



Overview of the Indicators of Wellbeing

The Commissioner for Children and Young People has a statutory responsibility to monitor the wellbeing of all children and young people living in WA and advocate on their behalf. The Commissioner has developed the Indicators of Wellbeing to report on a range of measures monitoring the wellbeing of WA's children and young people across the life course and over time.

The Indicators of Wellbeing is a component of the Commissioner's Wellbeing Monitoring Framework. It is designed to be a practical data resource that provides a single, collated overview of the wellbeing of WA's children and young people, and help identify what is working and where changes in policies and practices are required.

It is recommended to be used by government and non-government organisations involved in policy-making and service delivery, advocacy groups and the general community.

Structure of the Indicators of Wellbeing

The Indicators of Wellbeing are structured across three key age groups (0 to 5 years, 6 to 11 years and 12 to 17 years) and three domains:

- Learning and participating
- Healthy and connected
- Safe and supported.

These domains align with the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*, which states that the wellbeing of children and young people includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

Under the Act, the Commissioner must give priority to, and have special regard to, the interests and needs of Aboriginal children and young people, and children and young people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged for any reason. With this in mind, the Indicators of Wellbeing considers the outcomes for all children and young people, and also groups of children and young people who experience vulnerability or disadvantage, in particular Aboriginal children and young people.

Within each domain, specific indicators and measures have been selected to track and measure progress towards selected critical short-term outcomes. The selection of the indicators and measures is guided by the following principles:

- They are informed by what children and young people say is important to them.
- They enable policy and decision makers to track and assess progress towards strong wellbeing outcomes for children and young people by measuring their lived experiences.
- They reflect all critical aspects of children and young people's wellbeing and are not restricted by a current lack of data.

The following diagram details the short-term outcomes and indicators for each age group and domain.

Indicators of Wellbeing model

Domain	Short-term outcome	Indicator	Age-range		
			0-5	6-11	12-17
Learning and participating	Children are provided with opportunities that support their learning	Informal learning opportunities	✓		
		Participation in formal and informal childcare	✓		
		Formal learning opportunities	✓		
	Children develop the skills needed for successful learning Children transition to school successfully	Readiness for learning	✓		
		Transition to school	✓		
	Children and young people are engaged and supported with learning	School attendance		✓	✓
		A sense of belonging and supportive relationships at school		✓	✓
		Academic achievement		✓	✓
	Children and young people have an active voice and are listened to	Autonomy and voice		✓	✓
	Children transition to high school successfully	Transition to high school		✓	
Young people are prepared for, and feel positive about, their future	Transition from school			✓	
Healthy and connected	Children are provided the best start to life through a positive antenatal environment	Positive antenatal environment	✓		
	Children are screened for developmental and medical conditions Children and young people are physically and mentally well	Developmental screening	✓	✓	
		Physical health	✓	✓	✓
		Mental health	✓	✓	✓
	Young people engage in positive health behaviours	Healthy behaviours			✓
Children and young people feel connected and respected in culture and community	Connection to community and support		✓	✓	
Safe and supported	Children develop secure attachment patterns with their primary caregiver(s)	Secure attachment	✓		
	Children and young people are supported by safe and healthy relationships Children and young people are physically and emotionally safe	Supportive relationships	✓	✓	✓
		Safe in the home	✓	✓	✓
		Safe in the community	✓	✓	✓
	Young people engage in safe behaviours	Contact with the youth justice system			✓
	Children and young people's material needs are met	Material basics	✓	✓	✓

Data collection and reporting

Data for the Indicators of Wellbeing have been collected from a wide variety of sources, including publicly available resources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and NAPLAN data, and in some instances administrative data from government departments.

The Commissioner thanks the Director Generals and staff of the agencies who assisted in the development of this resource by providing data and feedback.

Wherever possible, data have been disaggregated by gender, Aboriginal status and WA region (based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure) to provide a greater depth of analysis.

There are a number of areas where data is not available or of sufficient quality. One of the goals of the Indicators of Wellbeing resource is to highlight gaps in available data and therefore encourage further data collection and reporting by agencies, non-government organisations or researchers.

Data availability for each indicator has been assessed and is reported in the Overview and areas of concern section. Where an indicator has *very good* data availability, this means it is generally available on a regular basis (e.g. annually or biennially), provides some disaggregation by various characteristics and is of consistent quality to enable some form of trend analysis.

Data updates and changes to the model

The Indicators of Wellbeing is intended to be a flexible and responsive tool for the Commissioner, practitioners, policy-makers and the community.

The data are updated on a regular basis. This process is principally governed by the availability of the source data.

While it is important to gather consistent data across years for effective trend analysis, it is also critical that the measures reported are relevant and valuable for policy development. Therefore, where additional data items or measures are identified that provide further information on an indicator, they are assessed, and where appropriate, included.

Further considerations

When reviewing and using the data in this resource please consider the following:

- The Indicators of Wellbeing does not include all of the customary measures that may represent a population-based perspective on wellbeing, such as immunisation rates or mortality rates. This was decided as the focus is to support the development and enhancement of policy and practice. While these other measures are important, they are adequately tracked and managed through other processes and policies.
- Data published are current when compiled and released. As outlined above, data is updated on a regular basis, however there is often a lag between the time data is publicly released by the data custodians (e.g. Australian Bureau of Statistics) and when it is compiled by the Commissioner's office.

- Data have been delineated by age groups of 0 to 5 years, 6 to 11 years and 12 to 17 years. These age groupings were developed to consider a number of factors, in particular, current knowledge about child development, the structure of the school years and the Commissioners' remit for children and young people under 18 years of age. However, some data sets do not collect or report information in these age groupings. In these instances, the most appropriate data has been used and may include data for young people aged 18 years and older.
- Details of the data sources are contained within the content for each indicator. This includes any qualifications regarding data quality, limitations or any issues related to the data.
- Where recent information is not available, older data is sometimes used. In these cases, it has been decided that the data is useful to report on the wellbeing of WA's children and young people. If newer data becomes available, the measure will be updated.
- While all care has been taken to check the data in this resource, if errors are found they will be corrected and republished.

Development of the Indicators of Wellbeing

The Indicators of Wellbeing was developed by the Commissioner in consultation with CoLab through Telethon Kids Institute to support the Commissioner's role to promote and monitor the wellbeing of WA's children and young people.

To develop the model, CoLab/Telethon Kids Institute and the Commissioner's office identified short-term outcomes that have been shown to improve the wellbeing of WA's children and young people. The focus on short-term outcomes increases the relevance of the Indicators of Wellbeing for application in policy and practice by identifying critical intervention points across the life course of children and young people.

The indicators and measures were selected based on their capability to track progress towards the short-term outcomes and their suitability to support the development and progress of policy and practice.

A key input to the selection of indicators were the views of children and young people about what wellbeing means to them and what it means to have a good life. These views were gathered through the Commissioner's consultations and the 2019 [Speaking Out Survey](#). Therefore, the Indicators of Wellbeing includes measures that capture the lived experiences of children and young people which, in many cases, are not currently collected or not collected regularly.

The online resource replaces previous printed editions of [The State of Western Australia's Children and Young People](#). There are a number of changes from previous publications, including incorporating measures where data is not available or not available yet, and thereby emphasising the critical data gaps that exist.