School Entrant Health Questionnaire 2022

# **Merri-bek (C)**

# The School Entrant Health Questionnaire

The School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ) is an annual survey that records parents’ concerns and observations about their child’s health and wellbeing during their child’s first year at school. The questionnaire is completed by parents and guardians of Prep children in Victorian primary schools through the Victorian Primary School Nursing Program across the year. The information collected in the SEHQ is a starting point for nurses to carry out further assessment of the child and family and determine appropriate intervention and/or referral as required. Analysis of the SEHQ data is also used to inform planning and service delivery.

SEHQ data are reported based on the child's residential postcode with allocation to a local government area (LGA).

No data are published (NDP) in this report where the number of children is fewer than 5.

Depending on participant responses, there may also be no data available (NDA) for some questionnaire items.

Merri-bek (C) results

In 2022, 1,328 Prep aged children in the LGA of Merri-bek (C) participated in SEHQ data collection (2.2% of the statewide total of 60,858).

The tables below provide details of their health, development and wellbeing as reported by their parents.

## Table 1: Demographic profile of children beginning school

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Population group** | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children** | 48 | 3.6 | 1.7 | 2.3 |
| **[[1]](#footnote-1)Children living in an area with the most socio-economic disadvantage[[2]](#footnote-2)** | 496 | 37.3 | 16.2 | 19.0 |
| **Children living in an area with the least socio-economic disadvantage** | 30 | 2.3 | 24.4 | 20.2 |
| **Children who were not born in Australia** | 115 | 8.7 | 8.9 | 7.5 |
| **Children who live with one parent (mother only or father only)** | 91 | 6.9 | 8.2 | 8.8 |
| **Children reported to have an intellectual disability, developmental delay or learning disability** | 115 | 8.7 | 8.3 | 8.6 |

## Table 2: General health

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Children reported to be in excellent or very good health** | 1,093 | 82.3 | 81.3 | 81.6 |
| **Children reported to have allergies** | 123 | 9.3 | 9.7 | 9.6 |
|  *of the children above, those with an allergy action plan at school* | 46 | 37.4 | 36.9 | 35.2 |
| **Children reported to have been told by a doctor they have asthma** | 121 | 9.1 | 9.5 | 10.1 |
| *of the children above, those with an asthma action plan at school* | 82 | 67.8 | 62.3 | 62.4 |

## Table 3: Oral health

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Parents concerned about their child's oral health (e.g. teeth, gums etc.)** | 233 | 17.5 | 16.7 | 16.5 |

## Table 4: Speech and Language

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Children reported to have difficulties with speech and/or language** | 198 | 14.9 | 15.0 | 16.3 |
|  *of the children above, those who are seeing a speech pathologist* | 83 | 41.9 | 38.2 | 40.7 |

## Table 5: Service use

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Children reported to have attended a Maternal and Child Health Centre for their 3.5-year-old check** | 832 | 62.7 | 60.8 | 62.7 |
| **Children reported to have been seen by an optometrist in the past year** | 185 | 13.9 | 14.7 | 15.3 |
| **Children reported to have been seen by a paediatrician in the past year** | 167 | 12.6 | 11.8 | 12.4 |
| **Children reported to have been seen by a dentist in the past year** | 688 | 51.8 | 43.6 | 45.1 |
| **Children reported to have been seen by an audiologist/hearing specialist in the past year** | 104 | 7.8 | 6.2 | 6.7 |
| **Children reported to have participated in a kindergarten program led by a qualified early education teacher** | 1,172 | 88.3 | 85.5 | 85.6 |

## Table 6: Behavioural and emotional wellbeing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Parents concerned about the behaviour/emotional wellbeing of their child** | 223 | 16.8 | 16.0 | 17.1 |

# Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

The **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)** embedded within the SEHQ is used to assess different aspects of child behaviours at the beginning of primary school (Goodman, 2001). The instrument includes the:

* **Emotional scale:** measuring negative emotions, such as sadness, fear and worries.
* **Conduct problems** **scale**: measuring tendencies to display negative behaviours when interacting with others.
* **Hyperactivity scale:** measuring restlessness, impulsiveness and concentration.
* **Peer problems** **scale:** measuring peer relationships, including not having friends, being picked on, playing by themselves or not being liked by other children.
* **Prosocial behaviour** **scale:** measuring positive social behaviours (reverse scored).

## Table 7: Children at risk of behavioural and emotional problems

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Emotional symptoms** | 80 | 7.5 | 6.7 | 7.5 |
| **Conduct problems** | 119 | 11.1 | 10.9 | 11.9 |
| **Hyperactivity** | 99 | 9.2 | 9.3 | 10.6 |
| **Peer problems** | 89 | 8.3 | 9.4 | 9.6 |
| **Prosocial behaviour (reverse scored)** | 33 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| **Total difficulties (score in the 'high risk' range)** | 83 | 7.7 | 7.0 | 7.9 |

## Table 8: Family stress

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Families experiencing high or very high stress during the month prior to the survey** | 120 | 9.0 | 8.6 | 9.5 |

## Table 9: Sources of family stress

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **LGA** | **LGA** | **Metro** | **VIC** |
| **N** | **%** | **%** | **%** |
| **Alcohol or drug related problem in family** | 23 | 1.7 | 2.5 | 3.2 |
| **History of abuse to parent** | 39 | 2.9 | 4.0 | 5.0 |
| **History of abuse to child(ren)** | 9 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 1.8 |
| **Parent witness to violence** | NDA | NDA | NDA | NDA |
| **Child witness to violence** | 18 | 1.4 | 2.5 | 3.1 |
| **Gambling problem in family** | 6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| **History of mental illness of parent** | 133 | 10.0 | 8.4 | 10.4 |

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Children have been allocated to quintiles of disadvantage based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)