



Australian Government

Department of Social Services

## FOOTPRINTS IN TIME 2015



## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

### Dubbo and regional New South Wales

#### 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 125 families from regional New South Wales. Most of these families lived in Dubbo, but others were living between Armidale and Walgett to the north and Wagga Wagga to the south. This fact sheet looks at the *Footprints in Time* families living in regional NSW 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 study children in regional NSW attended a government school (95%). In addition, a very small number of children (4%) went to a Catholic school, and the remaining few (1%) went to an independent or private school. Children in regional NSW were more likely to go to a public school and less likely to go to a Catholic school or an independent or private school than children in other locations of our study.



## Did you know?

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

*Six out of 10 children in regional NSW (59%) said they are happy to go to school most of the time, and two out of 10 children (19%) said they are happy to go to school sometimes.*

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

*Almost six out of 10 children in regional NSW (57%) said they sometimes wish they didn't have to go to school.*

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

*Nearly eight out of 10 children in regional NSW (79%) said their teacher is nice to them.*

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

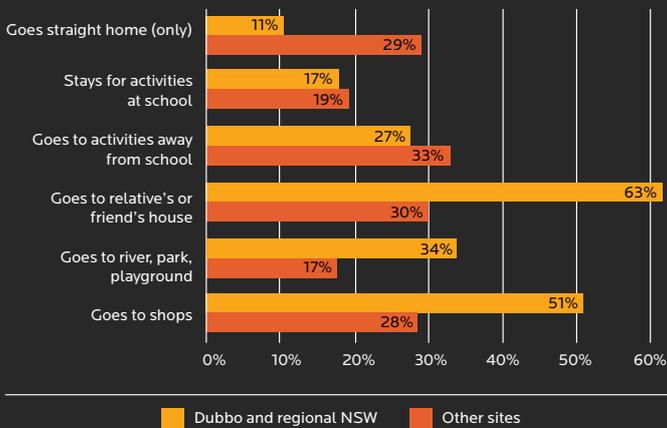
*Around six out of 10 children in regional NSW (62%) said other children at school are nice to them most of the time, and almost three out of 10 (27%) said other children are nice to them sometimes.*

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

*Nearly eight out of 10 children in regional NSW (78%) said they feel safe and secure at school most times, and more than one in 10 (15%) said they feel safe and secure sometimes. Only eight children (6%) 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 from school every weekday and didn't go to any other activities – 11% of children in regional NSW did this. However, most children in our study usually did some activities after school at least once a week. Most children in regional NSW went to a friend's or relative's house after school (63% of children did this at least once a week), and about half the children (51%) went to the shops. Children in other locations of the study were more likely to go straight home from school each weekday afternoon, compared to children in the regional NSW area.



## 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](http://www.health.gov.au).



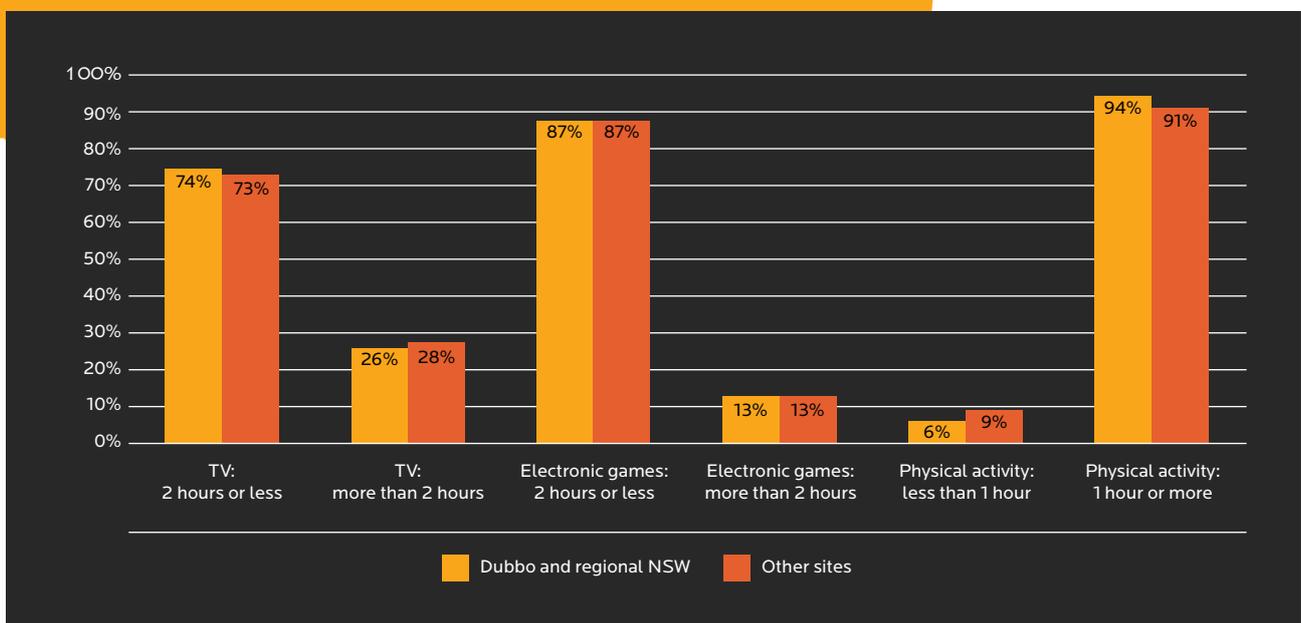
We asked parents in our study how many hours a day the children watched TV, played electronic games, and did physical activities.

More than seven out of 10 children in regional NSW (74%) watched TV for 2 hours or less on weekdays and less than three out of 10 (26%) watched TV for more than 2 hours. These figures are similar to other locations of our study. 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, and in regional NSW slightly more than one in 10 children (13%) played electronic games for more than 2 hours on a weekday. This is the same as in other study sites (13%). We also found that older children spent more time playing electronic games than younger children.

Most study children in regional NSW (94%) spent at least one hour on a weekday in active play, sport or exercise, and less than one in 10 children (6%) were active for less than one hour a day. This is a great result, and similar to what we found for other sites in the study, where 91% of children were active for at least one hour each day.

### 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:**

*Around eight out of 10 children in regional NSW (82%) said their Mum or Dad expect them to follow family rules. This was less than in other locations, where nine out of 10 children (91%) said their parents expect them to follow the rules.*

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

*Almost nine out of 10 children in regional NSW (87%) said this, similar to other study sites (82%).*

**Mums and Dads like to know when something is wrong:**

*Nearly nine out of 10 children in regional NSW (87%) said that Mum or Dad want to be told when the children are worried or have a problem. This is very similar to other study locations.*

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

*Nearly nine out of 10 children in regional NSW (87%) said that Mum or Dad will tell them when they have done something well. This is the same in other study sites.*

## What children do for fun with their parents

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

- > I go for walks with Dad every afternoon after school and we cook together
- > Mum and I wash the car and go for runs and we play cards
- > I go fishing, yabbing and swimming with Mum and Dad
- > Mum and I cook together and we have talks
- > Dad and I clean the car together and he takes me to concerts
- > Mum tickles me, and I help her get food off the shelves at the shopping centre
- > Playing games outside with Dad, playing cards and going shopping with him
- > I go to the pool with Mum and we go girly shopping and play dress-ups
- > Dad plays sport with me, helps me with my homework and plays games with me
- > Mum and I watch movies, dance around and go out and have lunch
- > I go for walks with Dad and we play hide and seek with the kids at the park
- > Watching TV and sitting in bed with Mum, and going shopping
- > Dad and I joke around and laugh together

## 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.