



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

FOOTPRINTS IN TIME 2015



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Regional Victoria

Introduction

Welcome to the 2015 *Footprints in Time* community fact sheets update, sharing the latest findings from the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children for your community. Interviews for Wave 7 of the study were completed in 2014 with the help of 1,253 families like yours. Our seventh round of interviews included 92 families in regional Victoria. Most of these families lived in the Shepparton area, but a handful of participants lived in Echuca, Learmonth and Traralgon. This fact sheet looks at the *Footprints in Time* families living in regional Victoria and compares them with families in other sites of the study.

We thank all the children and their families who continue to participate in the *Footprints in Time* study. Allowing us to be part of your life helps us learn more about what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children need to have the best start in life and grow up strong.



School

All children in our study were of school age in 2014. The younger group of children (born in 2006–2008) were mostly in Year 1 or Year 2 at school, and most of the older children (born in 2003–2005) were in Year 4 or Year 5.

Most children in the regional Victoria locations of our study attended a government school (83%). In addition, a little less than two out of 10 children (16%) went to a Catholic school, and the remaining few (1%) went to an independent or private school. Children in regional Victoria were slightly less likely to go to a public school and more likely to go to a Catholic school than children in other locations of our study.



Did you know?

Children are pretty **happy about going to school**:

Six out of 10 (60%) of children in regional Victoria said they are happy to go to school most of the time, and an additional two out of 10 (22%) said they are happy to go to school sometimes.

However, sometimes children **wish they didn't have to go to school**:

Six out of 10 children in regional Victoria (62%) said they sometimes wish they didn't have to go to school.

Children thought that **their teacher is nice** to them:

Nine out of 10 children (89%) in regional Victoria said their teacher is nice to them.

Children also said that other **children at school are nice** to them:

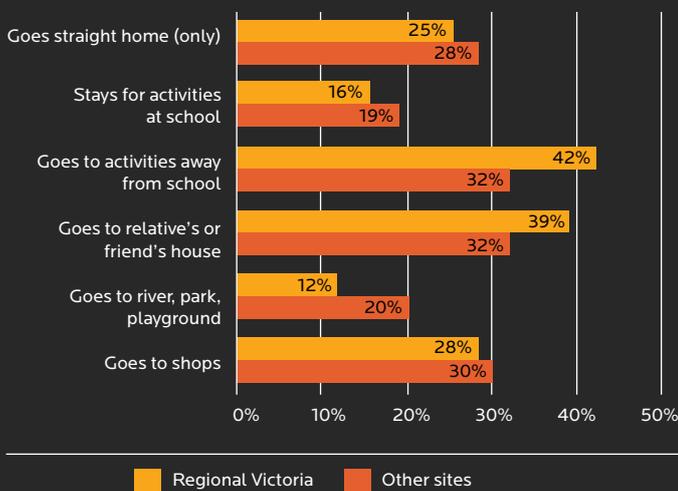
Nearly seven out of 10 children in regional Victoria (68%) said other children at school are nice to them most of the time, and two out of 10 children (19%) said other children are nice to them sometimes.

But overall, most children said that they feel **safe and secure at school**:

Nine out of 10 children in regional Victoria (90%) said they feel safe and secure at school most times, and a little less than one in 10 (7%) said they feel safe and secure sometimes. Only two children (2%) said they do not feel safe at school.

After-school activities

Kids lead busy lives both in school and out. We asked parents what the children usually did on weekdays after school. Some of the children went straight home every weekday and didn't go to any other activities – 25% of children in regional Victoria did this. However, most children in our study usually did some activities after school at least once a week. Many children in regional Victoria had activities away from school (42% of children did this at least once a week), and slightly less than four out of 10 children (38%) went to a friend's or relative's house. Children in other locations of the study were less likely to go to activities away from school or go to friend's or relative's house, but more likely to go to rivers, playgrounds or parks, compared to children in regional Victoria.



Be active for life!

Being physically active is good for children's health, and creates opportunities for making new friends and developing physical and social skills. The Department of Health recommends for all children aged 5-12 years:

- > At least one hour of moderate to intensive physical activity every day.
- > On at least three days per week, activities that strengthen muscle and bone (such as jumping, running, playing tug-o-war, or climbing).
- > Minimise the time the children spend sitting every day:
 - Limit use of electronic entertainment (e.g. TV, seated electronic games and computer use) to no more than two hours a day – lower levels are even better!
 - Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

Source: Department of Health 2014, *Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children (5-12 years)*, available from www.health.gov.au.



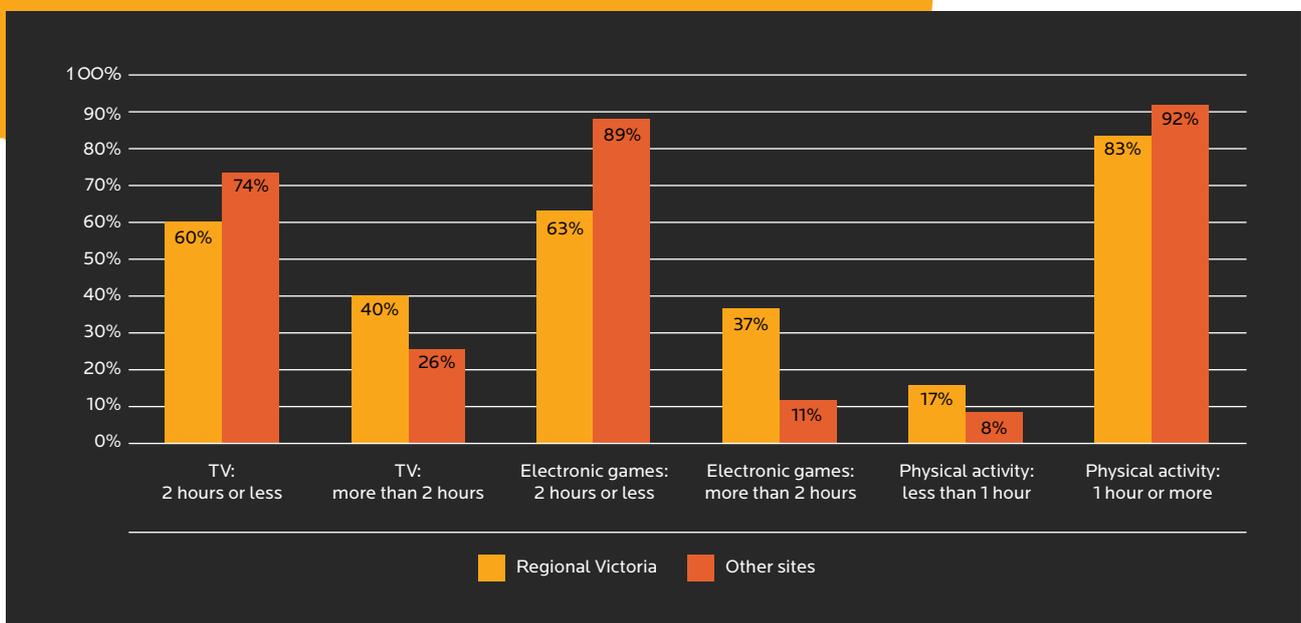
We asked parents in our study how many hours a day the children watched TV, played electronic games, and did physical activities.

Six out of 10 children in regional Victoria (60%) watched TV for 2 hours or less on a weekday, and four out of 10 watched TV for more than 2 hours. Compared to other sites, children in regional Victoria were more likely to watch TV for longer. We also found that older children in our study watched TV for about the same amount of time as the younger children.

Most children in our study played electronic games for less than 2 hours on a typical weekday, however children in regional Victoria were a lot more likely to play electronic games for a long time than children in other locations of our study. Almost four out of 10 of children (37%) in regional Victoria played electronic games for more than 2 hours on a weekday, compared to one in 10 (11%) elsewhere. We also found that older children spent more time playing electronic games than younger children.

Most study children in regional Victoria (83%) spent at least one hour on a weekday in active play, sport or exercise, and less than two out of 10 children (17%) were active for less than one hour a day. This is a great result, but the children in regional Victoria were still less active than children in other sites of the study, where nine out of 10 children (92%) were active for one hour or more on a weekday.

TV, electronic games and physical activity on a weekday





Did you know?

We asked the older children in our study about their parents and family. Here is what they told us.

Children told us that **parents expect them to follow family rules:**

Nine out of 10 children in regional Victoria (91%) said their Mum or Dad expect them to follow family rules. This was very similar in other locations of the study.

Children also said that **Mum or Dad show or tell them how to do better:**

Eight out of 10 children in regional Victoria (80%) said this, similar to other study sites (83%).

Children don't often get away with things when they do something naughty:

Seven out of 10 children in regional Victoria (69%) said that Mum or Dad won't let them get away with things. In other study sites, most children (88%) said this too.

When the children are doing well, **parents will praise them:**

Most children in regional Victoria (89%) said that Mum or Dad will tell them when they have done something well. Children in other sites agree with this too (86%).

What children do for fun with their Dad

We asked the older children in the study what they like to do for fun with Dad. Here are some of the things the children told us.

- > Dad and I tell each other bad jokes and mess around
- > We go shopping, read books together, play the PS3 (awesome games)
- > Go to work with Dad
- > Dad and I clean the car together and he takes me to concerts
- > Going for drives
- > Dad takes me to another town for a visit
- > We have yarns together
- > Drive in the car. Dad takes us to the shops and the park. He loves to go Places and Surprises
- > Go fishing sometimes, go walking, take the dog for a walk, sometimes go to the shops too
- > Kick the football, go play OZ kick, play soccer and go to my training
- > Laugh together
- > Go to netball

Footprints in Time data in policy development

More than 200 researchers from government departments and universities all over Australia have used *Footprints in Time* data for interesting and important research projects. This research adds to our knowledge about what helps Indigenous children grow up strong. The findings are then used in reports which the government responds to in various ways to introduce new policies and programs. Some of the topics that governments have looked at using the *Footprints in Time* data include health, human rights, paid parental leave and income management. For example, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2014 Report* includes research you have contributed to. *Footprints in Time* becomes more valuable for both researchers and policy makers each year you answer our questions.

Did you know that *Footprints in Time* is only one of four longitudinal studies run by the Department of Social Services? The Department of Social Services has recently established the National Centre for Longitudinal Data to make sure we have the best evidence possible from longitudinal data.

Keeping in touch

If you are a *Footprints in Time* family, we need to keep in touch with you. If you have moved or are going to move, please let us know on the free-call number 1800 106 235 or contact your local RAO.