



Department of
Education



SUB REPORT: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA BY REGION 2015

AUSTRALIAN EARLY DEVELOPMENT CENSUS

Copyright

TITLE: Early childhood development for children living in Western Australia by region. Australian Early Development Census.
Sub Report: Western Australia 2015.
SCIS NO: 1853899
ISBN: 978 0 7307 4611 9

© Commonwealth of Australia and WA Department of Education 2018

This publication may be freely copied in whole or part and in any format in an education institution for non-commercial education purposes.
This material is available on request in appropriate alternative formats.

Enquiries

Department of Education
151 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004
T: 9264 5366
W: education.wa.edu.au

Acknowledgments

Since 2002, the Australian Government has worked in partnership with eminent child health research institutes – Centre for Community Child Health, Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne, and Telethon Kids Institute in Perth – to deliver the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) program to communities nationwide. On 1 July 2014, the AEDI program became known as the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and was launched through a new website – aedc.gov.au. The Australian Government continues to work with its partners, and with state and territory governments, to implement the AEDC.

The Western Australian Department of Education acknowledges funding received from the Australian Government Department of Education to assist with the production of this publication.

Western Australian schools, teachers and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers that completed the AEDC are acknowledged for their important contribution.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key findings 2015	2
Overview	4
How can the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) be used?	4
What is the AEDC?	4
What does the AEDC measure?	4
Why is the AEDC important?	4
Why do we need to focus on the early years?	5
How is AEDC information reported?	5
How can the AEDC results be compared?	6
How does the AEDC differ from other measures?	6
Are the AEDC results available for communities and how are the result reported?	6
How are the AEDC results interpreted?	6
Early childhood development in Western Australia	7
Data collections at a glance	7
Are Western Australian children on track?	7
How did Western Australian children perform in 2015 compared with 2009 and 2012?	8
How do Western Australian children compare nationally?	9
Early childhood development by Western Australian region	11
How do children compare across the regions in 2015?	11
What are the emerging trends across the regions, 2009 to 2015?	12
How did children perform across the regions by developmental domain in 2015?	16
Overview of results by region	18
Perth Region	18
Peel Region	22
South West Region	26
Great Southern Region	30
Wheatbelt Region	34
Goldfields–Esperance Region	38
Mid West–Gascoyne Region	42
Pilbara Region	46
Kimberley Region	50
Further information	53
Additional resources	53
Additional notes	53
Data sources	53

KEY FINDINGS 2015

- The majority of children living in each region are doing well on each of the five developmental domains, consistent with the 2009 and 2012 results. However, there are children who commenced full-time school developmentally vulnerable on one or more of the AEDC domains.
- Developmental vulnerability existed across all regions.
- The Perth (20.0%), Wheatbelt (20.9%) and Peel (21.3%) regions had the lowest percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains.
- The Kimberley (43.4%) and Mid West-Gascoyne (27.0%) regions had the highest percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains.
- Regions further away from the Perth Region had generally higher rates of developmental vulnerability (21.3% in the Peel Region compared to 27.0% in the Mid West-Gascoyne Region and 43.4% in the Kimberley Region).
- Between 2009 and 2015, six regions showed statistically significant reductions in the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable – Perth, Peel, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Goldfields-Esperance and Mid West-Gascoyne.
- Three of these regions – Great Southern, Wheatbelt and Goldfields-Esperance have also experienced a steady increase in the percentage of children developmentally on track on all five domains.
- The language and cognitive skills domain has shown the most improvement across all regions.
- The physical health and wellbeing domain has continued to show the highest rates and numbers of children developmentally vulnerable, across every region, except the Peel Region.

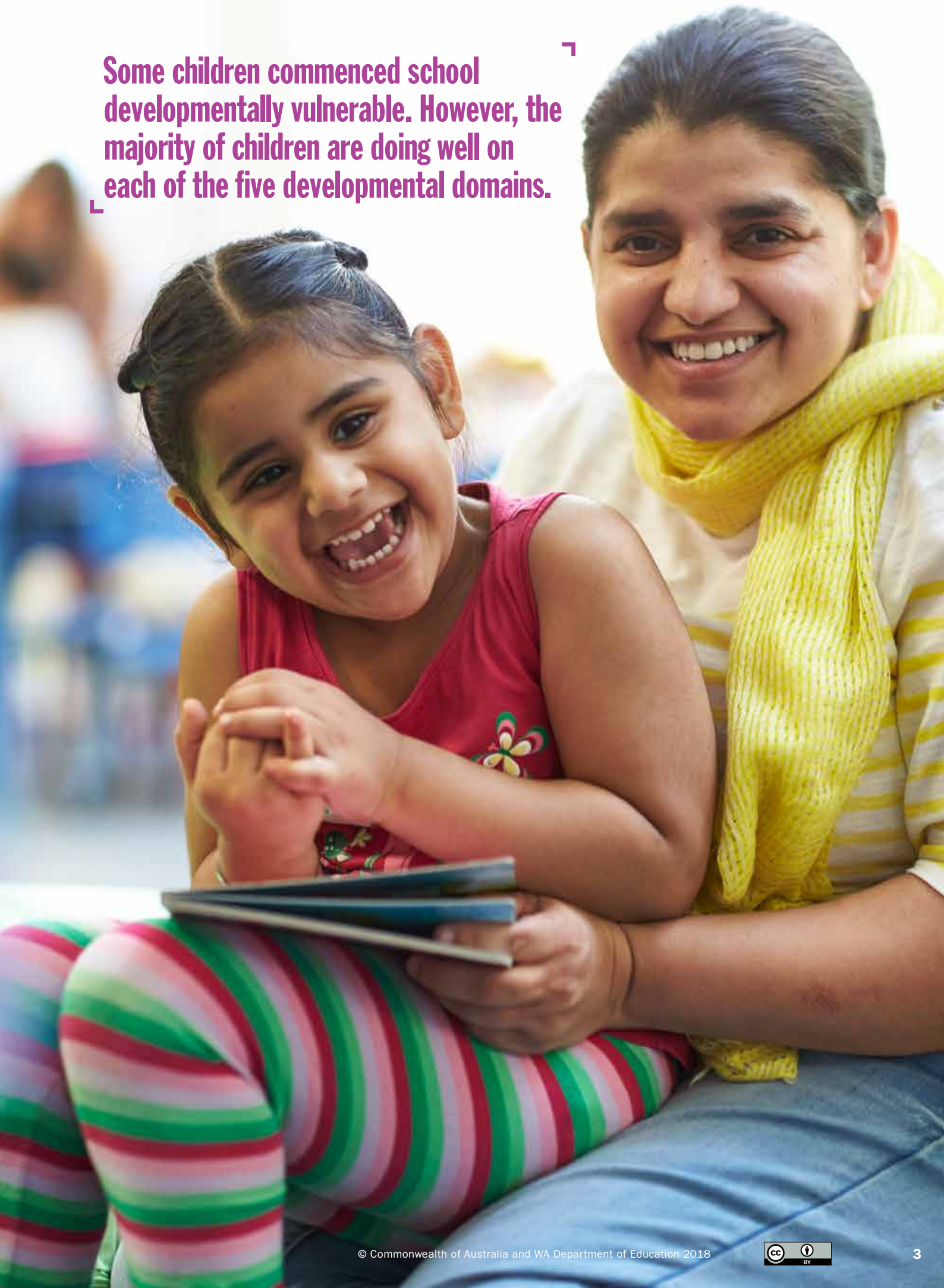
Summary

The area of language and cognitive skills domain has received a lot of attention, focus and investment; notably, through the implementation of national and state systemic initiatives such as the introduction of the Australian Early Development Census, Early Years Learning Framework, the National Quality Standard and a variety of other key universal and targeted reading, early literacy and numeracy initiatives across Western Australia.

While there has been an overall reduction in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills domain, vulnerability on physical health and wellbeing, and social, and emotional development present a challenge for many regions and the State as a whole.

It would be useful to explore the stories behind the positive trends in the Great Southern, Wheatbelt and Goldfields-Esperance regions to understand which policies and/or initiatives could be driving the change.

Some children commenced school developmentally vulnerable. However, the majority of children are doing well on each of the five developmental domains.



OVERVIEW

How can the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) be used?

As a population measure, the AEDC data provides insights into the health and well-being of young children living in different Western Australian communities, over time, so that evidence based decisions can improve investment in our children.

To gain a better understanding of how children are developing within each region, the AEDC data has been aggregated and reported for the nine Western Australia regions as defined by the Regional Development Act 1993: Goldfields–Esperance, Great Southern, Kimberley, Mid West–Gascoyne, Peel, Pilbara, South West and Wheatbelt. Data for Gascoyne is combined with the Mid West to meet the minimum AEDC public reporting requirements and protect the privacy of children in smaller populations. Data for the Perth Region is also included.

The report aims to:

- support organisations such as the Regional Development Commissions to examine the ecological and environmental influences on child development within their region and identify the services, resources and support families need to give their children the best start in life;
- stimulate important discussions about early childhood development in the broader context of each region;
- encourage reflection on early childhood and family friendly policies; and
- influence how regions and communities work to improve young children's outcomes.

Results presented in this report should be viewed in conjunction with the local AEDC community results and the *Early Childhood*

Development in Western Australia: Australian Early Development Census: State Report: 2015 to gain a deeper understanding of variations in early childhood development within a region.

What is the AEDC?

The AEDC is a nationwide population measure of young children's development. It is completed by teachers for children enrolled in their first year of full-time school (Pre-primary in Western Australia). The AEDC collects data through an Australian version of the Early Development Instrument (Instrument) which was created in Canada. Data is collected every three years, and is analysed and reported at national, state/territory and AEDC community levels (based on suburb or town in which children live).

What does the AEDC measure?

The AEDC measures the percentage of Pre-primary children who are developmentally on track, at risk or vulnerable across five domains:

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

These domains are important areas of child development and are considered good predictors of adult health, education and social outcomes.

Why is the AEDC important?

By understanding young children's development, Western Australian regions, communities, parents, families, government and non-government agencies can begin to explore the factors influencing child development outcomes.

Used with other socio-demographic and community information, the AEDC is a powerful tool that supports policy development, planning and action for health, education and community support.

Why do we need to focus on the early years?

The early years matter! From the moment of birth a child's brain undergoes a huge change.

The first five years of a child's life is a critical period of development. It is during this time that children build the foundations that help to shape them into the adults they will become.

These early stages of development are influenced by genes and the environment. While genes provide the initial road map for brain development in children, it is their everyday experiences, the opportunities available and the relationships they make that have the most influence.

Positive early experiences are essential in ensuring children get the best start in life so they start school ready and eager to learn, and build the skills necessary for healthy development, wellbeing and lifelong learning.

Research into child development overwhelmingly supports the view that focussing on early childhood health and wellbeing leads to positive outcomes as children grow older, as well as reduced economic costs to governments and families.

How is AEDC information reported?

AEDC domains

The AEDC domain scores are calculated for each child where enough valid* responses were recorded. For each of the five domains children receive a score between 0 and 10, where ten is the highest score.

In 2009, when the first AEDC was undertaken, a series of cut-off scores were established for each of the five domains. Children falling below the 10th percentile were considered 'developmentally vulnerable', children falling between the 10th and 25th percentile were considered 'developmentally at risk' and all other children were considered to be 'on track'.



The first five years of life is a critical period of development.

The cut-off set in 2009 provides a reference point against which later AEDC results can be compared. For example, in 2012 the national results showed 6.8% of children were developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills domain, compared with 8.9% in 2009.

*The AEDC domain scores are reported for valid results only. Scores are flagged as invalid for children who may have been in the class for less than one month; are less than four years old; or where teachers complete less than 75% of the items in any given domain.

Vulnerable on one or more domains

As well as reporting the percentage of children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable for each domain, the AEDC results are also reported as the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable across multiple domains. Children represented by this summary measure may be vulnerable one or more, two or more, three or more, four or more, or all five domains.

How can the AEDC results be compared?

With data sets covering three collections (2009, 2012, 2015), results can be compared to identify emerging trends of early child development.

To assist in making decisions about whether the change in results over time (for the percentages of children developmentally on track, at risk, or vulnerable) is statistically significant, a method described as the 'critical difference' has been developed. The critical difference is the minimum percentage point change required for the results to represent a 'significant change' in children's development for the school, community, region, or state.

For more information see the technical report *Calculation of the Critical Difference*.

How does the AEDC differ from other measures?

The AEDC is different from other measures as it focuses and gathers information on the 'whole child' (health, wellbeing, learning and development).

As a population measure it analyses and reports this information at the group – not individual level.

It is not a test or measure of school performance. The results provide information about how communities have supported the development of their children up to five years of age and helps them understand how their children are doing compared with other communities, both in Western Australia and nationally.

Are the AEDC results available for communities and how are the results reported?

Each Community (usually a local government area and made up of local communities - generally a suburb or town) has access to an AEDC community profile, and online community tables, and maps. For results to be reported publicly a minimum of 15 children and two teachers must have participated in the AEDC.

Results are also accessible in the form of a national report and State Report.

Visit aedc.gov.au

How are the AEDC results interpreted?

The results show how children are doing compared to other children measured in their own community and across Australia.

It is important to consider the **percentage** of children who are developmentally vulnerable and the **number** of children this percentage represents. For example, a high percentage does not necessarily mean a large number. Similarly, a low percentage in a large community may not equate to a low number of children.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Data collections at a glance

Data collections are expected to be undertaken every three years. The first collection was undertaken in 2009 followed by a second in 2012, and a third in 2015. The rate of participation in the AEDC has remained consistently high across the three collection cycles. Western Australian schools completed the census for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary (table 1).

Table 1: Number of children in the AEDC for Australia and Western Australia

Year	Australia*	Western Australia*
2009	261 147 (97.5%)	27 565 (99.6%)
2012	289 973 (96.5%)	32 158 (99.0%)
2015	302 003 (96.5%)	33 819 (98.7%)

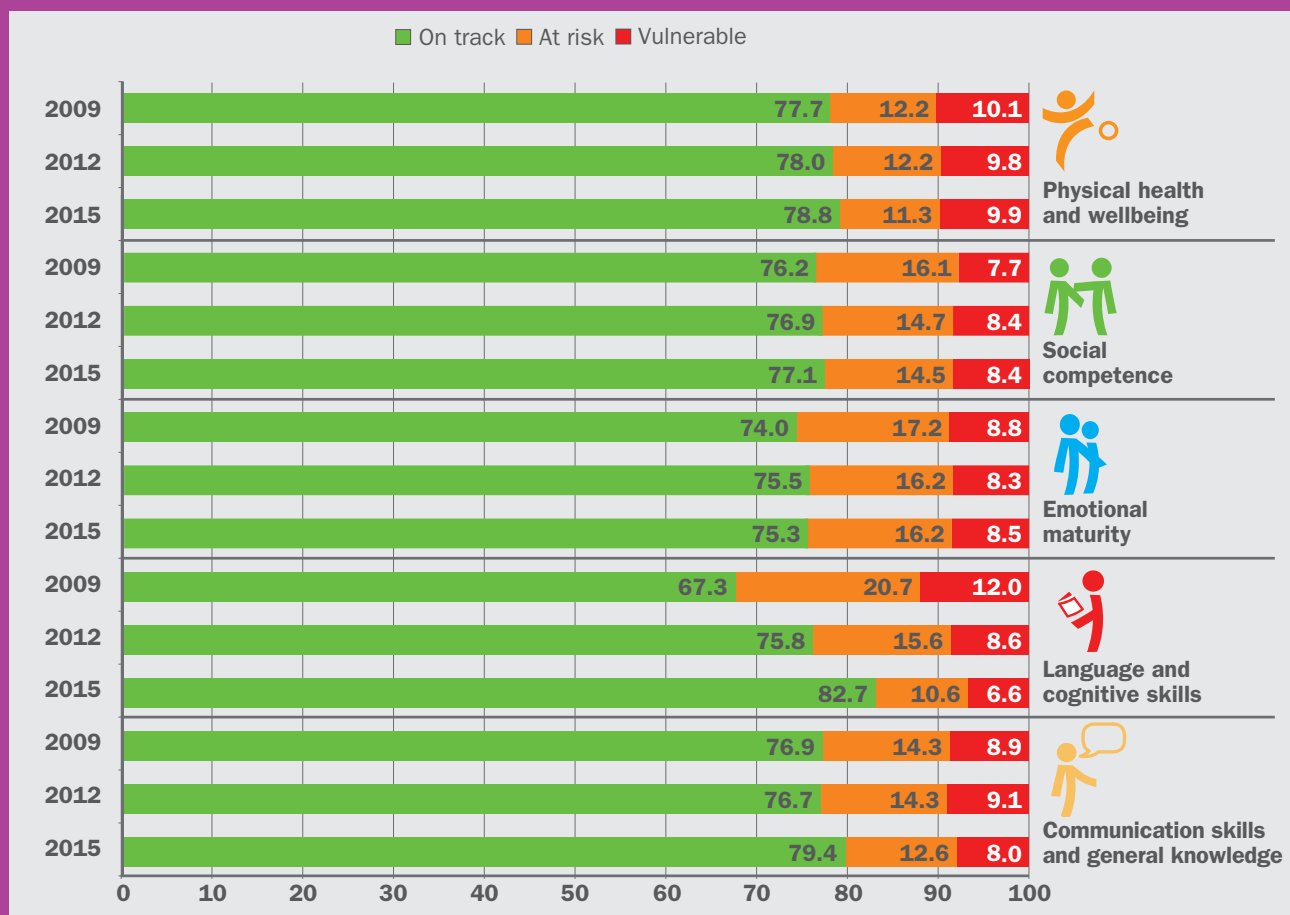
*Denominator = Number of children enrolled in a Pre-primary Program (or equivalent) as per the School Census and includes government, Catholic and independent schools.

Are Western Australian children on track?

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results showed most children in Western Australia were on track and doing well on each of the developmental domains, however, some started school developmentally at risk or vulnerable (graph 1).

- Since 2009, there have been statistically significant improvements in the percentage of children developmentally on track for each of the domains (graph 1).
- The most improvement occurred in the language and cognitive skills domain.

Graph 1: Percentage of Western Australian children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains



While the majority of children living in Western Australia were doing well, there were children who commenced school developmentally at risk or vulnerable.

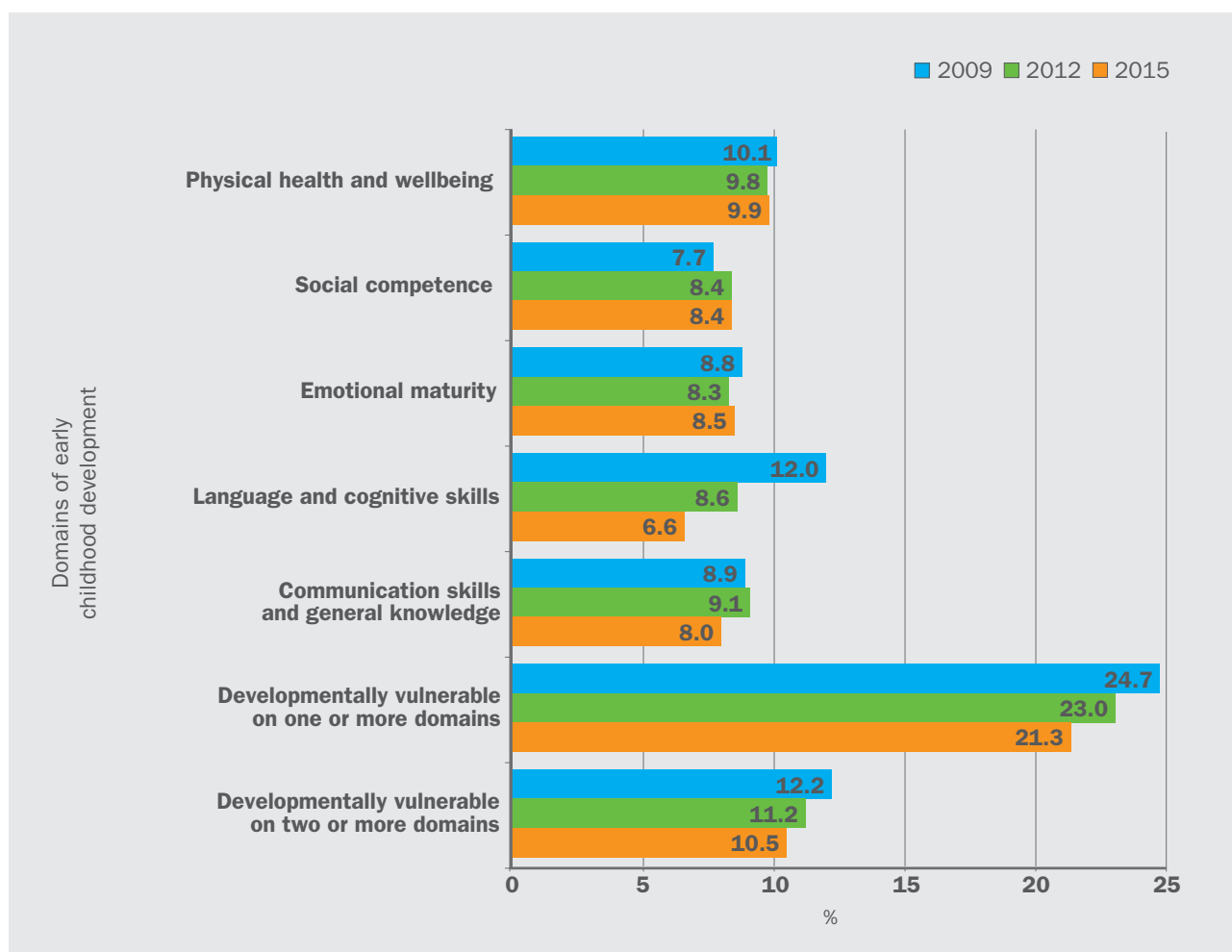
The 2015 results (graph 2) show that:

- 21.3% of Western Australian children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains; and
- 10.5% were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.

How did Western Australian children perform in 2015 compared with 2009 and 2012?

- There were proportionately fewer children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2015 – 21.3% compared with 24.7% in 2009 and 23.0% in 2012 (graph 2).
- There was a similar pattern for the percentage of children vulnerable on two or more domains in 2015 – 10.5% compared with 12.2% in 2009 and 11.2% in 2012 (graph 2).
- The number of children with one or more developmental vulnerabilities has remained relatively constant despite a rapid population increase (2009 N=6445, 2012 N=7048, 2015 N=6895).

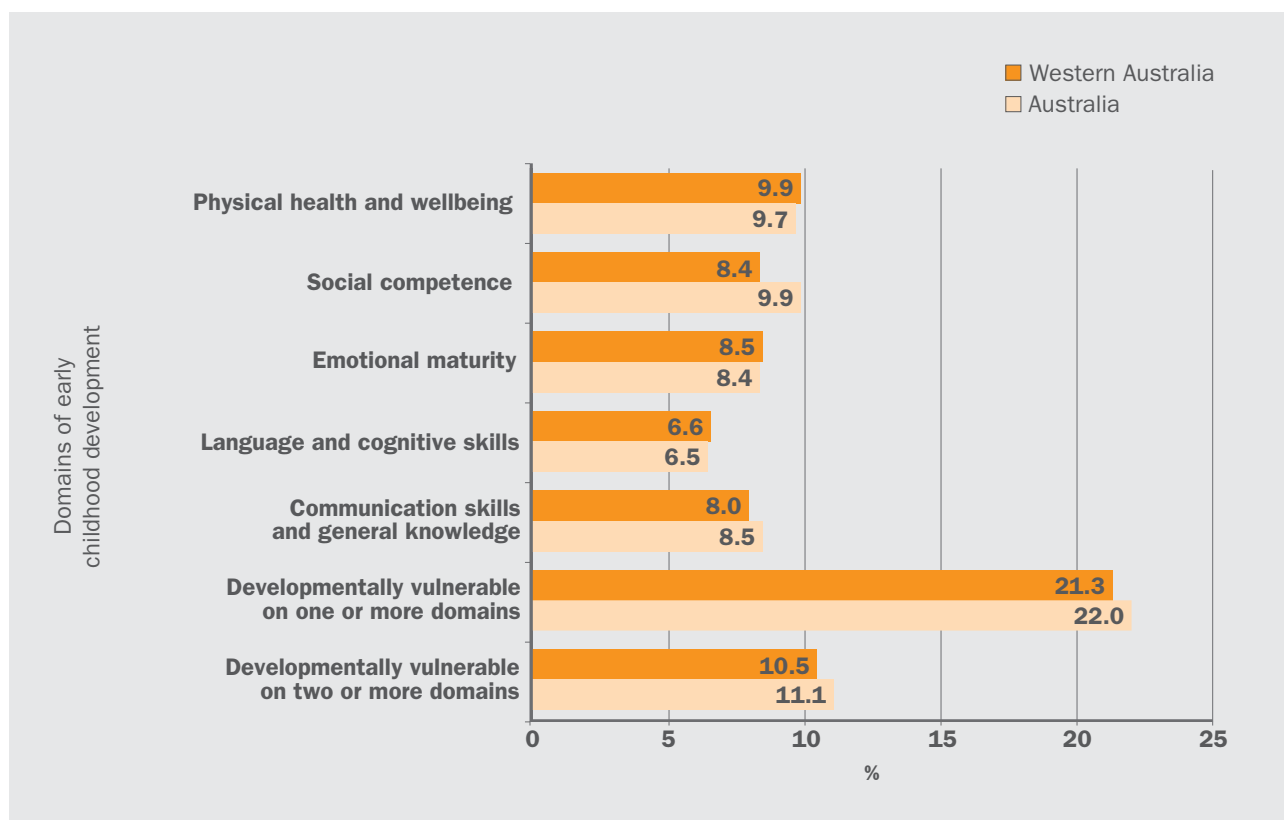
Graph 2: Percentage of Western Australian children who were developmentally vulnerable by AEDC domain, 2009, 2012 and 2015



How do Western Australian children compare nationally?

- In 2015, there were proportionately fewer Western Australian children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains and two or more domains than the national average (graph 3).
- Western Australia had a lower percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in the social competence and the communication and general knowledge domains in 2015 than the national average (graph 3).
- In the other three domains, Western Australian children were assessed to be at a similar level to the national average in 2015 (graph 3).
- From 2009 to 2015, Western Australian children showed a significant improvement in the language and cognitive skills domain, bringing Western Australia closer to the national average (graph 3).

Graph 3: Percentage of developmentally vulnerable children by domain for Western Australia and Australia in 2015



Six regions showed an improvement
in the percentage of children who
were developmentally vulnerable.

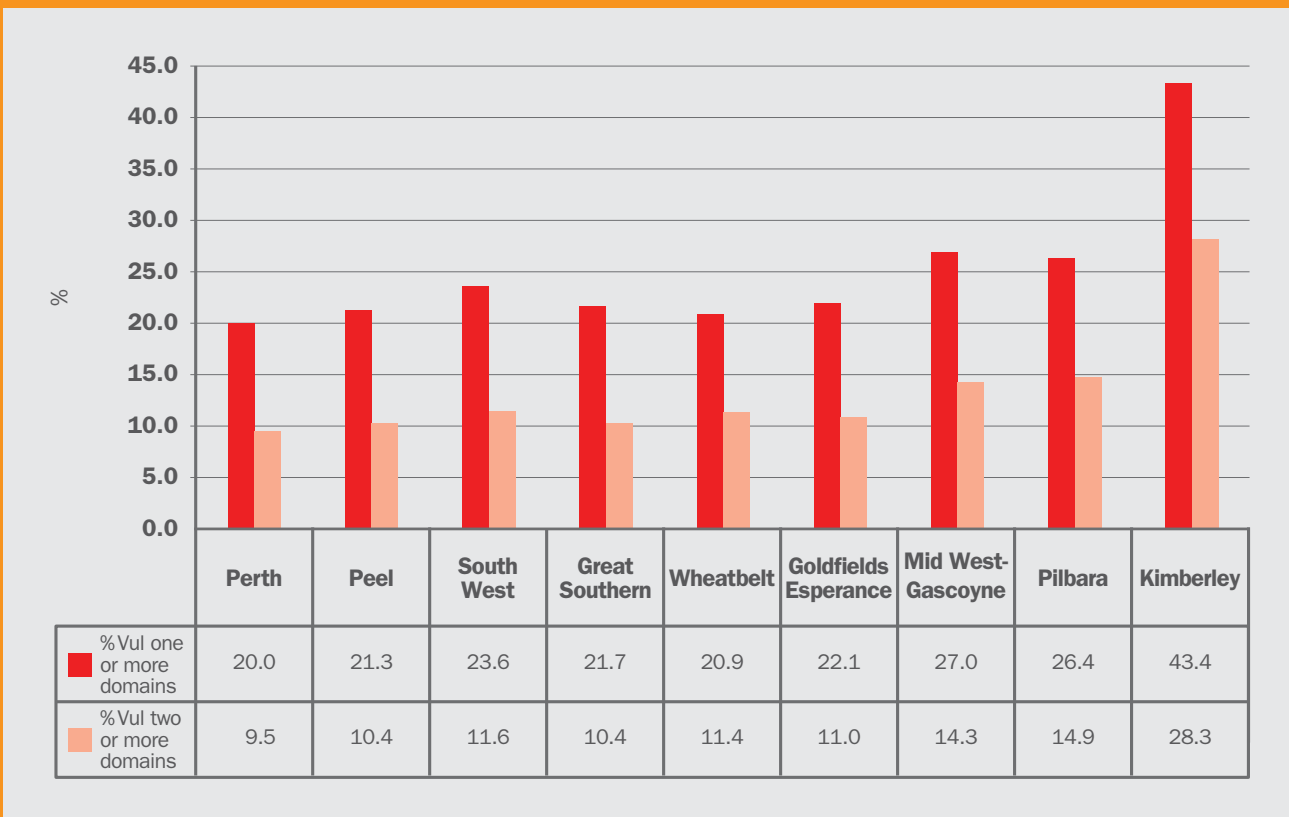


EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT BY WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REGION

How do children compare across the regions in 2015?

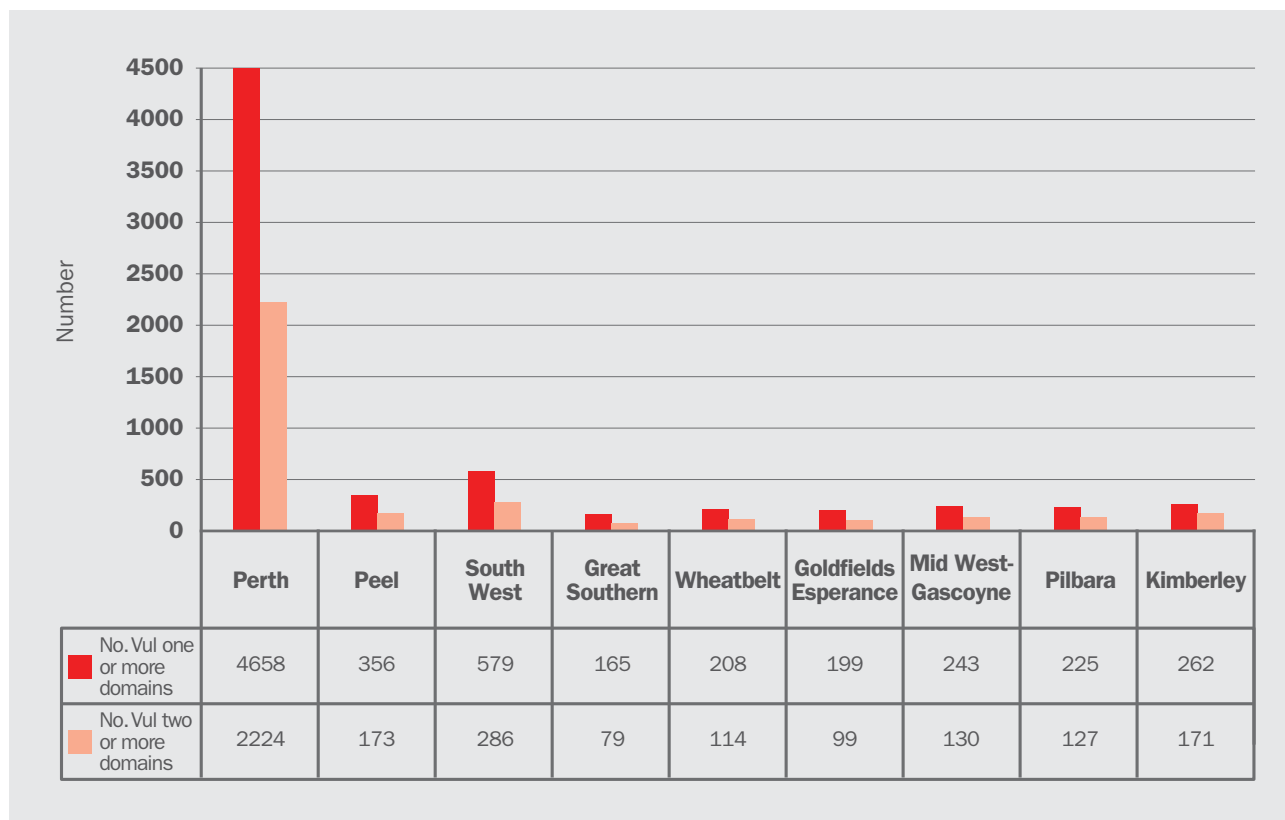
- Developmental vulnerability existed across all domains, however, the percentage and number of children who were developmentally vulnerable varied.
- Perth (20.0%), Wheatbelt (20.9%) and Peel (21.3%) regions had the lowest percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (graph 4).
- The Kimberley (43.4%) and Mid West-Gascoyne (27.0%) regions had the highest percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (graph 4).
- Perth (N=4 658), the South West (N=579) and Peel (N=356) regions had the most number of developmentally vulnerable children (graph 5).
- The Great Southern (N=165) and the Goldfields (N=199) regions had the least number of developmentally vulnerable children (graph 5).

Graph 4: Percentage of Western Australian children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more and two or more domains by region in 2015



* Regions are ordered by their approximate distance from Perth.

Graph 5: Number of Western Australian children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more and two or more domains by region in 2015

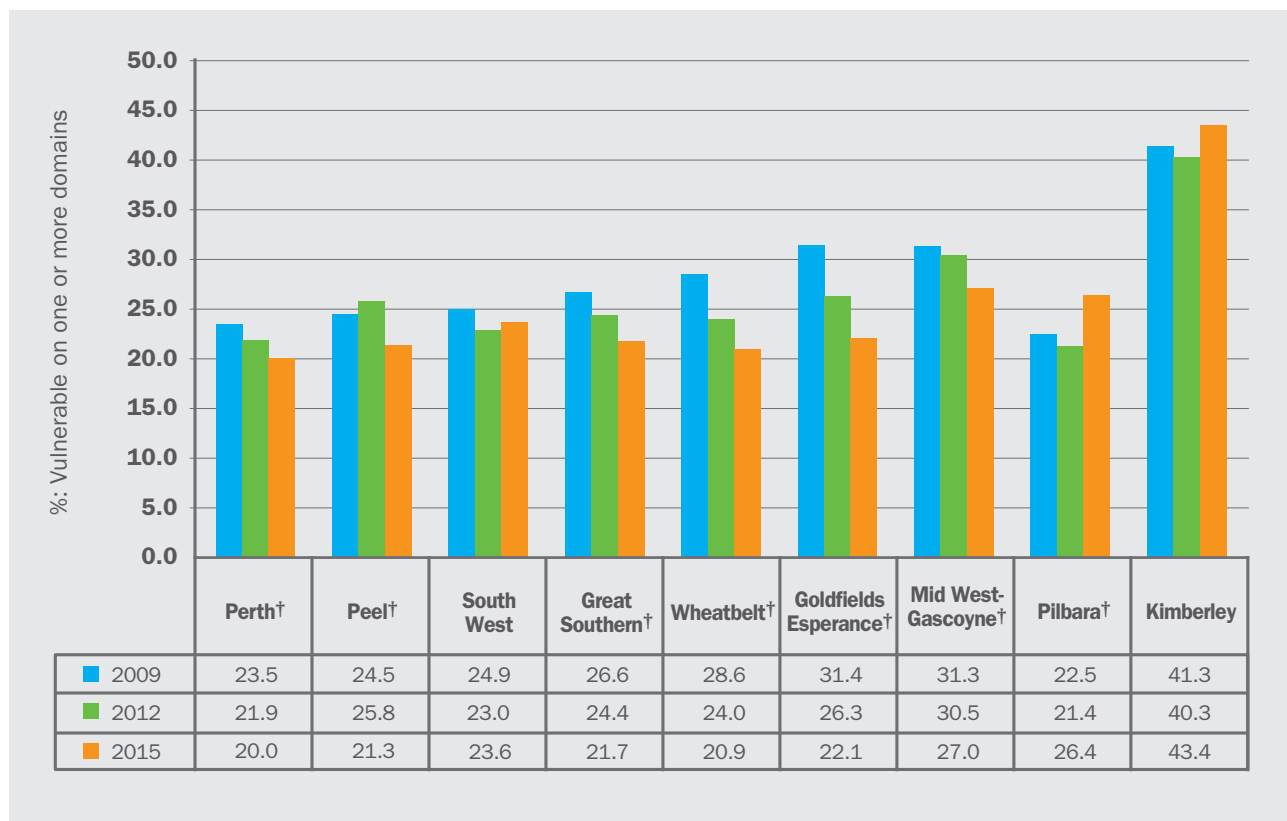


* Regions are ordered by their approximate distance from Perth.

What are the emerging trends across the regions, 2009 to 2015?

- Six regions showed statistically significant reductions in the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains – Perth, Peel, Great Southern, Wheatbelt, Goldfields–Esperance and Mid West–Gascoyne (graph 6, table 2).
- The South West Region showed a small improvement. This was not statistically significant (graph 6, table 2).
- The Pilbara experienced a statistically significant increase in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains (graph 6, table 2).
- There was also a slight increase in developmental vulnerability in the Kimberley Region, although the change was not statistically significant (graph 6, table 2).
- While there was no statistically significant change in the percentage of vulnerable children in the South West and Kimberley regions, the number of children starting school vulnerable in these regions increased (figure 1, page 15).
- Generally, the further away from the Perth Region children live, the higher the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable (table 2, graph 6 and 7).

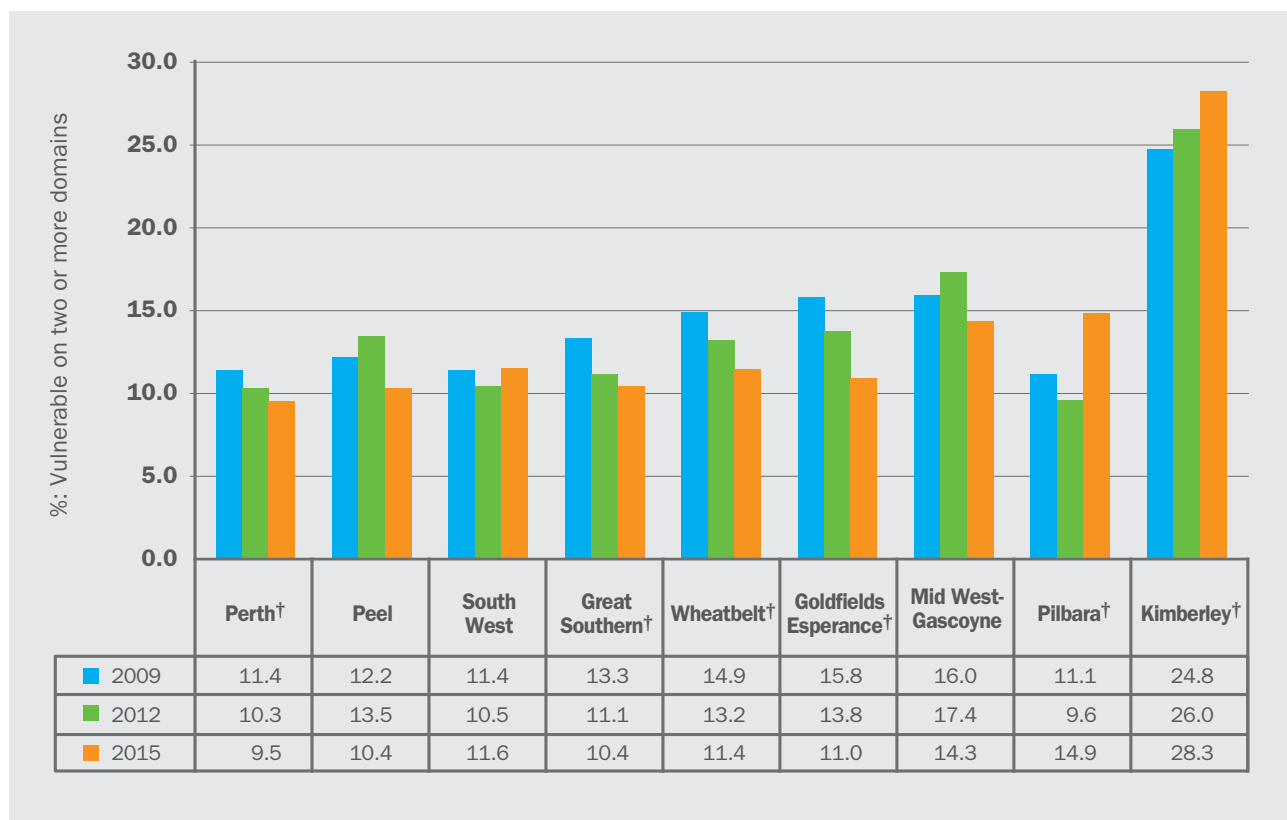
Graph 6: Percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains by region



* Regions are ordered by their approximate distance from Perth

† Statistically significant change in developmental vulnerability between 2009 and 2015

Graph 7: Percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains by region



* Regions are ordered by their approximate distance from Perth

† Statistically significant change in developmental vulnerability between 2009 and 2015

The percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains is shown in table 2. The final column highlights whether results have significantly improved or not from 2009.

Table 2: Change in the percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains by region from 2009, 2012 and 2015

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Perth	18 493	23.5	21 778	21.9	23 242	20.0	Improved
Peel	1 154	24.5	1 492	25.8	1 669	21.3	Improved
South West	1 916	24.9	2 331	23.0	2 451	23.6	No change
Great Southern	729	26.6	802	24.4	760	21.7	Improved
Wheatbelt	921	28.6	1 008	24.0	994	20.9	Improved
Goldfields Esperance	768	31.4	905	26.3	902	22.1	Improved
Mid West-Gascoyne	840	31.3	915	30.5	899	27.0	Improved
Pilbara	701	22.5	819	21.4	853	26.4	Declined
Kimberley	530	41.3	581	40.3	603	43.4	No change

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

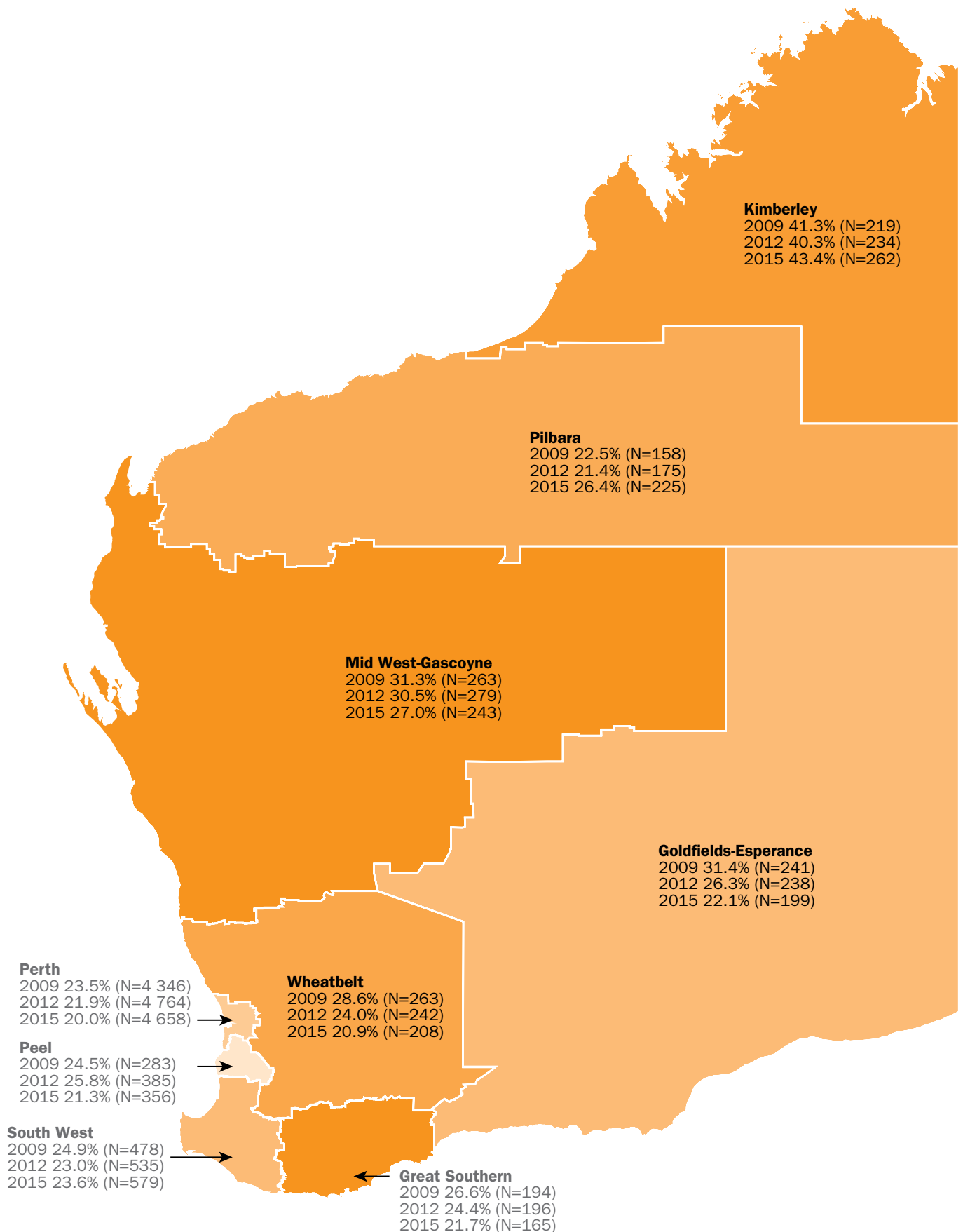
No change: No statistically significant increase or decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

**The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

Figure 1: AEDC results: Western Australia

Percentage and numbers of Western Australian children who were developmentally vulnerable, by Regional Development Australia regions



How did children perform across the regions by developmental domain in 2015?

- Of the five domains, the physical health and wellbeing domain showed the highest percentages and numbers of children developmentally vulnerable across most regions (tables 3 and 4).
- With the exception of the Mid West–Gascoyne and Kimberley regions, there were generally lower rates and numbers of children developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills, and communication and general knowledge domains (tables 3 and 4).

Compared with Perth, State and national averages (table 3):

- The Mid West–Gascoyne, Pilbara and Kimberley regions had a higher percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable on each of the five domains.
- Children living in the Kimberley Region were nearly three times as likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the language and cognitive skills domain, and twice as likely to be vulnerable on the remaining four domains.
- Developmental vulnerability rates were higher in the physical health and wellbeing domain across all regions; although Peel was on par with the State average.

Developmental vulnerability rates were higher in the physical health and wellbeing domain across most regions.



Table 3: Percentage of children who were developmentally vulnerable by domain in each region for 2015

	Physical health and wellbeing	Social competence	Emotional maturity	Language and cognitive skills	Communication skills and general knowledge
Australia	9.7	9.9	8.4	6.5	8.5
Western Australia	9.9	8.4	8.5	6.6	8.0
Perth	8.9	7.8	7.9	5.4	7.8
Regional areas					
Peel	9.9	7.8	10.0	6.6	7.2
South West	12.2	8.8	9.3	8.5	7.4
Great Southern	10.8	7.6	7.6	8.3	7.0
Wheatbelt	11.0	8.0	8.1	7.7	7.8
Goldfields Esperance	9.5	8.6	8.6	8.6	7.4
Mid West-Gascoyne	13.6	11.4	9.2	12.5	10.9
Pilbara	11.7	12.4	11.7	11.6	9.2
Kimberley	24.8	20.1	18.8	23.5	20.3

Table 4: Number of children who were developmentally vulnerable by domain and region for 2015

	Physical health and wellbeing	Social competence	Emotional maturity	Language and cognitive skills	Communication skills and general knowledge
Australia	27 711	28 351	23 866	18 533	24 475
Western Australia	3 206	2 721	2 751	2 153	2 612
Perth	2 087	1 825	1 843	1 261	1 809
Regional areas					
Peel	166	130	166	111	121
South West	302	219	229	209	183
Great Southern	82	58	58	63	53
Wheatbelt	110	80	81	77	78
Goldfields Esperance	86	78	78	78	67
Mid West-Gascoyne	123	103	83	113	99
Pilbara	100	106	100	99	79
Kimberley	150	122	113	142	123

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS BY REGION

PERTH REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 20.0%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=23 000) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Perth Region, nearly 1 in 5, or about 4 600 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Perth Region were developmentally on track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

Since 2009, there has been a steady improvement in the percentage of children developmentally on track on all five domains.

The most improvement occurred in the language and cognitive skills domain with the percentage of children on track increasing from 69.1% in 2009 to 84.9% in 2015. At the same time, for this domain, the percentage of children at risk has almost halved from 20.1% to 9.7%, as has the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable – from 10.8% to 5.4% (graph 8).

Between 2009 and 2015, there was a statistically significant decrease in the

percentage of children developmentally at risk and vulnerable in the emotional maturity, and communication skills and general knowledge domains (graph 8).

While there was a positive change in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in the physical health and wellbeing domain, the change was not significant. Of the five domains, children were most likely to be developmentally vulnerable in this area (graph 8).

Social competence showed a statistically significant increase in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable from 2009 to 2015.

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, showed an overall positive emerging trend with the vulnerability rate decreasing in each AEDC cycle – 23.5% in 2009, down to 21.9% in 2012, and 20.0% in 2015 (table 6).

Summary

The results suggest there are some encouraging emerging trends in the Perth region with the percentage of children on track increasing in all domains and developmental vulnerability decreasing in three domains – emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and general knowledge. The physical health and wellbeing and social competence present the biggest challenge for the Perth region.

Table 5: Fast facts for the Perth Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	19 515	****	22 830	****	24 239	****
Population of Aboriginal children	590	3.0	812	3.6	811	3.4
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	3 128	16.0	4 042	17.7	5 437	22.4
Children born overseas	2 391	12.2	3 051	13.4	3 156	13.0
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	12 808	65.6	16 159	70.8	17 870	73.7
Children adapting to school	15 539	79.6	17 851	78.2	19 149	79.0
Parents actively engaged with the school	13 846	70.9	16 620	72.8	18 206	75.1
Children with special needs	666	3.4	795	3.5	855	3.5
Children requiring further assessment	2 125	10.9	2 236	9.8	2 652	10.9
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	7 284	37.3	7 832	34.3	7 310	30.1

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 8: Percentage of Perth children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

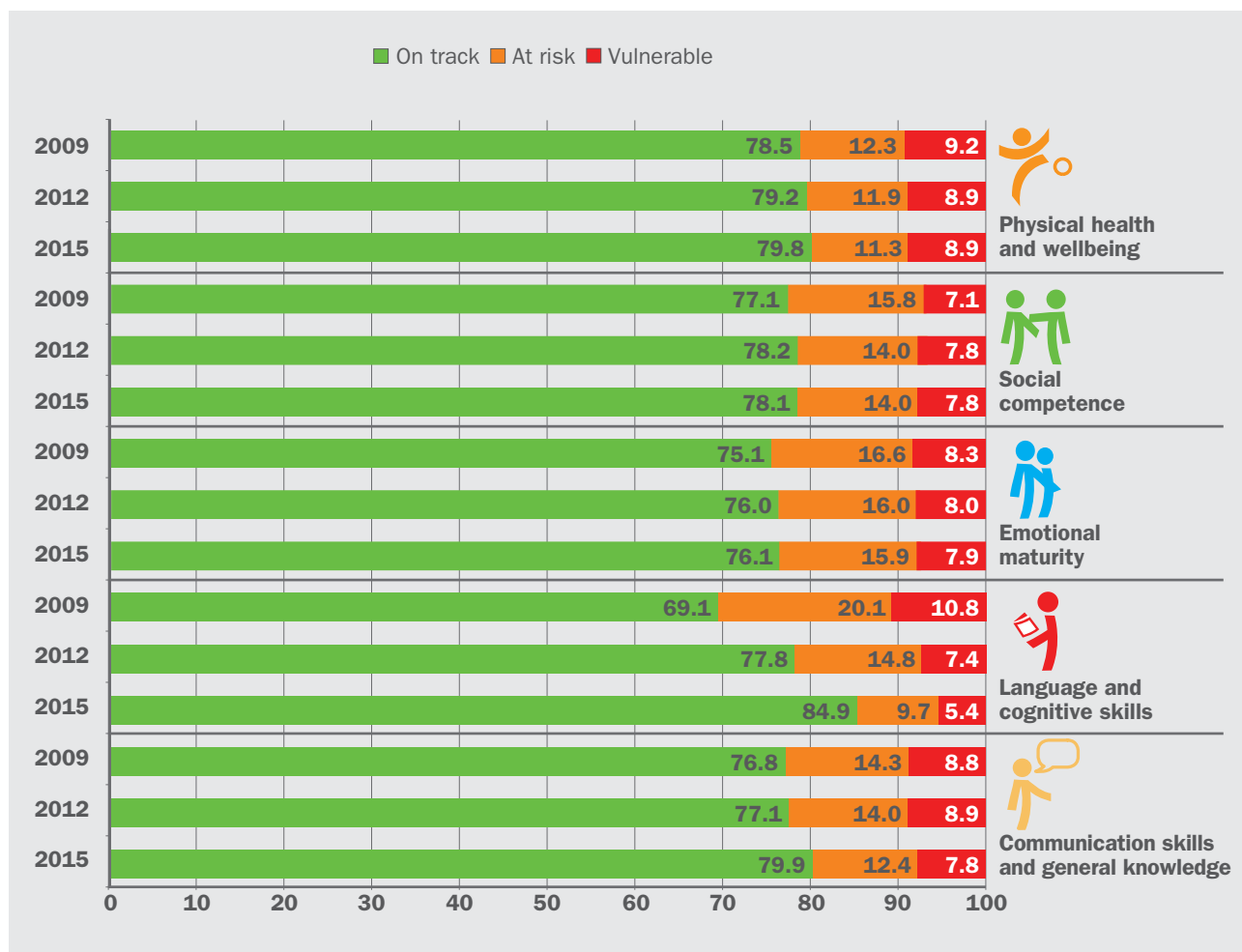


Table 6 shows the percentage of children living in the Perth region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 6: Percentage of children living in the Perth Metropolitan Region that were developmentally vulnerable.

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Perth	18 493	23.5	21 778	21.9	23 242	20.0	Improved
Gender							
Male	9 411	30.7	11 025	28.2	11 857	26.4	Improved
Female	9 082	16.0	10 753	15.4	11 385	13.4	Improved
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	533	48.8	768	46.1	753	38.4	Improved
Non-Aboriginal	17 960	22.8	21 010	21.0	22 489	19.4	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	2 974	33.0	3 878	29.8	5 232	25.6	Improved
Proficient in English	2 523	22.1	3 376	20.4	4 665	17.3	Improved
Not proficient in English	449	≥90.0	500	≥90.0	567	≥90.0	No change
English only***	15 519	21.7	17 900	20.2	18 010	18.4	Improved
Proficient in English	14 978	19.2	17 335	17.7	17 480	16.1	Improved
Not proficient in English	532	≥90.0	553	≥90.0	528	≥90.0	No change

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

**The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

***The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.



The language and cognitive skills domain has shown improvement across most regions.

PEEL REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 21.3%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=1 700) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Peel Region, nearly 1 in 5, or about 360 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Peel Region were developmentally on track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

Of the five domains, the language and cognitive skills domain was the only area to show a sustained improvement with a statistically significant increase in the percentage of children doing well. For this domain, the on track rate increased from 63.1% in 2009 to 82.3% in 2015. At the same time the percentage of children at risk halved from 22.7% to 11.0%, as has the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable – 14.1% to 6.6% (graph 9).

In the physical health and wellbeing, social competence, and communication skills and general knowledge domains, there was no statistically significant change in the percentage of children developmentally on track or vulnerable between 2009 and 2015 (graph 9).

Emotional maturity showed a worsening trend with a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of children on-track, since 2009. From 2009 to 2015, for this domain, there was a corresponding increase in the percentage of children at risk and developmentally vulnerable (graph 9).

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, showed that the results have fluctuated since 2009. In 2012, there was a small increase, although not significant, in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains from 24.5% in 2009 to 25.8%. This was followed by a significant decrease (improvement) in vulnerability down to 21.3% in 2015 (table 8).

Summary

While there has been an improvement in children's language and cognitive skills, the data suggests that emerging trends in children's emotional maturity presents a challenge for the Peel Region.

Table 7: Fast facts for the Peel Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	1 211	****	1 586	****	1 737	****
Population of Aboriginal children	44	3.6	82	5.2	82	4.7
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	69	5.7	80	5.0	149	8.6
Children born overseas	105	8.7	131	8.3	161	9.3
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	803	66.3	1 023	64.5	1 194	68.7
Children adapting to school	914	75.5	1 142	72.0	1 330	76.6
Parents actively engaged with the school	811	67.0	1 048	66.1	1 192	68.6
Children with special needs	37	3.1	65	4.1	65	3.7
Children requiring further assessment	128	10.6	188	11.8	209	12.0
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	523	43.2	677	42.7	573	33.0

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 9: Percentage of Peel children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

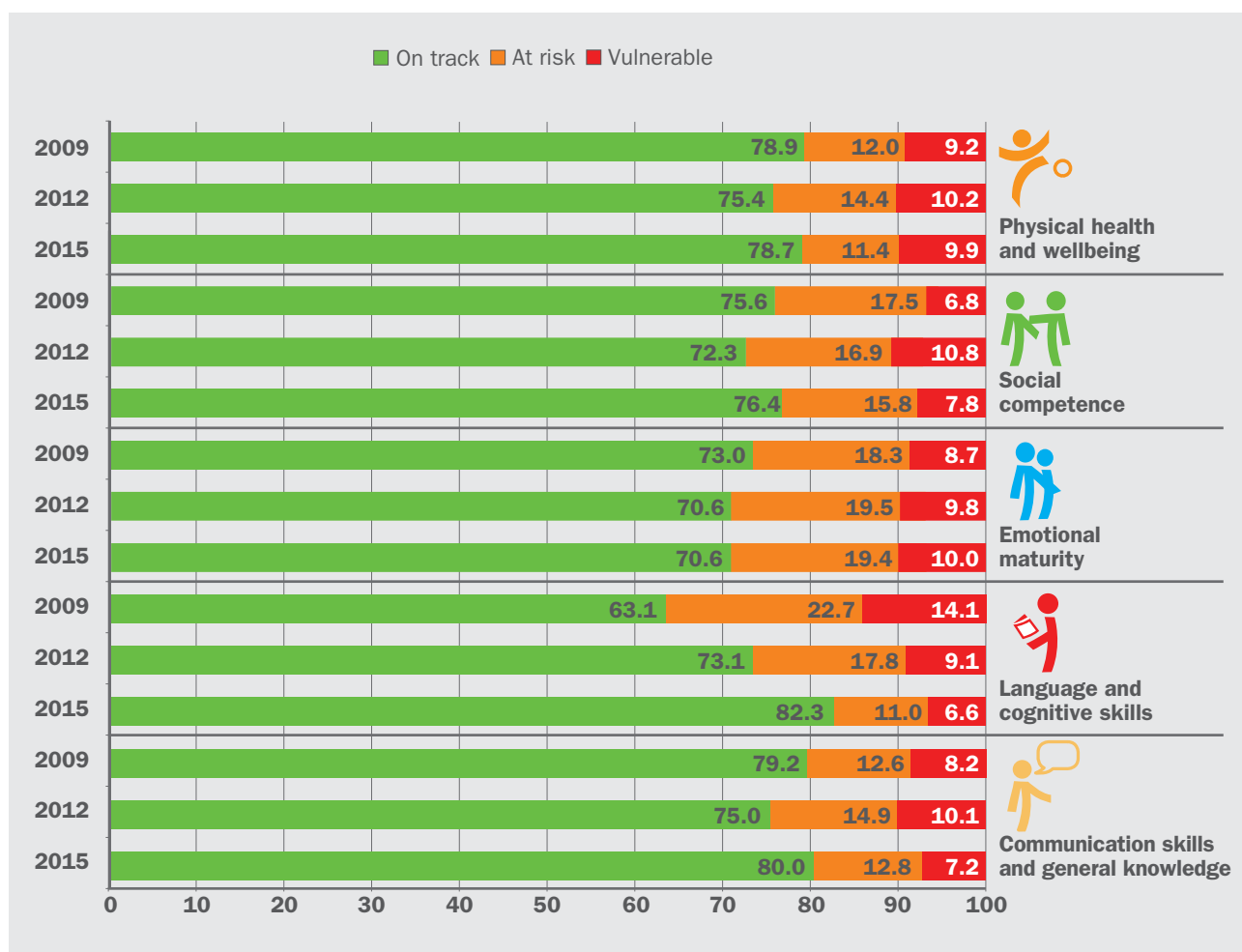


Table 8, shows the percentage of children living in the Peel Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 8: Percentage of children living in the Peel Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Peel	1 154	24.5	1 492	25.8	1 669	21.3	Improved
Gender							
Male	603	31.0	771	31.3	815	29.2	No change
Female	551	17.4	721	20.0	854	13.8	Improved
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	40	50.0	73	46.6	79	32.9	Improved
Non-Aboriginal	1 114	23.6	1 419	24.7	1 590	20.8	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	67	31.3	75	30.7	146	15.1	Improved
Proficient in English	59	22.0	66	21.2	137	10.2	Improved
Not proficient in English	****	****	****	****	****	****	****
English only***	1 087	24.1	1 417	25.5	1 523	21.9	Improved
Proficient in English	1 043	21.3	1 362	22.9	1 473	19.4	No change
Not proficient in English	43	≥90.0	53	≥90.0	50	≥90.0	No change

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.

**** Due to small numbers, data is not publicly available.



SOUTH WEST REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 23.6%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=2 500) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the South West Region, nearly 1 in 4, or about 590 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the South West Region were developmentally on track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

Of the five domains, the language and cognitive skills domain was the only area to show a sustained improvement with a statistically significant increase in the percentage of children doing well. For this domain, the on track rate increased from 65.7% in 2009 to 79.1% in 2015. At the same time, the at risk rate almost halved from 21.8% to 12.4%, and vulnerability decreased from 12.5% to 8.5% (graph 10).

In the emotional maturity, and communication skills and general knowledge domains there was no statistically significant change in the percentage of children developmentally on track and vulnerable between 2009 and 2015 (graph 10).

Physical health and wellbeing, and social competence showed a worsening trend with a continuous decrease in the percentage of children on track and an increase in developmental vulnerability since 2009 (graph 10).

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, showed there was a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable from 24.9% in 2009 to 23.0% in 2012. The improvement was followed by a small increase to 23.6% in 2015, although the change was not statistically significant (table 10).

Summary

While there has been an improvement in children's language and cognitive skills, the results suggest that the emerging trends in children's physical health and wellbeing, and social competence present a challenge for the South West Region. This is especially true when related to children's social development, where there has been a steady and significant increase in developmental vulnerability since 2009. With the exception of the language and cognitive skills domain in 2009, the physical health and wellbeing domain has consistently shown the highest vulnerability rate in all three AEDC cycles.

Table 9: Fast facts for the South West Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	2 020	****	2 424	****	2 572	****
Population of Aboriginal children	89	4.4	105	4.3	126	4.9
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	94	4.6	141	5.8	197	7.7
Children born overseas	96	4.8	142	5.9	150	5.8
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	1 343	66.5	1 700	70.1	1 739	67.6
Children adapting to school	1 614	79.9	1 827	75.4	1 958	76.1
Parents actively engaged with the school	1 393	69.0	1 708	70.5	1 807	70.3
Children with special needs	54	2.7	69	2.8	84	3.3
Children requiring further assessment	251	12.4	244	10.1	292	11.4
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	847	41.9	1023	42.2	987	38.4

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 10: Percentage of South West children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

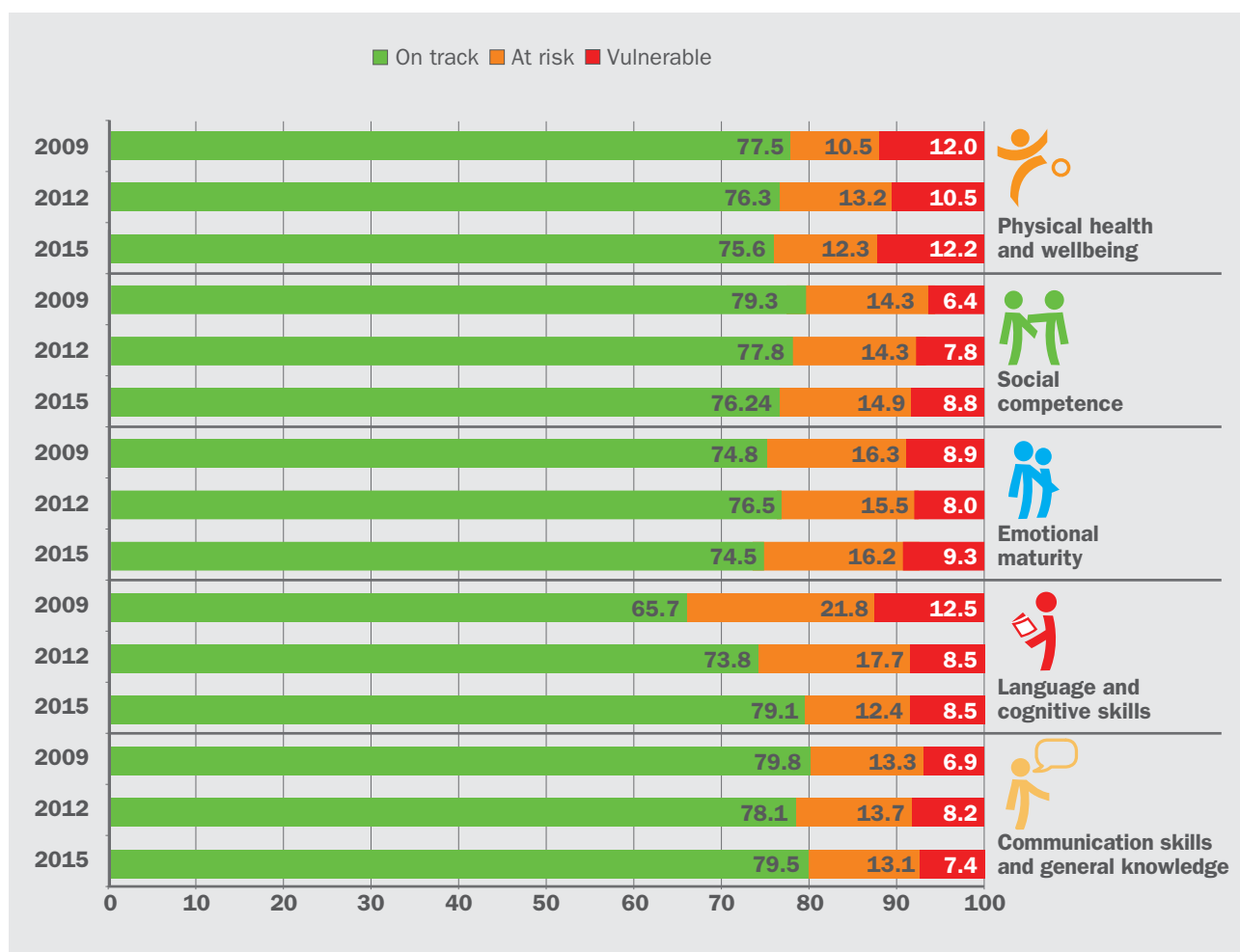


Table 10 shows the percentage of children living in the South West Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 10: Developmentally vulnerable children in the South West Region

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
South West	1 916	24.9	2 331	23.0	2 451	23.6	No change
Gender							
Male	965	32.4	1 166	31.0	1 258	31.0	No change
Female	951	17.4	1 165	15.5	1 193	15.8	No change
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	83	41.0	99	38.4	123	44.7	No change
Non-Aboriginal	1 833	24.2	2 232	22.3	2 328	22.5	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	91	29.7	138	26.8	190	31.1	No change
Proficient in English	82	23.2	122	18.9	175	25.7	No change
Not proficient in English	****	****	16	87.5	15	≥90.0	****
English only***	1 825	24.7	2 193	22.7	2 261	23.0	Improved
Proficient in English	1 765	22.4	2 111	20.1	2 189	20.5	Improved
Not proficient in English	59	≥90	79	≥90	72	≥90	No change

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability
 Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability
 No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.

**** Due to small numbers, data is not publicly available.



GREAT SOUTHERN REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 21.7%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=760) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Great Southern Region, nearly 1 in 5, or about 160 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Great Southern Region were developmentally on-track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

Since 2009, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of children developmentally on track in all five domains, representing a statistically significant change between 2009 and 2015 (graph 11).

The language and cognitive skills domain has shown the most improvement with the on track rate increasing from 67.8% in 2009 to 79.0% in 2015. From 2009 to 2015, for this domain, there was a corresponding decrease in the percentage of children at risk from 19.6% to

12.7% and developmentally vulnerable from 12.6% to 8.3% (graph 11).

The communication skills and general knowledge, and social competence domains also showed a decrease in the percentage of children developmentally at risk and vulnerable. There was no statistically significant change in vulnerability rates in the physical health and wellbeing, and emotional maturity domains (graph 11).

Of the five domains, children were most likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain. This area has consistently shown higher rates of vulnerability in every AEDC cycle.

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, showed an overall positive emerging trend with the vulnerability rate decreasing in all three AEDC cycles – 26.6% in 2009 down to 24.4% in 2012, and 21.7% in 2015 (table 12).

Summary

The results suggest some positive emerging trends across all developmental domains.

It would be useful to explore the story behind these trends and understand which policies and initiatives are driving the change.

Table 11: Fast facts for the Great Southern Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	765	****	838	****	799	****
Population of Aboriginal children	57	7.4	68	8.1	75	9.4
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	57	7.4	50	6.0	82	10.3
Children born overseas	34	4.4	33	3.9	27	3.4
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	481	62.9	570	68.0	571	71.5
Children adapting to school	570	74.5	629	75.1	617	77.2
Parents actively engaged with the school	529	69.2	543	64.8	557	69.7
Children with special needs	24	3.1	29	3.5	38	4.8
Children requiring further assessment	86	11.2	101	12.0	92	11.5
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	444	58.0	428	51.1	317	39.7

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 11: Percentage of Great Southern children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

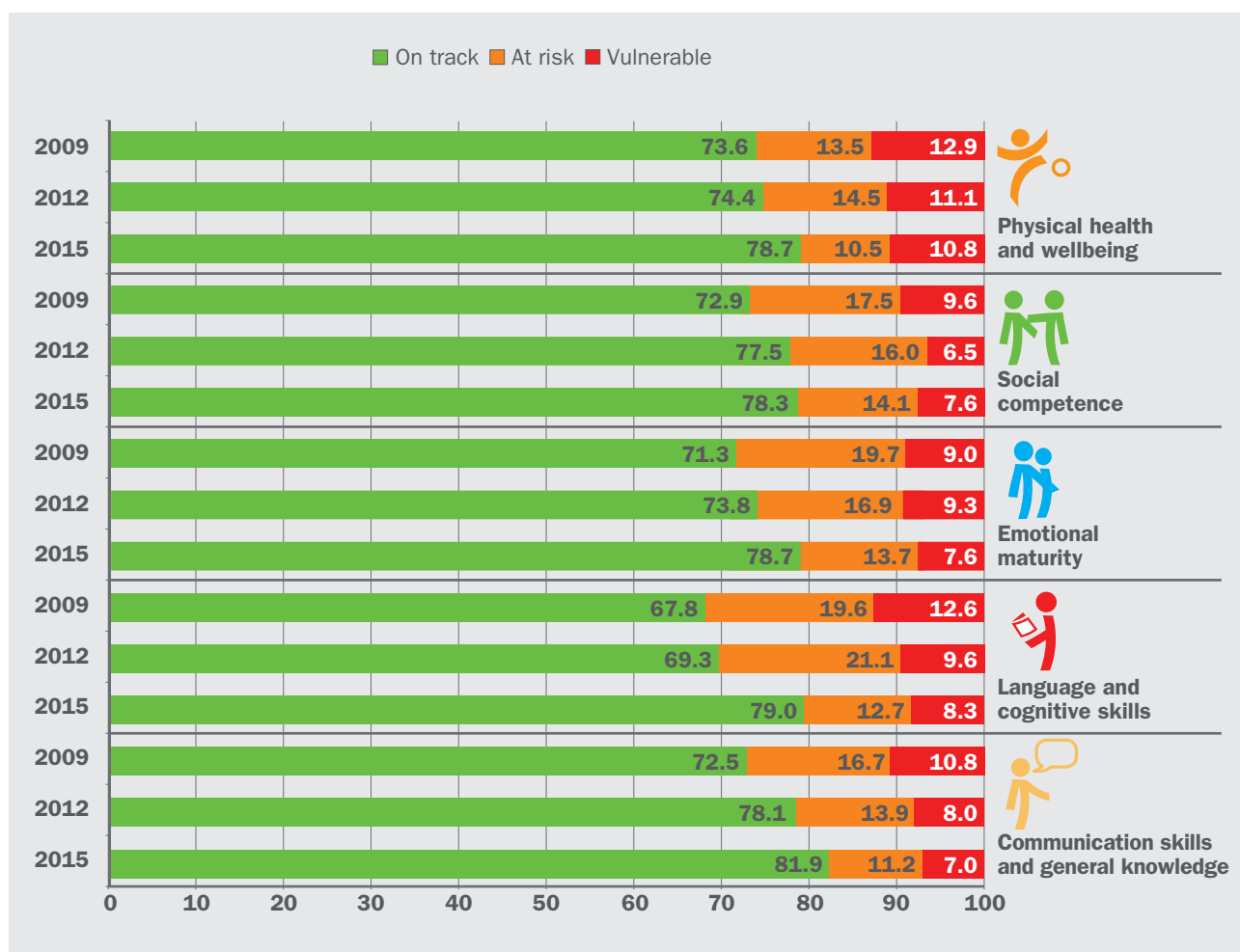


Table 12 shows the percentage of children living in the Great Southern Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 12: Developmentally vulnerable children in the Great Southern Region

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Great Southern	729	26.6	802	24.4	760	21.7	Improved
Gender							
Male	386	34.2	401	31.9	355	29.6	Improved
Female	343	18.1	401	17.0	405	14.8	No change
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	55	58.2	63	42.9	73	45.2	Improved
Non-Aboriginal	674	24.0	739	22.9	687	19.2	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	52	40.4	48	33.3	81	21.0	Improved
Proficient in English	42	28.6	42	23.8	71	9.9	Improved
Not proficient in English	****	****	****	****	****	****	****
English only***	677	25.6	754	23.9	679	21.8	Improved
Proficient in English	635	21.6	728	21.6	658	19.3	No change
Not proficient in English	38	≥90.0	25	≥90.0	21	≥90.0	No change

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.

**** Due to small numbers, data is not publicly available.



WHEATBELT REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 20.9%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=990) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Wheatbelt Region, nearly 1 in 5, or about 210 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Wheatbelt Region were developmentally on track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

Since 2009, there has been a steady and statistically significant increase in the percentage of children developmentally on track across all five domains (graph 12).

The most improvement occurred in the language and cognitive skills domain with the percentage of children on track increasing from 64.6% in 2009 to 81.7% in 2015. At the same time, for this domain, the percentage of children at risk has almost halved from 21.1% to 10.5%, as has the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable – 14.3% to 7.7% (graph 12).

In the physical health and wellbeing, and emotional maturity domains there were statistically significant decreases in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in each AEDC cycle (graph 12).

While there was a decrease in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in the social competence and communication skills and general knowledge domains between 2009 and 2015, the change was not statistically significant (graph 12).

Of the five domains, children were most likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing domain. This area has consistently shown higher rates of vulnerability in every AEDC cycle.

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, has shown a steady and continuous decrease in developmental vulnerability from 28.6% in 2009, down to 24.0% in 2012, and 20.9% in 2015 (table 14).

Summary

The results suggest there are some positive trends emerging in the Wheatbelt. It would be useful to explore the story behind these trends and better understand which policies and initiatives are influencing these positive changes.

Table 13: Fast facts for the Wheatbelt Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	969	****	1058	****	1043	****
Population of Aboriginal children	98	10.1	136	12.8	138	13.2
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	51	5.3	41	3.9	51	4.9
Children born overseas	28	2.9	32	3.0	35	3.4
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	586	60.5	652	61.6	697	66.8
Children adapting to school	731	75.4	812	76.8	811	77.8
Parents actively engaged with the school	623	64.3	660	62.4	705	67.6
Children with special needs	27	2.8	31	2.9	38	3.4
Children requiring further assessment	161	16.6	128	12.1	105	10.1
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	547	56.4	532	50.3	427	40.9

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 12: Percentage of Wheatbelt children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

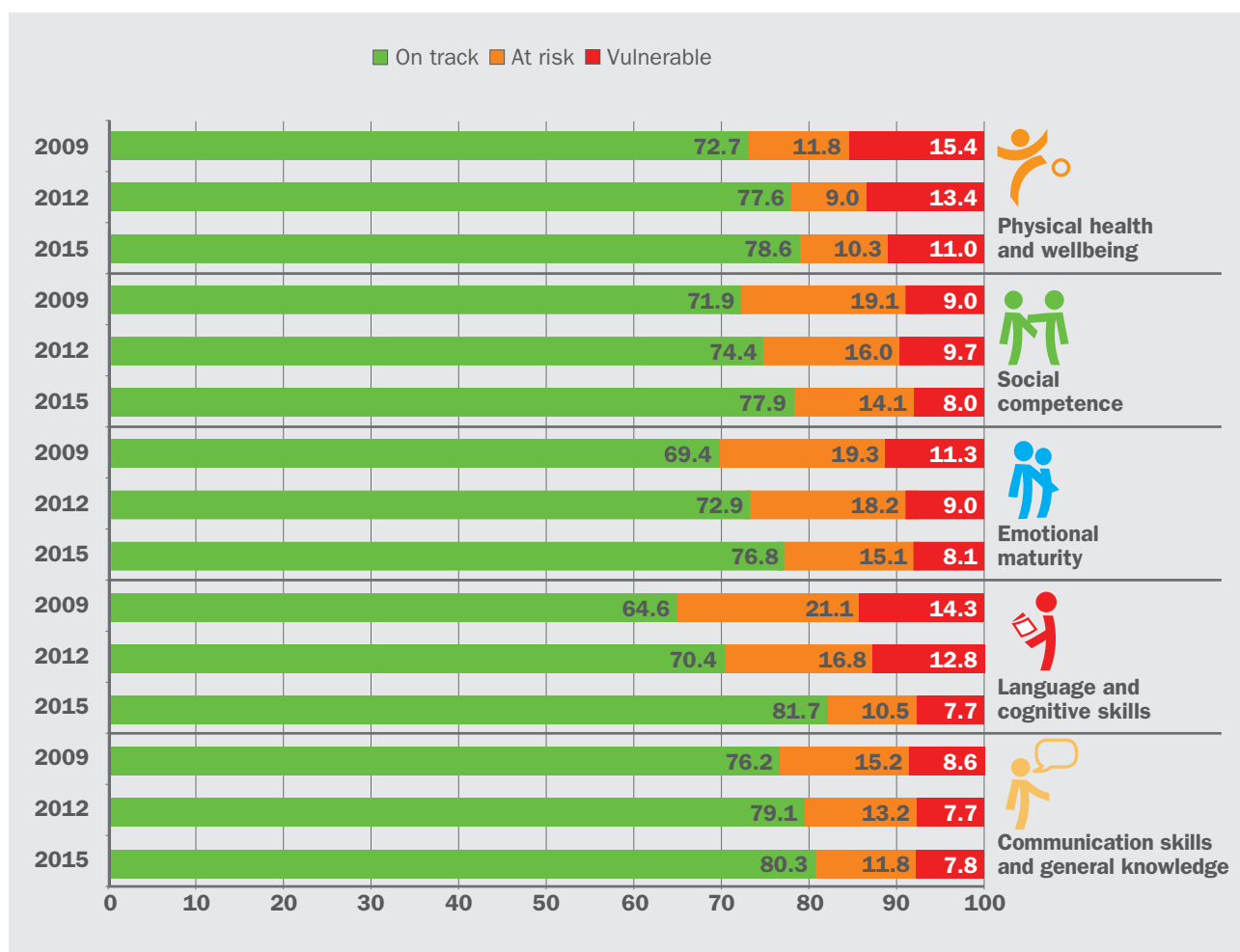


Table 14 shows the percentage of children living in the Wheatbelt Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 14: Developmentally vulnerable children in the Wheatbelt Region

	2009		2012		2015		** Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Wheatbelt	921	28.6	1 008	24.0	994	20.9	Improved
Gender							
Male	470	35.1	496	29.8	486	26.7	Improved
Female	451	21.7	512	18.4	508	15.4	Improved
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	90	52.2	124	54.0	129	38.0	Improved
Non-Aboriginal	831	26.0	884	19.8	865	18.4	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	45	53.3	38	31.6	48	29.2	Improved
Proficient in English	34	38.2	34	23.5	43	23.3	Improved
Not proficient in English	****	****	****	****	****	****	****
English only***	876	27.3	970	23.7	946	20.5	Improved
Proficient in English	840	25.0	938	21.4	906	17.2	Improved
Not proficient in English	36	80.6	31	≥90.0	40	≥90.0	****

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.

**** Due to small numbers, data is not publicly available.



GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 22.1%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=900) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Goldfields–Esperance Region, nearly 1 in 5, or about 200 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Goldfields–Esperance Region were developmentally on track and doing well in each of the developmental domains (graph 13).

There have been significant increases in the percentage of children developmentally on track on all five domains from 2009 to 2015, although in 2012, there was some fluctuation in the physical health and wellbeing, social competence and communication skills and general knowledge domains (graph 13).

The most improvement occurred in the language and cognitive skills domain with the percentage of children on track increasing from 56.6% in 2009 to 76.1% in 2015. At the same time, for this domain, the percentage of children developmentally at risk almost halved from 26.2% to 15.3%, as has the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable – 17.1% to 8.6% (graph 13).

From 2009 to 2015, there was a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in the physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, and communication skills and general knowledge domains (graph 13).

Of the five domains, children were most likely to be developmentally vulnerable on the physical health and wellbeing. With the exception of the language and cognitive skills domain in 2009, this domain has consistently shown higher rates of vulnerability in every AEDC cycle (graph 13).

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, showed a positive emerging trend with the vulnerability rate decreasing in each AEDC cycle – 31.4% in 2009, down to 26.3% in 2012 and 22.1% in 2015 (table 16).

Summary

The results suggest there are some encouraging trends emerging in the Goldfields–Esperance Region with the percentage of children developmentally on track increasing and vulnerability rates reducing. It would be useful to explore the story behind these emerging trends and understand which policies and initiatives are having a sustained and positive impact on children's development for this region.

Table 15: Fast facts for the Goldfields–Esperance Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	822	****	951	****	928	****
Population of Aboriginal children	135	16.4	174	18.3	152	16.4
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	115	14.0	118	12.4	120	12.9
Children born overseas	63	7.7	83	8.7	86	9.3
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	435	52.9	557	58.6	625	67.4
Children adapting to school	606	73.7	706	74.2	700	75.4
Parents actively engaged with the school	479	58.3	565	59.4	612	66.0
Children with special needs	24	2.9	35	3.7	17	1.8
Children requiring further assessment	84	10.2	85	8.9	103	11.1
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	418	50.8	456	48.0	357	38.5

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 13: Percentage of Goldfields–Esperance children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

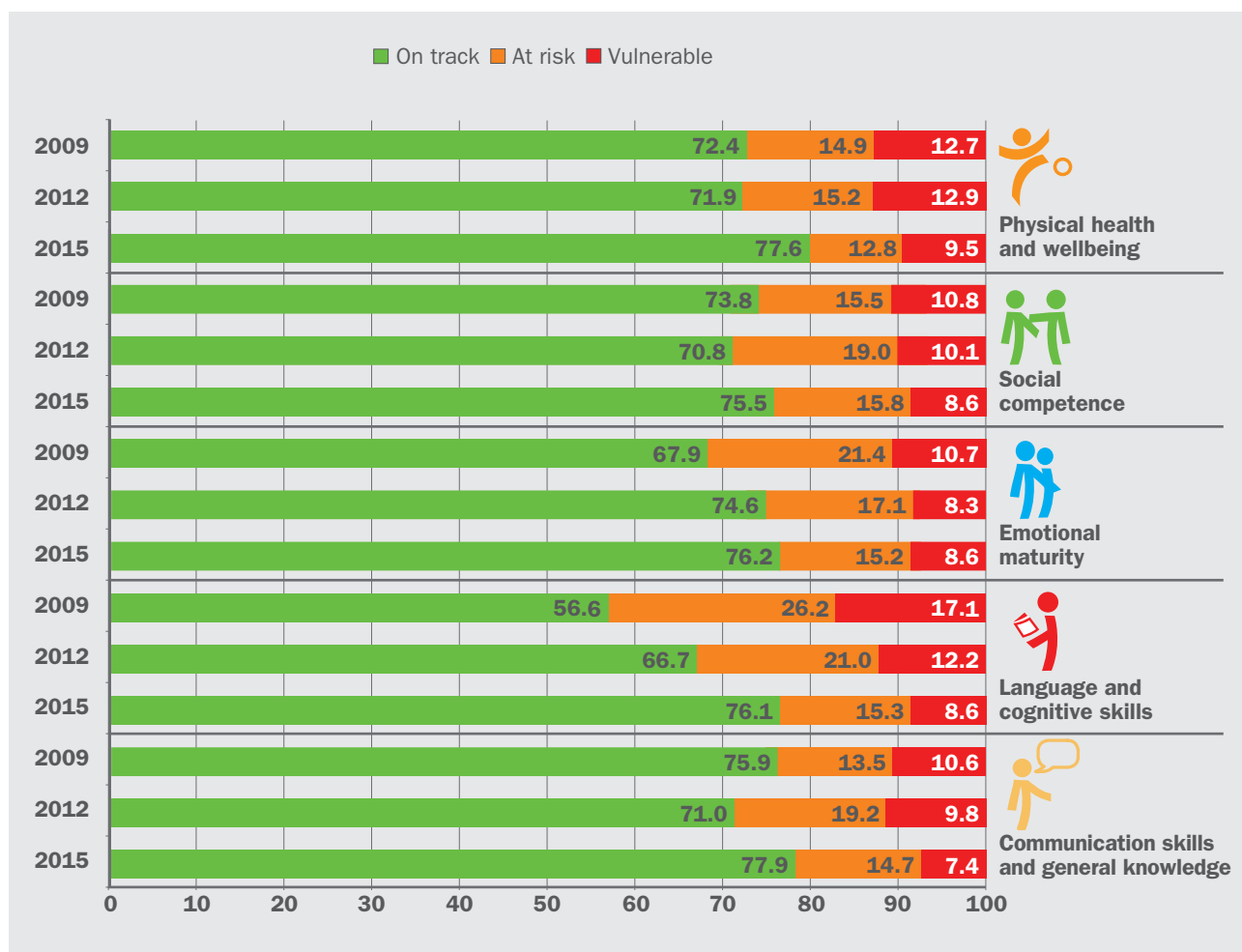


Table 16 shows the percentage of children living in the Goldfields–Esperance Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 16: Developmentally vulnerable children in the Goldfields–Esperance Region

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Goldfields–Esperance	768	31.4	905	26.3	902	22.1	Improved
Gender							
Male	375	38.7	443	36.1	454	29.1	Improved
Female	393	24.4	462	16.9	448	15.0	Improved
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	118	55.9	164	48.2	142	49.3	Improved
Non-Aboriginal	650	26.9	741	21.5	760	17.0	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	99	61.6	113	51.3	110	40.9	Improved
Proficient in English	81	53.1	86	36.0	95	32.6	Improved
Not proficient in English	18	≥90	27	≥90.0	15	≥90.0	No change
English only***	669	26.9	792	22.7	792	19.4	Improved
Proficient in English	640	23.9	765	20.3	762	16.5	No change
Not proficient in English	29	≥90.0	27	≥90.0	29	≥90.0	No change

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.



MID WEST-GASCOYNE REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 27.0%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=900) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Mid West-Gascoyne Region, nearly 1 in 4, or about 240 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Mid West-Gascoyne Region were developmentally on-track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

With the exception of the physical health and wellbeing domain, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of children developmentally on track for each AEDC domain, since 2009.

The most improvement occurred in the language and cognitive skills domain with the percentage of children on track increasing from 55.8% in 2009 to 73.5% in 2015. At the same time, for this domain, the percentage of children developmentally at risk almost halved from 27.5% in 2009 to 14.0% in 2015, and there was a decrease in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable from 16.7% in 2009 to 12.5% in 2015 (graph 14).

From 2009 to 2015, there was a positive trend in the social competence domain, with a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable (graph 14).

Physical health and wellbeing showed a worsening trend with the vulnerability rate significantly higher in 2015 than in 2009 (graph 14).

In the emotional maturity, and communication skills and general knowledge domains, from 2009 to 2012, there was a small increase in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable. This reversed in 2015, with the vulnerability rate falling back to 2009 levels.

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, has shown an overall positive emerging trend with the vulnerability rate decreasing in each AEDC cycle – 31.3% in 2009 down to 30.5% in 2012, and 27.0% in 2015 (table 18).

Summary

While there are some encouraging trends in the Mid West-Gascoyne Region, the vulnerability rates are amongst the highest in Western Australia. The data suggests that the continued increase in vulnerability rates in the physical health and wellbeing present a challenge for the region.

Table 17: Fast facts for the Mid West-Gascoyne Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	885	****	979	****	952	****
Population of Aboriginal children	188	21.2	239	24.4	215	22.6
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	111	12.5	110	11.2	109	11.4
Children born overseas	18	2.03	38	3.9	33	3.5
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	458	51.8	546	55.8	539	56.6
Children adapting to school	609	68.8	674	68.8	677	71.1
Parents actively engaged with the school	458	51.8	573	58.5	550	57.8
Children with special needs	17	1.9	34	3.5	30	3.2
Children requiring further assessment	102	11.5	105	10.7	91	9.6
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	467	52.8	453	46.3	440	46.2

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 14: Percentage of Mid West-Gascoyne children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

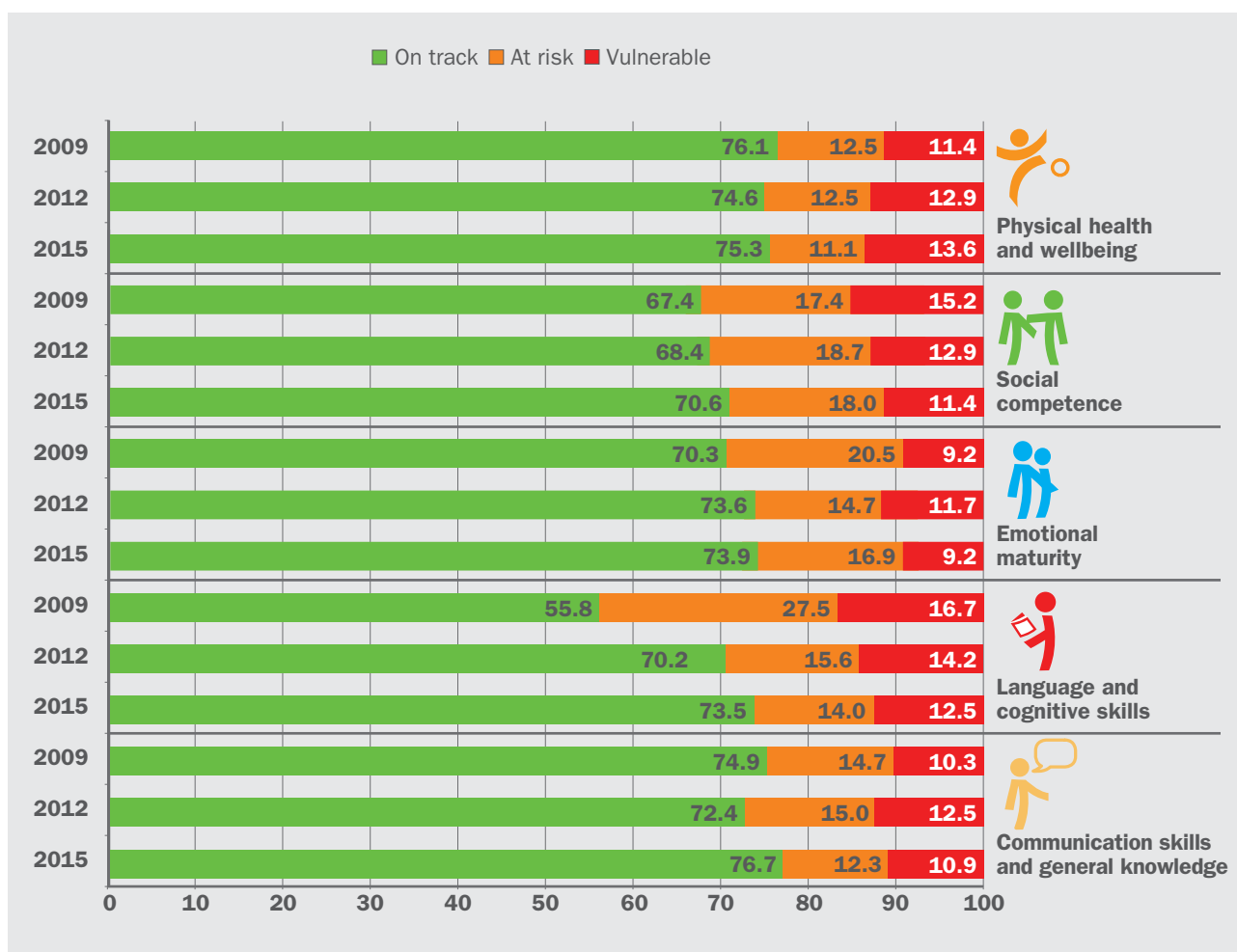


Table 18 shows the percentage of children living in the Mid West–Gascoyne Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 18: Developmentally vulnerable children in the Mid West–Gascoyne Region

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Mid West–Gascoyne	840	31.3	915	30.5	899	27.0	Improved
Gender							
Male	414	37.9	449	39.4	433	36.0	No change
Female	426	24.9	466	21.9	466	18.7	Improved
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	176	58.5	211	55.5	194	55.2	No change
Non-Aboriginal	664	24.1	704	23.0	705	19.3	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	108	52.8	102	47.1	106	34.9	Improved
Proficient in English	91	44.0	85	40.0	94	27.7	Improved
Not proficient in English	16	≥90	17	82.4	****	****	****
English only***	732	28.1	813	28.4	793	26.0	No change
Proficient in English	700	24.9	773	25.0	753	22.2	Improved
Not proficient in English	32	≥90.0	40	≥90.0	40	≥90.0	No change

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.

**** Due to small numbers, data is not publicly available.



PILBARA REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 26.4%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=850) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Pilbara Region, nearly 1 in 4, or about 220 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Pilbara Region were developmentally on track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

The social competence, emotional maturity, and language and cognitive skills domains showed a similar pattern in that the percentage of children developmentally on track increased from 2009 to 2012, and then decreased in 2015. The physical health and wellbeing domain showed a decrease in the percentage of children on track from 2009 to 2012 and then plateaued in 2015. The on track rate for the communication skills and general knowledge domain has also steadily decreased since 2009. Overall, there has been a statistically significant decline in the percentage of children on-track in four domains between 2009 and 2015 (graph 15).

The language and cognitive skills domain has shown the most improvement with the percentage of children on track increasing from 66.3% in 2009 to 75.4% in 2015. At the same time for this domain, the at risk rate decreased from 19.1% to 12.9%, as did the vulnerability rate – 14.6% to 11.6% (graph 15).

The physical health and wellbeing, social competence, and communication skills and general knowledge domains showed a worsening trend with the vulnerability rate increasing in each AEDC cycle. In the social competence domain, the vulnerability rate more than doubled from 6.0% in 2009 to 12.4% in 2015 (graph 15).

The percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in the emotional maturity domain decreased from 7.7% in 2009 down to 5.1% in 2012, and then increased to 11.7% in 2015, exceeding the 2009 vulnerability rate.

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, showed an improvement from 22.5% in 2009 to 21.4% in 2012. The improvement was not sustained with a statistically significant increase in the vulnerability rate to 26.4% in 2015 (table 20).

Summary

While there has been an improvement in children's language and cognitive skills, the overall results suggests there are worsening trends emerging on four domains which present a challenge for the Pilbara Region.

Table 19: Fast facts for the Pilbara Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	778	****	859	****	908	****
Population of Aboriginal children	218	28.0	192	22.4	230	25.3
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	128	16.4	120	14.0	143	15.8
Children born overseas	56	7.2	60	7.0	53	5.8
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	467	60.0	579	67.4	588	64.8
Children adapting to school	585	75.2	637	74.2	636	70.0
Parents actively engaged with the school	495	63.6	577	67.2	602	66.3
Children with special needs	20	2.6	22	2.6	28	3.1
Children requiring further assessment	76	9.8	79	9.2	110	12.1
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	441	56.7	496	57.7	461	50.8

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 15: Percentage of Pilbara children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

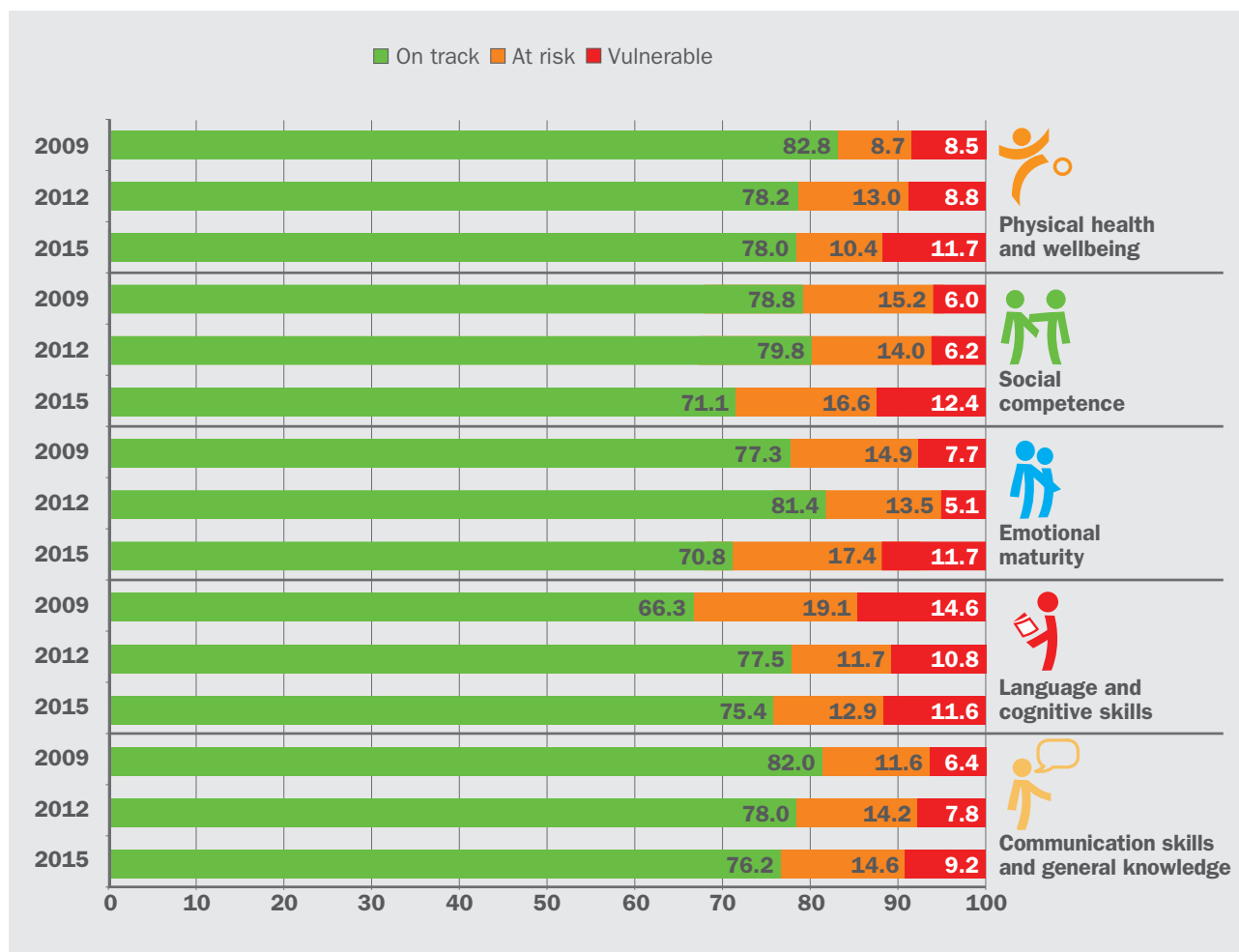


Table 20 shows the percentage of children living in the Pilbara who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 20: Developmentally vulnerable children in the Pilbara Region

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Pilbara	701	22.5	819	21.4	853	26.4	Declined
Gender							
Male	380	26.6	442	25.1	451	33.7	Declined
Female	321	17.8	377	17.0	402	18.2	No change
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	173	52.6	174	47.1	205	59.0	Decline
Non-Aboriginal	528	12.7	645	14.4	648	16.0	Decline
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	105	52.4	110	39.1	127	52.8	No change
Proficient in English	90	44.4	94	28.7	108	44.4	No change
Not proficient in English	****	****	16	≥90.0	19	≥90.0	No change
English only***	596	17.3	709	18.6	726	21.8	Decline
Proficient in English	582	15.5	693	16.9	698	18.8	Decline
Not proficient in English	****	****	16	≥90.0	28	≥90.0	****

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.

**** Due to small numbers, data is not publicly available.



KIMBERLEY REGION

The 2015 vulnerability rate for children vulnerable on one or more domains was 43.4%.

Using the 2015 numbers (N=600) from the AEDC as an annual estimate of pre-primary aged children living in the Kimberley Region, nearly 1 in 2, or about 260 children, commence school each year with vulnerabilities in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development.

Emerging domain trends

The 2009, 2012 and 2015 results show that most children living in the Kimberley Region were developmentally on track and doing well in each of the developmental domains.

Since 2009, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of children developmentally on track in two domains – language and cognitive skills and emotional maturity. There has been little change in the percentage of children on track in the remaining three domains (graph 16).

The most improvement occurred in the emotional maturity domain with the percentage of children on track increasing from 54.4% in 2009 to 66.8% in 2012, before falling back to 61.3% in 2015. At the same time for this domain, the percentage of children developmentally at risk decreased from 24.0% in 2009 down to 19.9% in 2015, as did the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable – 21.7% in 2009 down to 18.8% in 2015 (graph 16).

There was a positive trend emerging in the language and cognitive skills domain with the percentage of children on-track increasing from 54.6% in 2009 to 57.8 % in 2015. There was a corresponding decline, in the percentage of children at risk and developmentally vulnerable between 2009 and 2015, although the change was not significant (graph 16).

Physical health and wellbeing, social competence, and communication skills and general knowledge domains showed a worsening trend with a continuous increase in the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in each AEDC cycle. The change between 2009 and 2015 was statistically significant (graph 16).

The summary measure, vulnerable on one or more domains, shows an overall increase in the percentage of children developmental vulnerable, from 41.3% in 2009 to 43.4% in 2015, although the change is not statistically significant (table 22).

Summary

While there have been improvements in children's emotional maturity, and language and cognitive skills, the Kimberley Region has some of the highest rates of developmental vulnerability in Western Australia. Worsening emerging trends in the physical health and wellbeing, social competence, and communication skills and general knowledge domains present a challenge for the Kimberley Region.

Table 21: Fast facts for the Kimberley Region

	2009		2012		2015	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Early development instruments completed	600	****	633	****	641	****
Population of Aboriginal children	380	63.3	399	63.0	401	62.6
Children with language background other than English (including Aboriginal children)	334	55.7	311	49.1	280	43.7
Children born overseas	9	1.5	8	1.3	14	2.2
Children regularly read to and encouraged in their reading	226	37.7	289	45.7	280	43.7
Children adapting to school	395	65.8	406	64.1	391	61.0
Parents actively engaged with the school	279	46.5	325	51.3	310	48.4
Children with special needs	35	5.8	31	4.9	12	1.9
Children requiring further assessment	96	16.0	79	12.5	93	14.5
Children absent six or more days from the start of the school year to the time the AEDC was undertaken (1 May – 4 July 2015)	403	67.2	396	62.6	382	59.6

**** The AEDC was completed for almost 99% of children starting Pre-primary in Western Australia. The percentage has not been calculated by region.

Graph 16: Percentage of Kimberley children developmentally on track, at risk and vulnerable by AEDC domains

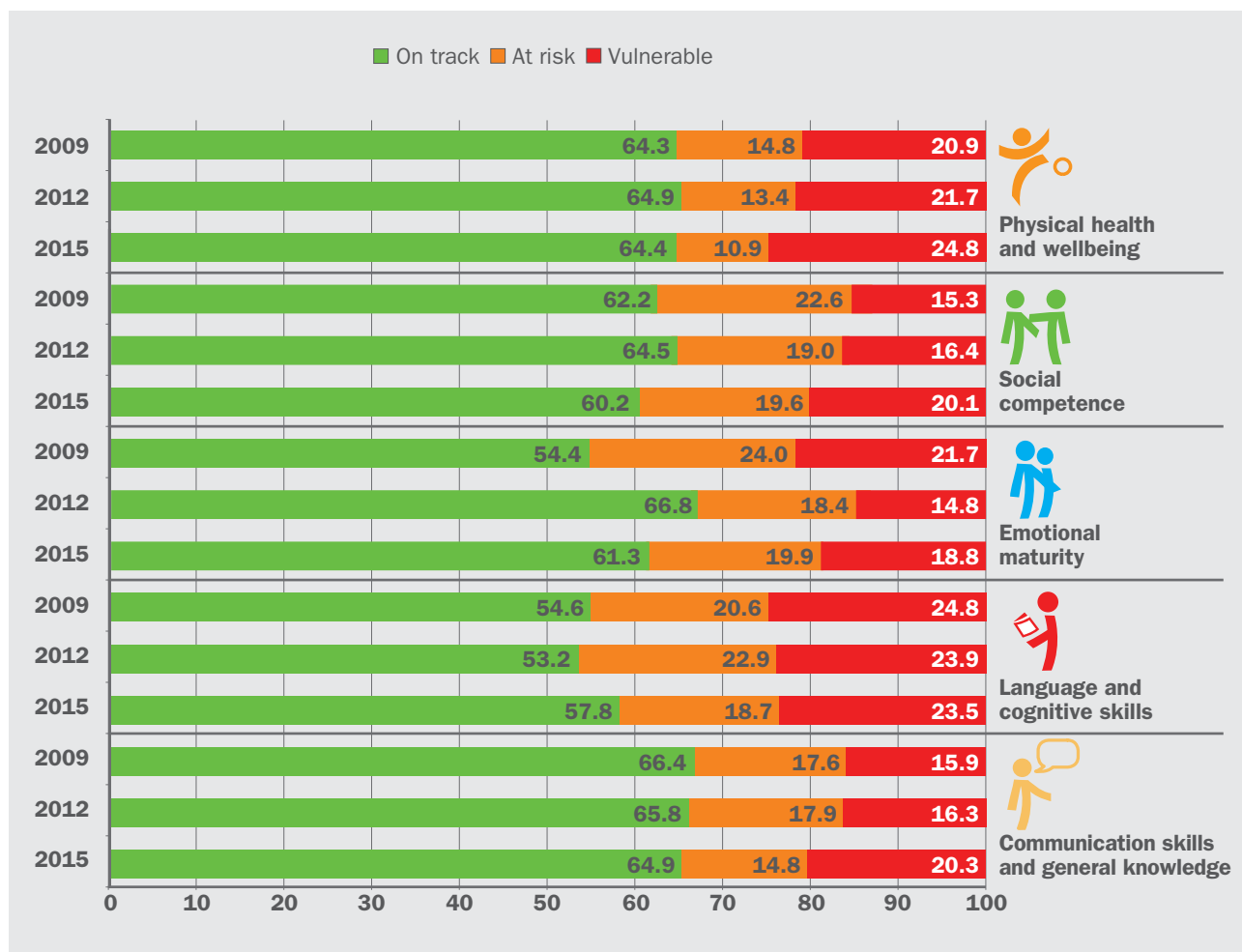


Table 22 shows the percentage of children living in the Kimberley Region who were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Results are reported by gender, Aboriginality and language background other than English (LBOTE). The final column highlights whether or not results have improved significantly between 2009 and 2015 for each of the different sub-groups of children.

Table 22: Developmentally vulnerable children in the Kimberley Region

	2009		2012		2015		**Statistically-significant change between 2009 and 2015
	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	*No. of children	Developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain/s (%)	
Australia	246 421	23.6	272 282	22.0	286 025	22.0	No change
Western Australia	26 052	24.7	30 631	23.0	32 373	21.3	Improved
Kimberley	530	41.3	581	40.3	603	43.4	No change
Gender							
Male	271	48.7	294	48.3	302	45.4	No change
Female	259	33.6	287	32.1	301	41.5	Declined
Aboriginality							
Aboriginal	326	55.5	357	55.7	370	63.0	No change
Non-Aboriginal	204	18.6	224	15.6	233	12.4	Improved
Language diversity							
LBOTE***	284	58.5	274	59.5	265	67.2	Declined
Proficient in English	218	51.4	199	47.2	203	59.1	Declined
Not proficient in English	66	81.8	75	92.0	61	93.4	Declined
English only***	246	21.5	307	23.1	338	24.9	No change
Proficient in English	241	19.9	296	20.3	317	20.2	No change
Not proficient in English	****	****	****	****	21	≥90.0	****

Improved: Significant decrease in vulnerability

Declined: Significant increase in vulnerability

No change: Neither increase nor decrease in vulnerability

* Number of children with valid scores on one or more domains.

** The final column indicates the change in developmental vulnerability of children from 2009 to 2015 and the significance of the change.

*** The subsets of these categories do not equal the total because teachers selected the 'Don't know' response.

**** Due to small numbers, data is not publicly available.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional resources

- *Early Childhood Development in Western Australia: Australian Early Development Census: State Report 2015*
- *Sub report: Children with additional health and development needs in Western Australia: Australian Early Development Census*
- *Australian Early Development Census – National Report 2015*
- *Exploring change in the Australian version of the Early Development Instrument: The estimation of a critical difference for the ‘vulnerable’, ‘at risk’, and ‘on-track’ categories – Indigenous Adaption Study 2009*
- Visit www.aedc.gov.au

Additional notes

1. The population of children enrolled to begin their first year of full-time school is data provided by the 2015 School Census, inclusive of government, Catholic and independent schools across Australia. This number is used to determine the extent to which the AEDC is reflective of the entire population of Western Australian children starting school in 2015.
2. Information about children with special needs is not included in the AEDC domains results tables because of the already identified substantial needs of this group. However, teachers completed background information on children with special needs to enable communities to be responsive to all children.
3. Figures in tables may not add to 100% due to rounding.
4. Numbers may not correspond precisely with percentages due to rounding.

5. The difference between the percentage of children vulnerable in 2009 and 2015 was statistically significant if it exceeded the critical difference.
6. Children are considered ‘LBOTE’ (Language Background other than English) when they speak a language other than English, when they speak a language other than English at home, and/or have English as a Second Language (ESL) status.
7. Children from LBOTE may be proficient in their home language/s.
8. It is possible for children to be Aboriginal and have LBOTE status.
9. The term ‘Aboriginal’ respectfully refers to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.
10. Proficient in English refers to what is expected of the average monolingual English speaker in a similar phase of development.
11. Further information regarding results for communities (local government areas) and local communities (suburbs/towns) is available from aedc.gov.au

Data sources

- *Australian Early Development Census: Core AEDC microdata pivot WA 2009-2015*
- *Early Childhood Development in Western Australia: Australian Early Development Census: State Report 2015*



**TO FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT THE AEDC VISIT
AEDC.GOV.AU**

ISBN 978-0-7307-4611-9



9 780730 746119 >