OUTCOMES FOR VICTORIAN  
CHILDREN AT SCHOOL ENTRY

FINDINGS FROM THE SCHOOL ENTRANT   
HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE 2021

**Ballarat (C)**

**OUTCOMES FOR VICTORIAN CHILDREN AT SCHOOL ENTRY**

FINDINGS FROM THE SCHOOL ENTRANT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE (sehq) 2021

Due to ongoing COVID-19 related events, there was significant disruption to the distribution of the SEHQ throughout 2021, reducing family participation compared to previous years. A priority service or targeted service was employed where required, according to assessment of school disadvantage and need where schools were encouraged to refer vulnerable students and families.

**Summary data for Ballarat (C)**

This summary sheet has been developed to support use of the key measures from the SEHQ in local planning.

The SEHQ is an integral part of the Primary School Nursing Program and also provides valuable information about outcomes for children at state and local levels. It is completed by the child's parent or carer and therefore the following analysis reflects parental responses and concerns. It does not report medical diagnoses or opinions of health professionals.

SEHQ data are reported based on the child's residential postcode with allocation to Local Government Areas (LGA).

Further information on the SEHQ is available [here](https://www.vic.gov.au/school-entrant-health-questionnaire).

In the LGA of Ballarat (C), there were 1,168 children (1.9% of the state total of 60,256) involved in the 2021 SEHQ data collection\*. Below are the number and percentage of responses from these parents about their children and aspects of their health and wellbeing as reported in the 2021 SEHQ.

| **Child and family demographics** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children | 33 | 2.8 | 3.9 | 1.9 |
| Children living in an area with the most socio-economic disadvantage\*\* | 276 | 23.6 | 27.6 | 19.5 |
| Children living in an area with the least socio-economic disadvantage\*\* | 40 | 3.4 | 7.6 | 19.4 |
| Children who were not born in Australia | 31 | 2.7 | 3.5 | 8.1 |
| Children who speak a language other than English at home | 27 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 9.7 |
| Children who live with one parent (mother only or father only) | 191 | 16.4 | 13.8 | 10.5 |
| Children reported to have an intellectual disability, developmental delay or learning disability | 111 | 9.5 | 9.3 | 8.2 |

| **General health** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Children reported to be in excellent or very good health | 1,053 | 90.2 | 85.2 | 84.3 |
| Children reported to have allergies | 115 | 9.8 | 8.8 | 9.0 |
| *of the children above, those with an allergy action plan at school* | 47 | 40.9 | 29.9 | 34.5 |
| Children reported to have been told by a doctor they have asthma | 164 | 14.0 | 11.8 | 9.6 |
| *of the children above, those with an asthma action plan at school* | 103 | 62.8 | 61.6 | 62.3 |

| **ORAL health** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Parents concerned about their child's oral health (eg, teeth, gums etc) | 186 | 15.9 | 15.4 | 15.9 |

| **speech/LANGUAGE** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Children reported to have difficulties with speech and/or language | 221 | 18.9 | 19.6 | 16.4 |
| *of the children above, those who are seeing a speech pathologist* | 61 | 27.6 | 29.8 | 28.4 |

| **SERVICE USE** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Children reported to have attended a Maternal and Child Health Centre for their 3 ½ year old check | 853 | 73.0 | 72.7 | 69.9 |
| Children reported to have been seen by an optometrist in the past year | 248 | 21.2 | 16.2 | 14.3 |
| Children reported to have been seen by a paediatrician in the past year | 138 | 11.8 | 12.2 | 10.6 |
| Children reported to have been seen by a dentist in the past year | 702 | 60.1 | 49.0 | 43.6 |
| Children reported to have been seen by an audiologist/hearing specialist in the past year | 96 | 8.2 | 7.1 | 6.2 |
| Children reported to have participated in a kindergarten program led by a qualified early education teacher | 1,076 | 92.1 | 86.4 | 86.5 |

| **BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Parents concerned about the behaviour of their child | 238 | 20.4 | 18.8 | 15.7 |

**Children at risk of developmental and behavioural problems**

The ***Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)*** is embedded within the SEHQ and comprises a number of questions that elicit responses about specific domains of learning, development and behaviour. Certain groupings of concerns have been found to be significant predictors of developmental or behavioural problems.

| **Children at risk of developmental and behavioural problems** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Children at high risk of developmental or behavioural problems | 280 | 24.0 | 24.7 | 24.9 |
| Children at moderate risk of developmental or behavioural problems | 392 | 33.6 | 30.0 | 30.7 |

**Children at high risk of behavioural and emotional problems**

The ***Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)*** is embedded within the SEHQ and is used to assess different aspects of child behaviours at the beginning of primary school, including prosocial behaviour, hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, peer problems and conduct problems (Goodman 2001).

The ***emotional*** scale measures a range of negative emotions, such as sadness, fear and worries. The ***conduct problem*** scale measures tendencies to display negative behaviours when interacting with others. The ***hyperactivity*** scale measures a range of behaviours, including restlessness, impulsiveness and concentration. The ***peer problems*** scale measures peer relationships, including not having friends, being picked on, playing by themselves or not being liked by other children. The ***prosocial behaviour*** scale measures positive social behaviours.

| **Children at high risk of behavioural and emotional problems** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Emotional symptoms | 111 | 9.5 | 8.7 | 7.1 |
| Conduct problems | 178 | 15.2 | 14.1 | 11.2 |
| Hyperactivity | 159 | 13.6 | 13.0 | 9.7 |
| Peer problems | 123 | 10.5 | 9.4 | 8.9 |
| Pro social | 28 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 2.9 |
| Total difficulties (score in the 'high risk' range) | 130 | 11.1 | 9.8 | 7.1 |

| **Family Stress** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Families experiencing high or very high stress during the month prior to the survey | 141 | 12.1 | 10.4 | 8.8 |

*The following shows the results reported by parents when asked whether their child had experienced any of the following stressors:*

| **family stress (CONTINUED)** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Non Metro** | **VIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** | **Per cent** |
| Alcohol or drug related problem in family | 57 | 4.9 | 5.6 | 3.5 |
| History of abuse to parent | 98 | 8.4 | 8.1 | 5.2 |
| History of abuse to child(ren) | 40 | 3.4 | 3.0 | 1.9 |
| Parent witness to violence | NDA | NDA | NDA | NDA |
| Child witness to violence | 58 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 3.2 |
| Gambling problem in family | 7 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 |
| History of mental illness of parent | 193 | 16.5 | 13.8 | 9.3 |

\* The number of SEHQ children with a valid postcode for concordance to a LGA.

\*\* Children have been allocated to quintiles of disadvantage based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA).

NDP: No Data Published where the number of children is less than 5.

Data Source: 2021 School Entrant Health Questionnaire

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