The AEDC provides important information about the development of Australian children as they start their first year of full-time school.

The AEDC is a reliable measure of child development across five domains:

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Language and cognitive skills
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Communication skills and general knowledge.

AEDC data can help professionals working with children and families to think critically on how best to support children’s development.

The AEDC highlights at the community level what is working well and what needs to be improved or developed to support children and their families.

By increasing awareness and utilisation of AEDC data, early years professionals can:

- Reflect and plan for children’s development across the five domains of the AEDC.
- Partner with families to support their child’s learning and development.
- Identify and respond to community strengths and developmental vulnerabilities.
- Engage with community partners on strategies to support positive early childhood outcomes.
- Collaborate to support children’s successful transition to school.

Tasmanian AEDC results are slightly better when compared with Australia overall. The richness of the AEDC dataset provides communities with the opportunity to undertake a detailed analysis of local data which can inform decisions making relating to resourcing and program delivery. The AEDC project in the Department of Education (DoE) called for Expressions of Interest for Action/Reflection projects that work towards reducing vulnerability in communities.

The Action/Reflection projects aim to increase the use of AEDC data to reduce developmental vulnerability in the early years.

- Through raising awareness of AEDC among early years stakeholders across the community and all government levels by developing AEDC ‘local champions’ and resources.
- Increase utilisation of the AEDC results in supporting children’s learning and development.
- Support identified communities with high levels of developmental vulnerability, assisting them to use to the AEDC results to support activities aimed at improving early childhood outcomes.

The following project details the grant applications received by the DoE in 2017. If you have any queries about the AEDC or the following grant applications, please contact the Tasmanian AEDC co-ordinator for more information.

Christine Woolley
Coordinator, AEDC
Phone: 03 6165 5708
chr@education.tas.gov.au
www.aedc.gov.au
**Burnie Child and Family Centre (CFC)**

**Title:** ‘Game Day’ program evaluation

**Aims:**
- To ensure an objective evaluation of the ‘Game day’ program, an external researcher would be appointed to evaluate and document the program, including a professional video outlining all aspects of the program.
- To involve all stakeholders: parents, children, TasTAFE and the Centre staff.
- The ‘aims of the (Game Day) program are to build parent capacity by improving knowledge on child development and best parenting practice, create a social network of support and to provide high quality playgroup for children’.
- Once the evaluation is complete, there are plans for the information to be shared across all CFCs and beyond.

**Timeline:** Completed by the end of 2017

**Evaluation:** Evaluation project

**Funding:** $12,000

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**City of Hobart (CoH)**

**Title:** The Role of Local Government in Responding to the Findings of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC): a Southern Tasmanian Inquiry

**Aims:**
- To examine the role of local government in responding to early childhood vulnerabilities as indicated in the AEDC with a focus on engagement and participation; strategy and action plan development; planning for children in the built environment; and effective partnerships and networks.
- To discover, design and embed effective responses to the AEDC data within CoH’s Community Programs.
- To promote and encourage the effective use of AEDC data across Tasmanian local government areas as supported by the research.
- To build and strengthen networks to support responses to early childhood vulnerabilities across Tasmania.
- To promote the research findings to Local Government Association Tasmania and other key stakeholders across Tasmania.

**Timeline:**
- Engage researcher – August 2017
- Focus groups – September 2017
- Local action plan meeting – October 2017
- State wide forum – February 2018

**Evaluation:** Evaluation project

**Funding:** $9,850
**East Devonport Child and Family Centre (CFC)**

**Title:** Tactical Tots for Blokes & Kids

**Aims:**
- To engage fathers and toddlers together through an obstacle course, extension games and physical activities.
- This program also seeks to support the child’s attachment to their fathers/ significant male.
- To ensure the program is sustainable beyond the grant period, the CFC will purchase larger equipment which would also help extend other community programs such as “Muscle Up Boot Camp” a Devonport City Council/ CFC program for older children.

**Timeline:** Tactical Tots for Blokes & Kids finishes on 22 September 2017. With the extra equipment the program and others will be ongoing.

**Evaluation:** Children participating in Tactical Tots for Blokes & Kids would be assessed using the Ages and Stages Gross Motor Development indicators on the first and eighth week to monitor improvement.

**Funding:** $13,353

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**Franklin Primary School**

**Title:** Parental engagement

**Aims:**
- To engage families not seen regularly (but not limited to).
- To work alongside parents and help them to understand and identify the ways their children are learning and how they can extend their children’s learning.
- To provide ongoing information around why the play their children are engaging in is so important to their development, why gross motor skills are so crucial to help children read and write, how important it is to talk to our children and extend their vocabularies – as some examples.
- To provide opportunity for families to reflect on their child’s play via video footage with support from staff and create learning stories for their children.
- To help break down perceived barriers between educators and the families, utilise a current parent as a resource – a team member. Building on the parent’s new knowledge gained from Parents as Active Companions in Children’s Learning (PaAC) training.

**Timeline:** Term 3 and 4, 2017

**Evaluation:** Two sessions after the program finishes to reflect and write up our findings – first as a progress report after the initial six weeks and then a summation at the completion of the second block of sessions.

**Funding:** $9,000
**Glenorchy City Council** (with Berridale and Benajfield Day Care Centres)

**Title:** Long Day care – parental engagement and additional needs

**Aims:**
- To engage parents/carers
- To work alongside parents and help them to understand the following topics:
  - Oral health and nutrition
  - Development and Speech
  - Children’s milestones
  - Protective behaviours for children
- To provide professional development opportunities for the Early Childhood Educators to enable them to appropriately respond and support families who are experiencing multiple and complex issues.

**Timeline:** Term 3 and 4, 2017

**Evaluation:** Glenorchy City Council, in partnership with each participating service, will include a planned evaluation process for each of the activities, to determine if they are making a positive difference for families, children and the Early Childhood Educators.

**Funding:** $6,620

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**Goodwood Primary School**

**Title:** Strengthening the power of Family Outreach

**Aims:**
- To connect with families via home visits (Dual Capacity Framework of Dr Karen Mapp, Harvard. “One home visit can change the way we think about another person, change our beliefs, change or values”. (Protocols developed by PTHWP.org will be used)
- To move family partnerships from relational to learning-based.
- To provide targeted ‘fun’ vocabulary building speech therapy sessions through rhymes and songs targeting co-operative play and building social and emotional competencies.

**Timeline:** Term 3 and 4, 2017 and ongoing.

**Evaluation:** Data collection points and analysis of results are embedded in the program

**Funding:** $29,600
Holy Rosary Catholic School, Claremont

Title: Partnership with all community – maximising student engagement and achievement

Aims:
• To support families as they endeavour to fulfil their vital role as the primary educators of their children
• To assist parents to connect with the school in a manner that supports future collaboration.
• To provide parents with support, information, modelling of play/learning that enhances early literacy and numeracy skill, fine and gross-motor skills, and social skill development.

Timeline: Term 4, 2017 – development of program
Term 1 and 2, 2018 – implement program

Evaluation: Data collection points and analysis of results are embedded in the program

Funding: $25,000

Lady Gowrie Tasmania Integrated Child & Family Centre, South Hobart

Title: Physical health and wellbeing: innovative approaches in an inner-city community
(Overarching research question – How can early childhood enable children to flourish in the area of physical health and wellbeing?)

Aims:
• To build educator capacity in relation to using AEDC data sets to inform professional decisions.
• To enact pedagogical practices that afford children opportunities to engage in challenging physical play.
• To measure and communicate about the effects of intentional, sustained and contextual practices to parents and families, the local community and other early years services.

Timeline: Action/Research, August 2017 – December 2017

Evaluation: Action/Research report, January 2018

Funding: $29,700
Oral Health Services Tasmania and The Child Health and Parenting Service

Title: Healthy mouths = Healthier mums and kids

Aims:
- To improve the oral and general health outcomes for approximately 130 first time parent/s aged 15-19 years and their children up to 2 years of age, who have been identified for support by the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) cu@home program commencing June, 2017.
- To identify and minimize oral health risk behaviours and habits of the new parent/s, while supporting the parent and child with evidence based resources, anticipatory messaging and support for timely dental care.
- Encourage and support the young mum to access timely dental care pre-birth and every twelve months for the first two years of the child’s life.
- Encourage regular dental visits for the child from 12 months of age.

Timeline: Commence August 2017, ongoing

Evaluation: Report end of June 2021
(Provide de-identified dental diseases data for the child at 2 year, 3 year and 4 years)

Funding: $12,246

Ringarooma Primary School with Ringarooma Playgroup

Title: Connecting our School and the Community

Aims:
- To provide a means for children and families to become familiar with the school environment and build relationships with staff, develop a sense of belonging and social inclusion.
- To assist families understanding of the importance of early development and learning prior to starting school
- To enable early intervention for a variety of needs but particularly Language, Speech and Cognitive delays.
- To provide quality fun and play based activities where parents and carers are encouraged by staff to get involved to help deepen their parenting skills and understand the importance of play in their child’s development.
- To encourage discussions between parents about parenting issues and share ideas about where to seek help in the community.
- To provide an inviting space for visiting professionals and community support members to interact with parents and families.

Timeline: Term 3 and 4 2017, then ongoing

Evaluation: Report December 2017

Funding: $16,000
St Brigid’s Catholic School, Wynyard

Title: Responding to local needs in physical health and wellbeing

Aims:
- To increase students’ physical activity, to assist in developing academic outcomes.
- To develop healthy habits and encourage lifelong fitness commitments.
- To provide for the needs of the local community.

Timeline: Term 3 and 4 2017, then ongoing

Evaluation: School data and general observations should reflect improvement in physical health and wellbeing and associated learning outcomes

Funding: $20,000

tagari lia Child and Family Centre, Bridgewater

Title: Engagement of Dads

Aims:
- To provide the impetus to bring dads together to collectively participate in a range of activities and to share their parenting experiences and wisdom. Dads will co-construct the program with the view to determining what activities they would like to undertake with their children. The types of activities they may choose are food, sport type activities, excursions, painting stories, and sharing parenting wisdom.
- Rationale: Fathers and male carers play an integral part in supporting the overall health and wellbeing of very young children as they are a major influence on a child’s emotional and behavioural health. Responsible and involved fathering starts from the perinatal period and continues throughout life. Fathers often help to build positive trusting relationships within their family, however historically services have not always provided fathers with the support to be the best parents they can be.

Timeline: Term 3 and 4 2017

Evaluation: Evaluation will utilise a Results Based Accountability approach:
1. What did we do?
2. How did we do it?
3. How do dads see that this program impacts on outcomes for children, and subsequently on the AEDC profile for our community?

Learning from this evaluation will inform the development of future dads programs for our Child and Family Centre.

Funding: $2,400