

## A WORLD FIRST FOR AUSSIE KIDS PUTTING AUSTRALIA'S CHILDREN ON THE MAP

In a world first, 96 per cent of communities in Australia now have vital information about their children's development, following the latest release of results from the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) today.

In 2009, initial AEDI results were mapped for 37 per cent of communities across the country. With today's release, 96 per cent of communities have mapped results.

The AEDI results report on 261,147 children (97.5 per cent of the estimated five year old population) from data collected during their first year of school in 2009 to provide a snapshot of children's health and development in different communities.

Today's results are available as online interactive maps and as Community Profiles which summarise the data collected from each community in a tailored report.

Professor Frank Oberklaid, director of The Royal Children's Hospital's Centre for Community Child Health said the AEDI results were a powerful tool for communities.

"Never before have we had access to such rich information about how our young children are developing. The AEDI is literally putting children's development on the map," Professor Oberklaid said.

"We know children's earliest years have a huge impact on their future. With the AEDI results, we're now in a unique position to look at where our kids are struggling and where they're doing well in these formative early years. The AEDI information is incredibly compelling and demands us to act now to ensure we do everything we can to give children the best start in life."

Launching the AEDI results today, the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Hon Peter Garrett said "Communities play a key role in influencing early childhood development and the AEDI community maps are a powerful way of displaying crucial child development information".

Professor Steve Zubrick from Perth's Telethon Institute for Child Health Research said the AEDI results would allow children everywhere to be developing towards their full potential.

"The results should prompt us all to ask: 'why should where a young child happens to be living make a difference in their early skill and onward potential?'"

"Where we do see children doing less well than others we need to encourage parents, families and leaders to come together and focus on specific things that can be done to enrich and extend developmental opportunities and expectations for families and children," Professor Zubrick said.



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
14 April 2011

The AEDI measured five areas of early childhood development: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills (school-based), communication skills and general knowledge. The census-like data collection involved teachers completing a checklist for children in their first year of full-time school. The results for each community are now available from the AEDI website as interactive online maps.

The Australian Government and State and Territory Governments are working in partnership with the Centre for Community Child Health (at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and a key research centre of the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute) and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth, to deliver the AEDI.

AEDI results and further information are available at [www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au)

*Ends*

Media contacts:

**Vanessa Whatmough** (The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne)  
(03) 9345 5138 or 0466 150 947  
[vanessa.whatmough@rch.org.au](mailto:vanessa.whatmough@rch.org.au)

**Simone Myers** (Murdoch Childrens Research Institute)  
(03) 8341 6433 or 0407 852 335  
[simone.myers@mcri.edu.au](mailto:simone.myers@mcri.edu.au)

**Liz Chester** (Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth)  
(08) 9489 7965 or 0409 988 530  
[elizabeth@ichr.uwa.edu.au](mailto:elizabeth@ichr.uwa.edu.au)

