# The Importance of Data

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Why do we need data?

- To ensure all children meet their developmental potential- " no data, no problem"
- To inform early childhood development policies and strategies
- To guide universal and targeted early childhood and early intervention services and EC systems development
- To evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to improve children's outcomes
- To monitor progress over time in improving children's outcomes

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Are we getting there-data will tell us?
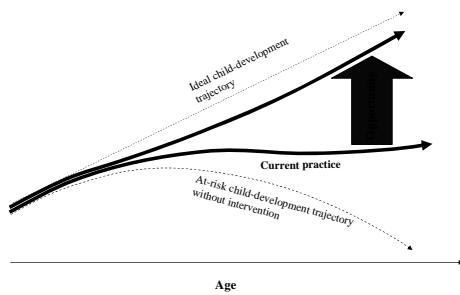
How can data be used?

Local community	Stimulate discussions about early child development among teachers, parents, schools, community groups, early childhood services.
Regional/LGA	Identify communities and neighborhoods where children may be at risk developmentally. Plan and evaluate early childhood strategies and actions.
State/ National	Leverage better-informed early childhood policies which match programs with investment opportunities. Document the effect, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness of early childhood programs.

Using data at the local/regional level

The activity of documenting community demographics using a wide range of data is an important precursor to developing a ***strategic action plan*** for the community that will translate the community's highest priority needs into ***outcomes, objectives*** and ***strategies for action***.
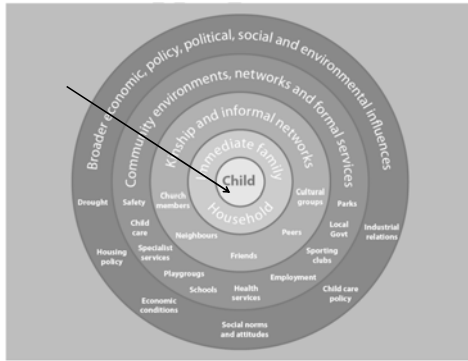

What influences child development?
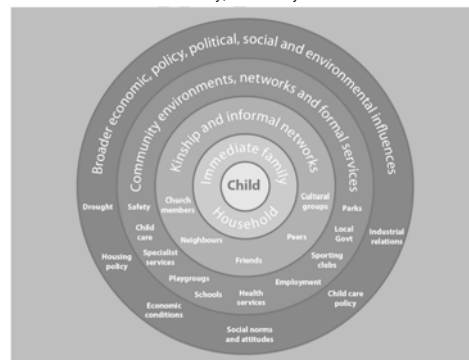
Children's family, community and environment

Reference: Bronfenbrenner (1979)

Slide 1

What influences child development?
Children's family, community and environment

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Slide 2

Child development outcomes at school entry (AEDI)-Moira LGA
% developmentally vulnerable

| Local Community	No of children	Physical health and wellbeing	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and cognitive skills	Communication skills and general knowledge	Vulnerable on one or more domain of the AEDI	Vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDI	SEIFA (score)
Cobram	74	9.5	2.7	5.4	10.8	13.5	24.3	13.5	929.38
Nathalia	24	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	930.87
Numurkah	51	7.8	21.6	11.8	9.8	17.6	27.4	19.6	969.86
Strathmerton	17	5.9	0.0	5.9	11.8	11.8	17.6	11.8	957.98
Yarrawonga	62	6.5	14.8	9.8	3.2	9.7	21.0	11.3	971.91

Slide 3

Child development outcomes at school entry (AEDI)-Moira LGA
Number developmentally vulnerable

Local Community	No of children	Physical health and wellbeing	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language and cognitive skills	Communication skills and general knowledge	Vulnerable on one or more domain of the AEDI	Vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDI
Cobram	74	7	2	4	8	10	18	10
Nathalia	24	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Numurkah	51	4	11	6	5	9	14	10
Strathmerton	17	1	0	1	2	2	4	2
Yarrawonga	62	4	9	6	2	6	13	7
Total	228	17	22	17	17	27	50	29

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What influences child development?
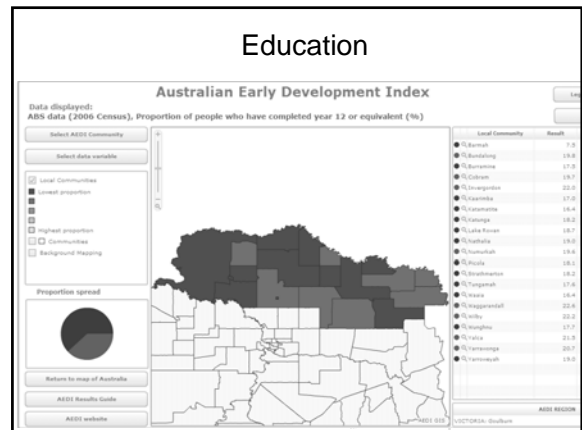### Children's family, community and environment

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Slide 5
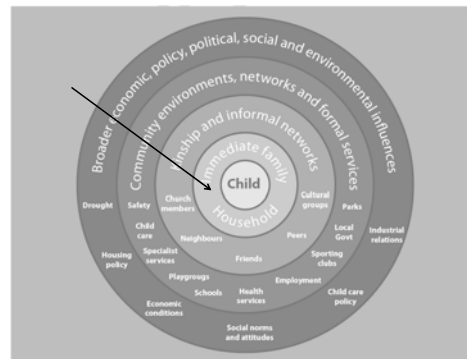
Family environments-Moira LGA

	MOIRA SHIRE	VICTORIA	RURAL AVERAGE
Families			
Couple Families	82.3%	83.1%	
Single parent families	17.7%	16.9%	
Family income			
Couple Families	$1,106		$1,176
Single parent families	$554		$541
Education			
% couple families with <yr 12/equiv	35.7%	21.2%	
% single parent families with <yr 12 /equiv	65.5%	54.7%	

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SEIFA

Education

Education

Single young parents

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Children's family, community and environment
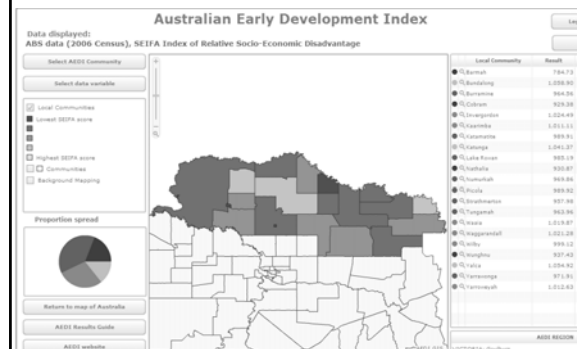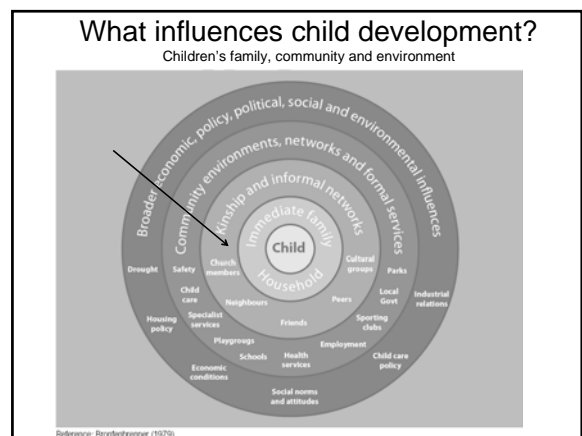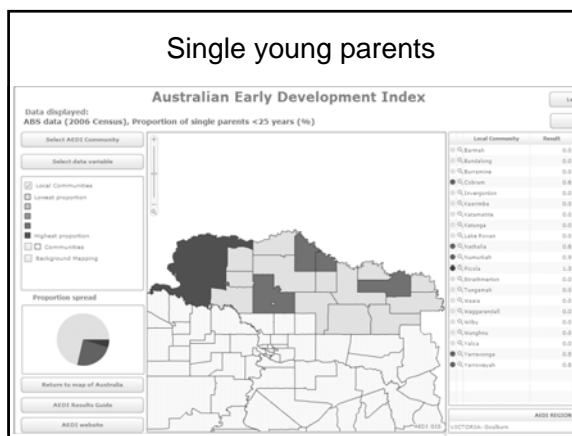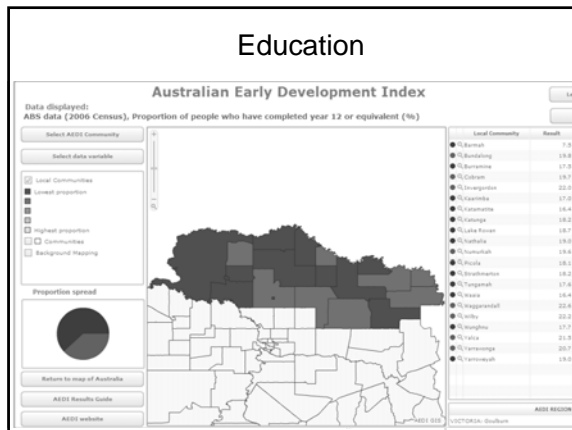
Kinship and informal networks
Key questions

- ᵥ How do families with young children connect with other families (e.g new parent groups, playgroups)?
- ᵥ What social supports are available for families in the community?
- ᵥ Are their peer and kinship supports for families?
- ᵥ Do families have someone to go to when they are in need?

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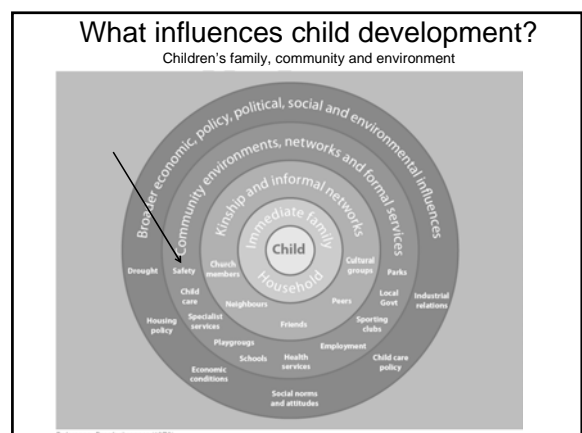
## Community and formal service environments

	MOIRA SHIRE	RURAL AVERAGE
Immunisation		
% fully immunised 12-15 mths	88.3%	92.1%
% fully immunised 24-27 mths	95.5%	94.4%
MCH Key Ages and Stages Visits		
% seen at home consultation	77.9%	93.9%
% seen at 3½ yr visit	87.9%	60.5%
Kindergarten participation (2006)	82.2%	94.1%

Community and formal service environments
Key questions

ᵥ What is the availability of services and facilities?
ᵥ Do services and facilities provide families with the opportunity to meet other families?
ᵥ How family friendly are services and facilities?
ᵥ How flexible are services e.g father inclusive?
ᵥ How affordable are services and facilities?
ᵥ What is the coordination between services and ease of finding out about services?
ᵥ What is the quality of services?

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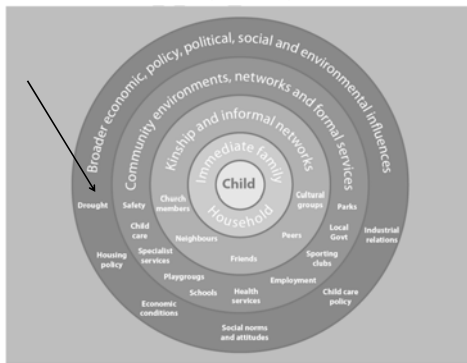
Broader economic, policy and political environments

ᵥ Hume Region overall what is happening?
ᵥ Policy environment for early childhood e.g COAG agenda, Blueprint, VEYLF etc

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What do we know about the Hume Region?

ᵥ Located astride Australia's major transport corridors and major water catchment areas
ᵥ It faces a number challenges over the next 20 years:
  – Changing demographics with average age of the population increasing (altering demands on services, transport and housing) and movement towards rural residential living is increasing (bringing about many capacity issues)
  – Impacts of global economic crisis and likelihood of recession. Agricultural restructuring already impacted. Skills shortages in health and manufacturing, with a need to improve education and training and attract skilled persons to the local area
  – **M**assive impact of climate change - enhanced risk of natural disasters, reduced water, personal mobility constraints, declined snow fall, health consequences of hotter temperatures, costs of cooling/heating, freight and logistics

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What do we know about the Hume Region?

ᵥ Overall population grown by 14% between 1991 and 2007 – with vast difference across the region
  – Largest growth in areas closest to Melbourne (Mitchell Shire)
  – Established areas (Wangaratta, Echuca and Yarrawonga) continued to increase
  – Decline in young adult/family formation age group to below the Australian average, with many moving away for education and employment needs. In comparison, the proportion aged 65 years or over has increased and is higher than Australian average
ᵥ Fertility rates have fallen, women are having fewer children
ᵥ People living longer, but because of higher numbers of older people, the number of deaths is also increasing

What do we know about the Hume Region?

- Of 31,000 households living in HR at time of 2006 Census, data on family structure indicates that:
  - 72% reflected families and 25% lone households.
  - Of these families, in 40% of cases, children no longer lived at home –therefore, in essence more than 50% of all households in the Hume Region were made up of only one or two residents. A further 14% of families were made up of single parent families
- The absence of 19-39 year olds creates problems – in strengthening workforce skills, supporting older residents, sustaining volunteer base for community services and creating gender imbalances (affecting individual wellbeing)

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What do we know about the Hume Region?

- Similar proportion and pattern of disadvantage to regional Victoria as a whole – based on SEIFA – with several pockets of greater disadvantage (around larger towns)
- Variation in income levels region with many towns having a relatively high proportion of low income households
- Limited economic incentives to move to the region; particularly relevant for professionals and business people
- Need to respond to need and provide new services where pockets of development are occurring while still offering services in areas where population is declining yet needs are strong

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Using data to guide action

- Helps guide thinking about the outcomes we want
- Outcomes-based approaches 'start with the end in mind', that is, they begin by identifying the outcomes to be achieved and work backwards from there.
- Progress towards expected outcomes can then be identified through measuring both process and impact indicators as an initiative or strategy proceeds.

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Measuring outcomes

- *Process data:*
  - Are the planned activities being delivered?
  - Are the activities being delivered in the way intended (in accordance with best practice)?

- *Impact data:*
  - Did the initiative/strategy have the immediate impact on the recipients that was expected?
  - How do we know we are making progress towards the desired outcomes?

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