



Growing Up in Australia: **The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children**

Study findings

Growing Up in Australia is Australia's first nationally representative longitudinal study of child development. The purpose of the study is to inform research into the development and life-course trajectories of Australian children, young people and young adults. Here is a selection of key findings from the study, when participants were aged up to 17 years. Read the full report here: growingupinaustralia.gov.au/research-findings/annual-statistical-reports-2018 or discover other findings like these on our website.



SCAN ME!

Here to help: How young people contribute to their community

- Approximately 40% of 12-13 year olds and 50% of 16-17 year olds reported volunteering in the last 12 months.
- Participation in volunteering was higher among:
 - females
 - older adolescents (16-17 year olds compared to 12-13 year olds)
 - adolescents whose parents also volunteered (particularly their mother)
 - adolescents whose parents had higher levels of education
 - adolescents from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Volunteering for activities related to arts, heritage, culture or music was higher among Indigenous adolescents and those from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- Volunteering for sport and recreation organisations was more common among adolescents living in inner regional and outer regional or remote areas.



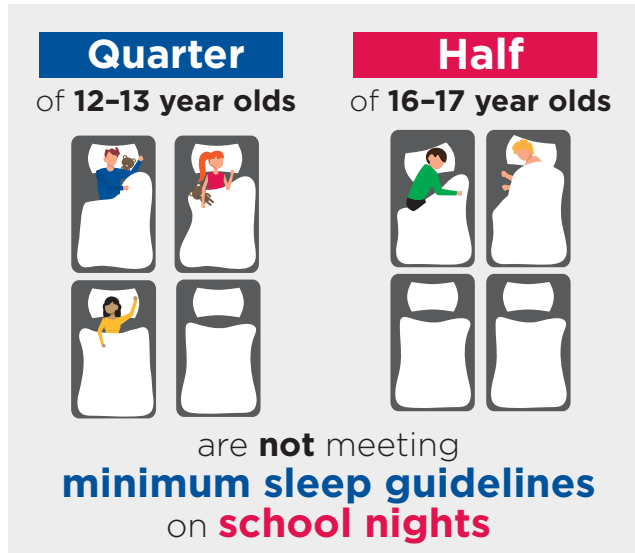
Hands up

Adolescents most commonly volunteered for sport or recreation organisations, school and children's groups, and community or welfare organisations.



Are children and adolescents getting enough sleep?

- On school days, nearly all 6–7 year olds were getting the required minimum hours of sleep, but only half (50%) of 16–17 year olds were.
- Children aged 12–17 years were less likely to get the required minimum hours of sleep on school nights compared to non-school nights.
- 12–13 year olds who participated in sport and/or who had regular bedtimes were more likely to meet the minimum sleep guidelines for their age.



The downside of staying awake

The Australian Department of Health recommends between nine and 11 hours of sleep for children aged 5–13 years and between eight and 10 hours of sleep for adolescents aged 14–17 years.

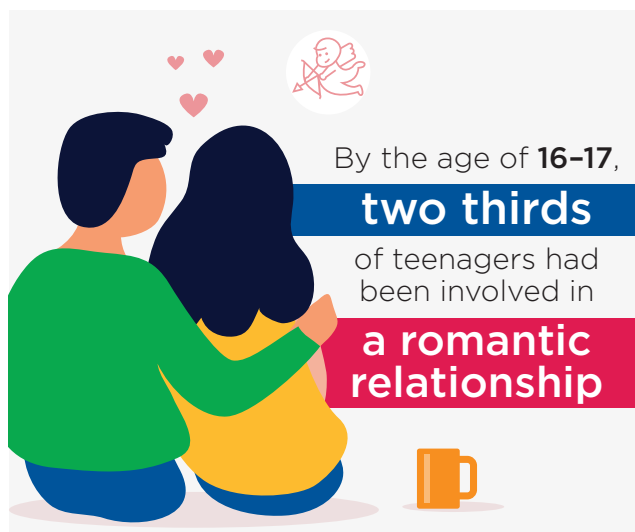


Examination of the LSAC data showed children and adolescents not meeting the minimum sleep guidelines were more likely to:

- show symptoms of poor mental health (e.g. anxiety, depression, unhappiness)
- be late for or absent from school
- spend more time (more than five hours per week) on homework
- have internet access in the bedroom or spend more time on the internet.

Teenagers and sex

- By the age of 16–17, around two thirds of teenagers had been involved in a romantic relationship and around one third had had sexual intercourse.
- Around one in five 16–17 year olds who were sexually active said that they had done nothing to prevent sexually transmitted infections the last time they had sex.
- Around one in 12 16–17 year olds who were sexually active said that they had done nothing to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex.
- Condoms were the most common method to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections among sexually active teens.
- Boys were much more likely than girls to have intentionally viewed pornography.



Unwanted sexual behaviours

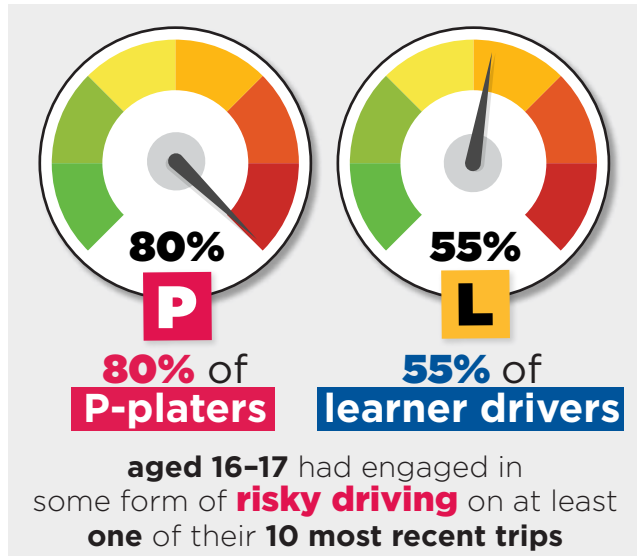
Almost half of girls and one third of boys aged 16–17 years said that they had experienced some form of unwanted sexual behaviour towards them in the past 12 months.



One in eight boys and around one in 12 girls reported that they had engaged in unwanted sexual behaviour towards someone else during the past 12 months (e.g. 'I told, showed or sent sexual pictures, stories or jokes that made someone feel uncomfortable' and/or 'I kept asking someone out on a date or asking them to hook up although they said "No"').

Risky driving among Australian teens

- Close to 80% of P-platers and 55% of learner drivers aged 16-17 had engaged in some form of risky driving on at least one of their 10 most recent trips.
- Speeding by up to 10 km/h over the limit and driving while tired were the two most common forms of risky driving.
- One in five teens who failed to wear a seatbelt when driving (or a helmet when riding a motorcycle) did so every trip.
- Learner drivers, P-platers and unlicensed drivers did not differ in their rates of seatbelt/helmet use.



Drinking and driving



- Almost 4% of teens had driven while 'under the influence' of alcohol or drugs during the past year.
- About one in 10 teens had been the passenger of a driver who was 'under the influence' during the past year.
- Teenagers who drank alcohol or used marijuana were more likely to engage in all types of risky driving.

Gambling activity among teenagers and their parents

- Despite it being illegal, one in six 16-17 year olds reported having gambled in the past year.
- More boys than girls reported having gambled on private betting, sports betting and poker.
- Although 65% of parents reported having gambled at least once in the past year, the majority (around 90%) were non-problem gamblers.
- At age 16-17, around one in four boys (24%) and one in seven girls (15%) reported having played gambling-like games in the past 12 months.



Odds on



16-17 year olds who engaged in risky behaviours such as smoking and drinking, or had friends who smoked or drank, were more likely to report having gambled. For example, almost one in four boys who reported drinking alcohol in the past 12 months had also gambled during that time, compared to around one in eight boys who had not drunk alcohol.

Shop or save: How teens manage their money

- Girls were more likely than boys to find it easy to spend money, though gender made no difference when it came to saving money or avoiding debt.
- Teens who were saving or investing or who had savings accounts at age 12–13 were more likely to be savers at age 16–17.
- Teens aged 16–17 were more likely to be spenders if they had paid for their own mobile or internet data when they were 14–15 years old, than if they had not.

Teenagers who were **saving or investing** at age 12–13 were **more likely** to be **savers** at **age 16–17**



Pocket money

How teens managed money at age 16–17 was related to whether they received extra pocket money at ages 12–13 or 14–15 and also if they stopped receiving pocket money or had it taken away.



Shaping futures: School subject choice and enrolment in STEM

- Boys were more likely to choose Advanced Maths, Physics, Technology, Engineering, Business and Finance subjects than girls.
- Girls were more likely than boys to select Biology, Creative Arts, Health, Psychology, Legal Studies, and Society and Culture.
- Enrolment in Intermediate or Advanced Maths increased with higher Year 9 NAPLAN scores, and was significantly higher among students who expected to complete a degree.



Boys were more likely to choose **Advanced Maths, Engineering, Physics, Technology, Business and Finance** subjects **than girls**

Gender choices

Gender has been shown to strongly influence school subject choice, which may then influence career opportunities and earning potential. Even after taking aspirations, ability and socio-demographic characteristics into consideration, boys were still more likely to study STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects.



Adolescents' resilience

- At age 16-17, boys reported higher levels of resilience than girls.
- On average, resilience levels were higher among 16-17 year olds who had:
 - consistently close relationships with one or both parents
 - at least one close friend
 - friends they could trust and communicate with about problems
 - a strong sense of belonging at school.
- Average resilience levels were lower for 16-17 year olds who:
 - were more inclined to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety or depression
 - experienced conflict between the ages of 12 and 15 with their parents
 - lacked family support between the ages of 10 and 13
 - had been the victim of bullying.



What is resilience?

There are many different aspects to resilience, including:



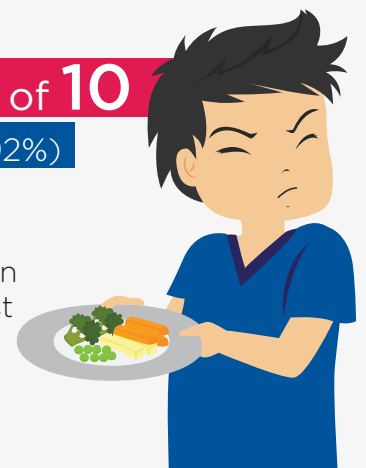
- the ability to cope and adapt with changes and challenges
- the capacity to deal and persist with problems without being overwhelmed
- self-belief in one's ability to deal with obstacles.

The physical health of Australian children

- One in seven children met the Australian guidelines for physical activity of at least 60 minutes per day (15% on weekdays and 16% on weekends).
- Around 7% of children had hypertension or pre-hypertension.
- According to their body mass index (BMI), 7% of children were underweight, 66% were of a normal weight, 21% were overweight (but not obese) and 6% were obese.
- Around 24% of children had some hearing loss in one or both ears.
- Around one in eight children (12%) had vision problems in one or both eyes.
- On average, children who did not have breakfast regularly or who ate less than the recommended two serves of fruit a day had lower levels of wellbeing, physical functioning and psychosocial functioning.
- Children who drank less than five cups of water a day had lower average physical functioning scores than those drinking five or more cups a day.

Nine out of 10 children (92%)

were **not** meeting the recommendation of eating at least **five serves** of vegetables per day



The most important meal of the day

Four in five children (82%) ate breakfast at least five times a week, with 72% consuming breakfast daily. Children who did not have breakfast regularly had poorer wellbeing, physical functioning and psychosocial functioning on average.




Tweens and teens: What do they worry about?

- Tweens and teens worried most about issues affecting their families.
- Two in three 10–11 year olds were worried about a family member becoming seriously ill or injured.
- Over half of 10–11 year olds were worried about fighting in their family.
- Just over two in five 10–11 and 12–13 year olds were worried about terrorism or war.
- Around a third of 10–11 and 12–13 year olds were worried about the environment.
- Family-related issues were particularly concerning for children from less advantaged and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.
- Children from CALD backgrounds were more likely to be concerned about global issues such as the environment, terrorism and war, as well as alcohol and drug use.
- Girls worry more when it comes to their appearance and fitting in with friends.



School worries

The transition to secondary school was an important area of concern for younger adolescents. Anxiety about changing schools was high among 10–11 year olds, while a similar proportion of 12–13 year olds were worried about not doing well at school.



Need support?




We have put together a comprehensive list of readily available help, advice and support for you to access. Scan this QR code or visit growingupinaustralia.gov.au/support-services to access this resource on the *Growing Up in Australia* website.



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Institute of Family Studies acknowledges the traditional Country throughout Australia on which we gather, live, work and stand. We acknowledge all Traditional Custodians, their Elders past, present and future, and we pay our respects to their continuing connection to their culture, community, land, sea and rivers.

More information

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