

Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study of Children in Out-of-Home Care (POCLS)

Dashboard 7 – Children’s feelings, supports and relationships in the POCLS

What is included in Dashboard 7?

This dashboard provides a summary of the child's feelings, supports and relationships from the following study topics:

- Carers help, praise and listen to the child, do things just for fun and spend time talking to the child
- Child-caregiver household relationships
- Perceptions of how the child is going
- Child view on whether they are happy living here
- Child view on several aspects of their life including:
 - Family/where they live now
 - Friends
 - Life as a whole
 - School work
 - School you go to now
 - the way they look
 - things they own

The responses of relevant study questions from children and young people in the study and their caregivers in the first four waves of interviews are included in the dashboard with granular data breakdowns by demographic characteristics (i.e., age, Aboriginality and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) status), out-of-home care (OOHC) placement type and districts.

Why is Dashboard 7 needed?

Findings are used to answer a key study objective of describing the children and young people’s experiences while growing up in OOHC and to measure if services and support to children and young people in OOHC meet the following NSW Standards for Statutory OOHC:

- NSW OOHC Standard 8 - Emotional and Social Development: Children and young people are cared for in placements that meet their specific emotional, social and behavioural needs.

Summary of Dashboard 7 findings:

Study Topic 1 – Caregiver reports that the child is going very well

This study topic presents caregiver reports of the percentage of children and young people who are going 'very well' from Wave 1 to Wave 4.

- Overall, the majority of children and young people were reported by their caregivers as going 'very well' with 71.4% in Wave 1, 76.8% in Wave 2, 69.5% in Wave 3 and 59.7% in Wave 4.
- The vast majority of children aged 9-35 months at interview were considered to be going 'very well' at Wave 1 (88.9%) and Wave 2 (92.5%). From Wave 3 onwards there were no children in the 9-35 months age group. The percentage of children aged 3-6 years who were going 'very well' ranged from 63.6% to 83.2%, for children aged 7-11 years, the range was from 54.2% to 68.9% and for children and young people aged 12-17 years from 37.4% to 54.6%.
- Around three-quarters of Aboriginal children were described by the caregivers as going 'very well' at Waves 1 and 2 (73.1% and 78.3% respectively). At Waves 3 and 4 the percentage going 'very well' had decreased to 67.7% and 56.3% respectively.
- The percentage of CALD children who were going 'very well' ranged from 69.0% to 84.1%.
- Caregivers generally reported that a higher proportion of children in foster care were going well in Waves 1, 2 and 3 (71.7%, 78.9% and 72.4% respectively) than in Wave 4 (55.6%). A similar pattern was seen for children in relative/kinship care for Waves 1 to 3 (73.2%, 78.8% and 65.1% respectively) although the percentage was slightly higher for Wave 4 (60.3%). The proportion of children on guardianship orders who were going 'very well' was relatively high in Wave 3 (78.8%) and Wave 4 (70.9%) compared with those in foster care or relative/kinship care.
- The percentage of children going 'very well' from:
 - Hunter and Central Coast ranged from 56.9% to 81.0%
 - Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW ranged from 56.0% to 75.8%
 - Mid North Coast, New England and Northern NSW ranged from 61.3% to 72.4%
 - Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW ranged from 56.3% to 70.7%
 - South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney and Sydney ranged from 69.9% to 85.2%
 - South Western Sydney ranged from 68.8% to 81.7%
 - Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains ranged from 55.7% to 76.6%.

Study Topic 2 – Caregiver reports that they know the child very well

This study topic presents the proportion of children and young people with caregivers who knew them 'very well' from Wave 1 to Wave 4. Note that the data for Wave 3 was not consistent with the other waves with the question only asked of new carers. Due to small numbers, Wave 3 results are not presented.

- Overall, the percentage of children and young people with caregivers who knew them 'very well' varied from 84.4% in Wave 1 to 91.5% in Wave 2 and 90.8% at Wave 4.
- For the younger children aged 9-35 months at interview, 96.1% had caregivers who

reported that they knew them 'very well'. Due to small numbers the figures are not presented for Wave 2. For children aged 3-6 years, the majority had caregivers who reported that they knew the children 'very well' ranging from 82.4% to 96.4%. For children aged 7-11 years, the percentage ranged from 72.3% to 93.0% and for children and young people aged 12-17 years, from 61.3% to 79.4%.

- The majority of Aboriginal children had caregivers who reported that they knew the child 'very well' ranging from 86.1% to 94.0%.
- Caregivers of CALD children reported that they knew the child 'very well' with the percentage ranging between 87.2% and 95.0%.
- The majority of children in foster care, relative/kinship care and on guardianship orders had caregivers who reported they knew the child 'very well' (82.3% to 92.6%, 87.8% to 91.8%, and 94.9% respectively). Only data for Wave 4 is presented for guardianship orders due to small numbers in Wave 3.
- Results for this study topic are only shown by District group at Wave 1. By Wave 2, most caregivers knew the child 'very well' which meant that only a small number of children were not known very well by their caregivers within a District group and the numbers are not presented to maintain confidentiality. At Wave 1, around 80% or higher of children from the Hunter and Central Coast had caregivers who knew the child 'very well' (79.1%), Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW (83.1%), Mid North Coast, New England and Northern NSW (81.1%), Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW (86.8%), South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney and Sydney (92.4%), South Western Sydney (86.6%) and Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains (87.0%).

Study Topic 3 – Caregiver reports of the relationship with the child being very close

This study topic presents the proportion of children and young people with caregivers who were 'very close' to them from Wave 1 to Wave 4.

- Overall, more than three-quarters of children and young people had caregivers who reported that they were 'very close' to them ranging from 78.4% in Wave 1 to 83.8% in Wave 2, 82.5% in Wave 3 and 83.6% in Wave 4.
- For the vast majority of children aged 9-35 months, their caregivers reported that they were 'very close' to them in Wave 1 (95.2%) and Wave 2 (97.8%). Around 70% of children aged 3-6 years at Wave 1 and more than 90% from Wave 2 onwards were 'very close' with their caregiver (91.8% at Wave 2, 93.9% at Wave 3 and 92.6% at Wave 4). For children aged 7-11 years at interview, the percentage of caregivers who reported they were 'very close' to them increased from 62.7% at Wave 1 to 86.7% at Wave 4. The percentage of children and young people aged 12-17 years at interview who were 'very close' to their caregiver was 48.0% at Wave 1 and increased to 67.1% at Wave 4.
- Around 80% of Aboriginal children at each wave had caregivers who were 'very close' to them (79.9% at Wave 1, 84.2% at Wave 2, 83.5% at Wave 3 and 83.7% at Wave 4).
- The percentage of CALD children and young people who were 'very close' to their caregiver ranged from 81.9% to 90.0%.
- For children in foster care, the percentage with caregivers who reported they were 'very close' was lower in Wave 1 (76.4%) than in subsequent waves (84.0% in Wave 2, 84.3% in Wave 3 and 83.6% in Wave 4). For children in relative/kinship care, the percentage was over 80% across Waves 1 to Wave 4 (from 81.7% to 85.4%). Relatively large proportions of children on guardianship orders had caregivers who were 'very close' to them (87.6% at Wave 3 and 91.7% at Wave 4) compared with children in foster care or relative/kinship care.

- The percentage of children with caregivers who reported knowing them ‘very well; from the:
 - Hunter and Central Coast ranged from 72.8% to 82.7%
 - Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW ranged from 80.0% to 87.5%
 - Mid North Coast, New England and Northern NSW ranged from 74.6% to 84.5%
 - Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW ranged from 75.3% to 83.3%
 - South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney and Sydney ranged from 84.3% to 93.0%
 - South Western Sydney ranged from 83.7% to 89.1%
 - Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains ranged from 80.1% to 83.3%.

Study Topic 4 – Child reports of feelings about aspects of life

This study topic presents children and young people’s feelings about aspects of life in Wave 4 such as family, friends, life as a whole, school work, schools, how they look and things owned. Note these questions were introduced at Wave 4 and were asked of children and young people aged 7-17 years with an additional question for 12-17 year olds.

- Overall, a high percentage of children and young people indicated they were ‘very happy/happy’ with their friends (97.2%), family/where you live now (95.5%), things they owned (94.1%), school they go to now (93.3%), life as a whole (93.1%), the way they look (90.9%) and school work (88.3%).
- Generally, over 90% of children aged 7-11 years were ‘very happy/happy’ with the various aspects of their life particularly with friends (97.4%), family/where you live now (96.1%), life as a whole (94.6%), school you go to now (94.3%), the way they look (92.1%) and their school work which had a slightly lower proportion (89.4%).
- A high percentage of children and young people aged 12-17 years indicated they were ‘very happy/happy’ with their friends (96.8%), family/where you live now (94.1%), things they owned (94.1%), school they go to now (90.7%), life as a whole (89.6%), the way they look (87.9%) and school work (85.6%).
- Aboriginal children reported being generally ‘very happy/happy’ with various aspects of their life – 96.1% with their family/where they live now, 95.1% with life as a whole, 93.3% with the school they go to now, 90.9% with the way they look, 89.8% with their school work and 90% or over with their friends and the things they own (the exact figures are not presented due to small numbers).
- CALD children also tended to be ‘very happy/happy’ with the various aspects of their lives. Over 90% were ‘very happy/happy’ with their friends (94.5%), school work (94.5%), life as a whole (94.0%), the school they go to now (92.2%) and 90% or over with the family/where they live now and the way they look (the exact figures are not presented due to small numbers).
- Generally, a high percentage of children in foster care were ‘very happy/happy’ with family/where they live now (94.6%), school they go to now (95.4%), life as a whole (93.6%), the way they look (89.8%), school work (88.5%), friends (90% or over) and things owned (90% or over). This was also the case for children in relative/kinship care with similar percentages ‘very happy/happy’ with family/where they live now (96.5%), school they go to now (92.3%), life as a whole (94.3%), the way they look (92.7%), school work (86.6%), friends (96.5%) and things owned (90% or over). Most children on

guardianship orders were also 'very happy/happy' with family/where they live now (90% or over) school they go to now (93.6%), life as a whole (95.3%), the way they look (90.8%), school work (94.7%), friends (90% or over) and things owned (90% or over).

- Generally, around 90% or over of the children and young people from Hunter and Central Coast; Mid North Coast, New England and Northern NSW; Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW; South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney and Sydney; South Western Sydney; and Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains were 'very happy/happy' with the various aspects of their lives. The proportions of children and young people from Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW who were 'very happy/happy' were slightly lower, particularly for school work (79.3%) and the way they look (81.8%).

Study Topic 5 – Child reports on aspects of their caregiver's parenting

This study topic presents reports by children and young people aged 7-17 years on various aspects of their caregiver's parenting. The children and young people were asked: how often do the people looking after you: do things with you that are just for fun; help you when you have a problem; listen to you; praise you for doing well; and spend time just talking with you. Children and young people aged 12-17 years were asked additional questions: know about what you do with your free time; and know about where you are when you go out at night.

- Overall, the majority of children and young people had caregivers who 'always/often' participated in each of the parenting activities with them from Wave 1 to Wave 4:
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' ranged from 69.2% to 76.0%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' ranged from 83.4% to 87.4%
 - 'Listen to you' ranged from 78.1% to 83.7%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' ranged from 79.9% to 84.1%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' ranged from 59.6% to 68.5%
 - 'Know about what you do with your free time' ranged from 75.3% to 86.8%
 - 'Know about where you are when you go out at night' ranged from 79.8% to 90.6%
- For children aged 7-11 years at interview, the percentages who indicated that their caregivers 'always/often':
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' ranged from 68.4% to 77.8%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' ranged from 80.0% to 88.0%
 - 'Listen to you' ranged from 73.8% to 84.0%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' ranged from 78.0% to 83.6%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' ranged from 56.6% to 67.9%
- For children and young people aged 12-17 years, the percentages who indicated that their caregivers 'always/often':
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' ranged from 65.3% to 79.0%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' ranged from 86.0% to 91.4%
 - 'Listen to you' ranged from 83.0% to 89.3%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' ranged from 80.4% to 86.7%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' ranged from 66.7% to 79.6%

- 'Know about what you do with your free time' ranged from 75.3% to 86.8%
- 'Know about where you are when you go out at night' ranged from 79.8% to 90.6%
- For Aboriginal children, the percentages who indicated that their caregivers 'always/often':
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' ranged from 68.7% to 75.2%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' ranged from 81.3% to 87.2%
 - 'Listen to you' ranged from 75.1% to 88.8%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' ranged from 78.8% to 83.5%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' ranged from 55.2% to 69.7%
- For CALD children, the percentages who indicated that their caregivers 'always/often':
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' ranged from 67.0% to 78.0%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' ranged from 81.0% to 86.7%
 - 'Listen to you' ranged from 78.7% to 88.1%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' ranged from 79.4% to 82.5%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' ranged from 46.7% to 71.9%
- For children in foster care, the percentages who indicated that their caregivers 'always/often':
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' ranged from 71.1% to 80.5%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' ranged from 84.9% to 91.4%
 - 'Listen to you' ranged from 76.2% to 87.9%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' ranged from 81.1% to 86.3%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' ranged from 62.7% to 70.6%
- For children in relative/kinship care, the percentages who indicated that their caregivers 'always/often':
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' ranged from 66.4% to 72.9%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' ranged from 76.6% to 86.5%
 - 'Listen to you' ranged from 74.8% to 83.4%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' ranged from 76.7% to 85.4%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' ranged from 57.7% to 75.3%
- For children on guardianship orders at Wave 3 and Wave 4 respectively, the percentages who indicated that their caregivers 'always/often':
 - 'Do things with you that are just for fun' was 64.3% and 70.1%
 - 'Help you when you have a problem' was 80.4% and 87.9%
 - 'Listen to you' was 83.0% and 79.0%
 - 'Praise you for doing well' was 73.2% and 88.6%
 - 'Spend time just talking with you' was 70.0% and 66.1%.

Study Topic 6 – Caregiver reports of a very close relationship between the child and other children in the household

This study topic presents caregiver reports of a ‘very close’ relationship between the child and other children in the household for children and young people from Wave 1 to Wave 4.

- Overall, the percentage of children and young people who had a ‘very close’ relationship with other children in the household was 72.4% at Wave 1, 78.0% at Wave 2, 75.6% at Wave 3 and 68.1% at Wave 4.
- According to caregivers, the percentage of children aged 9-35 months at interview who had a ‘very close relationship with other children in the household was 90.0% at Wave 1 and 91.4% at Wave 2. For children aged 3-6 years, the percentage for Wave 1 to Wave 4 ranged from 69.0% to 87.6%, for children aged 7-11 years from 55.2% to 69.2% and for the oldest children and young people who were 12-17 years at interview, the percentage ranged between 35.4% and 55.7%.
- For Aboriginal children and young people, the percentage who had a ‘very close’ relationship with other children in the household ranged between 67.8% and 82.0%.
- The percentage of CALD children and young people who had ‘very close’ relationship with other children in the household ranged between 78.7% and 86.2%.
- High proportions of children in foster care had a ‘very close’ relationship with other children in the household (71.4% to 78.9%), as did children in relative/kinship care (57.6% to 81.7%) and children on guardianship orders (86.8% in Wave 3 and 71.7% in Wave 4).
- Examining by district group, the percentage of children from Hunter and Central Coast districts ranged from 63.8% to 74.9%; Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW districts ranged from 66.2% to 78.4%; Mid North Coast, New England and Northern NSW districts ranged from 64.4% to 78.6%; Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW districts ranged from 64.6% to 74.8%; South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney and Sydney ranged from 77.9% to 91.0%; South Western Sydney ranged from 70.9% to 85.7%; and Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains ranged from 71.3% to 75.3%.

Study Topic 7 – Child reports of being very happy/happy living with current caregivers

This study topic presents the proportion of children and young people who were ‘very happy/happy’ living with their current caregivers in Wave 4. Note this question was introduced in Wave 4 and asked of children and young people aged 7-17 years.

- Overall, the vast majority of children and young people reported that they were ‘very happy/happy’ living with their current caregivers at Wave 4 (96.2%).
- For children aged 7-11 years at interview 96.9% reported they were ‘very happy/happy’ and for children and young people aged 12-17 years this was the case for 94.6%.
- Of the Aboriginal children and young people, 90% or over reported they were ‘very happy/happy’ living with their current caregivers as did a similar proportion of CALD children and young people. The exact percentages are not presented due to small numbers.
- The majority of children and young people in foster care (96.9%), relative/kinship care (97.0%) and on guardianship orders (90% or over) reported they were ‘very happy/happy’ living with their current caregivers.
- Around 90% of children and young people from Hunter and Central Coast (96.3%);

Illawarra Shoalhaven and Southern NSW districts (87.7%); Mid North Coast, New England and Northern NSW districts (90% or over); Murrumbidgee, Far West and Western NSW districts (90% or over); South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney and Sydney (90% or over); South Western Sydney (90% or over); and Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains (90% or over) were 'very happy/happy' living with their current caregivers. For some district groups the exact percentages are not presented due to small numbers.

Explanatory notes:

1. Data for Wave 1 may vary slightly from the Wave 1 Baseline Statistical Report and other POCLS reports due to a subsequent data refresh in the reporting system.
2. Aboriginal is used throughout this dashboard and is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
3. Data for the non-Aboriginal cohort also include children with Aboriginal status of 'not stated'.
4. CALD data should be interpreted with caution due to relatively small numbers and data quality issues
5. Districts reflect where the case plan of children and young people in the study was held at the time of interview.
6. To maintain confidentiality and prevent identification of study participants, numbers less than 10 for Aboriginal children and young people and less than 5 for non-Aboriginal children and young people are not published. The small numbers may be replaced with 'not shown', categories may be combined or approximate percentages provided. Percentages are also not shown if there are less than 20 children in the cohort.