

Health and wellbeing trends of Victorian school entrants from 2013-2017

The **School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ)** is an annual survey that records the observations and concerns of parents about their child’s health and wellbeing. SEHQ has been distributed to parents and guardians of preparatory (Prep) grade children in Victorian primary schools since 1997, and provides insights into health and wellbeing of children during their crucial movements into early primary schooling.

In 2017, there were 63,937 responses from parents, representing 90% of all Victorian children enrolled in Prep that year. Topics covered by the survey include general health, speech and language, service use, general development, behavioural and emotional wellbeing and family stress.

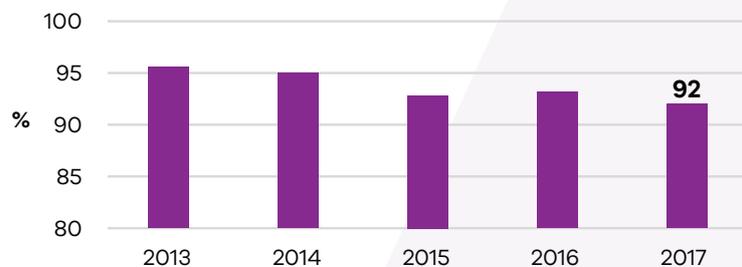
This snapshot summarises trends in parents’ responses to SEHQ between 2013 and 2017.

General health



Since 2013, more than **9 in 10 Victorian parents** rated their child’s health as **GOOD, VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT**

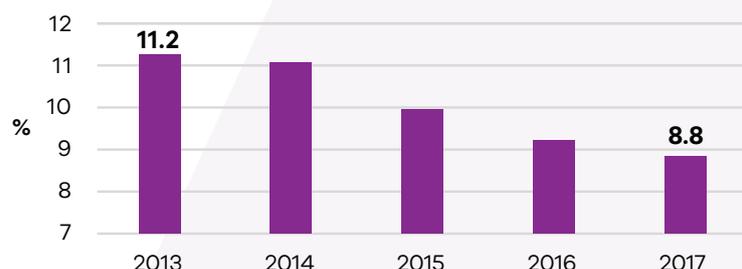
Despite fluctuations, this indicator has remained consistently high. In 2017, **92% of parents** reported positive perceptions of their child’s health.



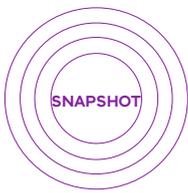
Family stress

The percentage of parents reporting the **HIGH or HIGHEST levels of family stress** has consistently decreased over the last five years, from 11.2% in 2013 to 8.8% in 2017.

The SEHQ asks parents to rate their family’s level of stress over the month prior to completing the questionnaire using a five point Likert scale, from ‘little or no stress/pressure’ to ‘almost more than I can bear’.



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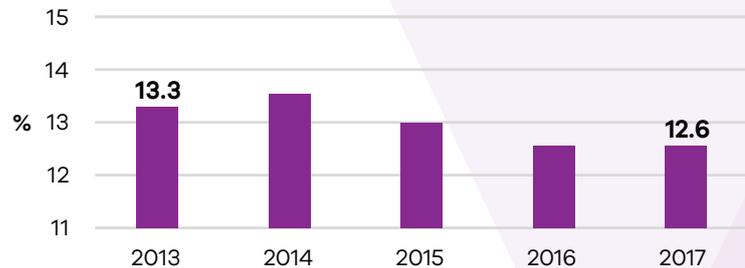


School Entrant Health Questionnaire 2017

Psychological health and wellbeing

In 2013, based on SDQ* responses, 13.3% of parents reported concerns about their child's emotional and psychological health.

By 2017, the percentage of parents reporting concerns decreased slightly, to 12.6%.

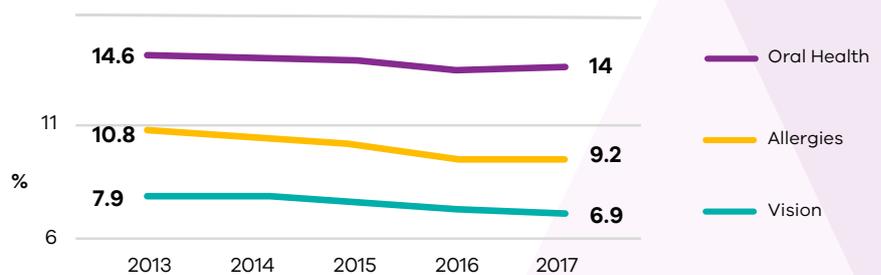


*The **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)** is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire that includes questions on 25 psychological attributes, divided between five scales: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, and, prosocial.

Reported concerns about oral health, vision and allergies

Since 2013, the proportion of parents reporting concerns about their child's vision have decreased slightly, while concerns about oral health have remained relatively stable.

The proportion of students with a known allergy has declined.



Risks of developmental or behavioural problems

Based on PEDS* responses from parents, **the proportion of incoming students at risk of developmental or behavioural issues has remained stable between 2013 and 2017.**



*The **Parental Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)** is a method for detecting developmental and behavioural problems in children from ages 0-8. The PEDS can be also be used as an informal means to elicit and respond to parent concerns.

Children assessed as having speech and language difficulties are more than three times as likely to demonstrate social-emotional and behavioural issues as those without speech and language difficulties (Hughes, Sciberras and Goldfeld, 2016).

DET analysis shows that on average, children who have speech and language difficulties at school entry have poorer educational achievement in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing in Year 3.



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