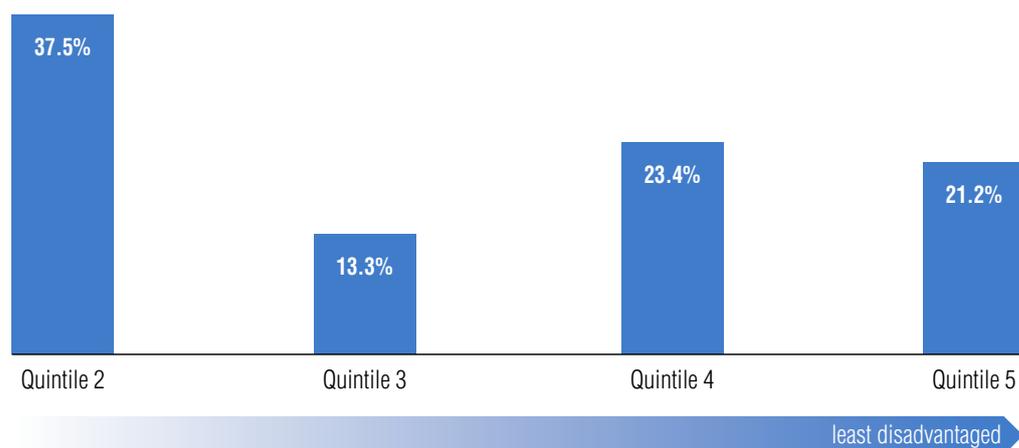
In 2009, the greatest percentage of children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in the third quintile (26.1%), and the smallest percentage of children were developmentally vulnerable in the second quintile (19.7%).

**Figure 11: Percentage of developmentally vulnerability across quintiles two to five for 2009**



In 2012, the greatest percentages of children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain in the second quintile (37.5%) and the smallest percentage of children were developmentally vulnerable in the third quintile (13.3%).

**Figure 12: Percentage of developmental vulnerability across quintiles two to five for 2012**



Research suggests that generally there is an association between socio-economic disadvantage and developmental vulnerability. However, this pattern is not fully reflected in the ACT results. This may be partly related to the difficulty the ACT traditionally experiences in identifying and measuring disadvantage. ACT collection districts have socio-economically diverse populations as public housing in Canberra is generally 'salt and peppered' across suburbs. As a result of this co-location, disadvantage is underreported when the standard Census-based measure of socio-economic disadvantage is used (SEIFA). Therefore, it is important to note that disadvantage by area does not adequately paint a picture of socio-economic disadvantage experienced by children and families in the ACT relative to a child's developmental vulnerability.

When looking at the proportion of children living in each quintile in the ACT it is clear that the vast majority live in the least disadvantaged areas according to SEIFA. This accounts for a larger total number of children vulnerable on one or more domains in these areas. This highlights the need for a universal service and intervention base to reach all developmentally vulnerable children regardless of community level disadvantage, in addition to a targeted approach.

# The AEDI in the future

The next AEDI data collection will occur nationally in 2015. This third data capture will provide an opportunity to review trends in early childhood development over time.

The ACT Government will continue to be responsible for the administration of the data collection in the ACT and use the 2015 results to promote the importance of early childhood and facilitate community development.

The Community Services Directorate will continue to assist community members, policy makers and stakeholders to understand the AEDI results and utilise them to encourage optimal development in the early years and good planning and policy around early childhood development.

This report is published  
on the Community  
Services Directorate  
Children's website  
[www.children.act.gov.au](http://www.children.act.gov.au)

## For further information

### Fact sheets

There are a number of fact sheets and FAQs to help understand the AEDI, the results, how it is collected and stories about what communities and schools are doing in response to the results. Visit the AEDI website at [www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au).

### National Report

*A Snapshot of Early Childhood Development in Australia 2012 – AEDI National Report* provides a unique overview of the development of Australia's children.

### Online community maps

Geographic maps show the proportion of children in the local community who are developmentally vulnerable on the AEDI domains. Online community profiles and maps can be found at <http://maps.aedi.org.au>.

### Community profile

The AEDI community profile contains important information about early childhood development outcomes. The profile provides community-level AEDI results and contextual information for the whole community.

### School profiles (available to schools with results for six or more children)

AEDI school profiles provide schools with results for children attending their school who had information collected about them for the AEDI data collection. School profiles are not publicly available. School profiles can be found at [www.rch.org.au/aedi/Schools/AEDI\\_School\\_Profile](http://www.rch.org.au/aedi/Schools/AEDI_School_Profile).

### AEDI Indigenous Adaptation Study

The AEDI Indigenous Adaptation Study responds to questions about the cultural equivalence of the AEDI for assessing the early childhood development outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The report is available at [http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/aedi/ResearchReport\\_IndigenousAdaptation\\_0911.pdf](http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/aedi/ResearchReport_IndigenousAdaptation_0911.pdf)



Australian Early Development Index



**ACT**  
Government