

3. Participants from starting school to age 14

3.1 Key findings

Box 3.1: Comparison of 2019-20 entrants with prior year entrants on key characteristics

- As at 30 June 2020, the combined baseline constitutes four years of experience (participants entering the Scheme between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2020).
- The report focusses on baseline results for 2019-20 entrants, but also includes a brief comparison with results for prior year entrants. Differences between participants by key characteristics (such as disability type and level of function) can occur over time, for example due to phasing in the transition period.
- Compared to prior year entrants, participants from starting school to age 14 who entered the Scheme in 2019-20 tend to be:
 - Younger.
 - More likely to have developmental delay or global developmental delay, slightly more likely to have autism or a sensory disability, and less likely to have an intellectual disability or Down syndrome.
 - More likely to have medium level of function and less likely to have low level of function.
 - More likely to require a low level of NDIA support through the participant pathway and less likely to require a medium, high or very high level of support.²²
 - Less likely to live in NSW and more likely to live in WA or QLD.
 - Much more likely to have not received services from State/Territory or Commonwealth programs prior to entering the Scheme, more likely to have entered the Scheme for early intervention (32.3% compared to 25.4%) and less likely to have entered due to disability.²³
 - More likely to have baseline annualised plan budget between \$10,000 and \$30,000, and more likely to fully self-manage their baseline plan (36.9% compared to 24.0%) or to use a plan manager (35.4% compared to 18.8%) rather than agency manage.
 - Similar with respect to remoteness, Indigenous status, CALD status, and gender.

²² The level of NDIA support a participant requires as they move along the participant pathway, having regard to the complexity of their situation.

²³ Participants accessing the Scheme under Section 24 of the NDIS Act 2013 enter the Scheme due to disability, whereas participants accessing the Scheme under Section 25 of the Act enter the Scheme for early intervention.

Box 3.2: Baseline indicators for participants entering in 2019-20 – overall

- **Living and housing arrangements**

- At baseline, 93.2% of participants in the starting school to age 14 group who entered the Scheme in 2019-20 lived with their parents, slightly higher than for entrants from earlier years (89.6%).
- 91.2% of 2019-20 entrants live in a private home either owned or rented from a private landlord, slightly higher than for prior year entrants (89.4%). 6.9% live in a private home rented from a public authority, slightly lower than for prior year entrants (8.3%).

- **Independence**

- Baseline levels of independence are generally low for this cohort. For example, 37.5% think their child is becoming more independent (compared to 40.0% of prior year entrants). However, 75.4% of children have a genuine say in at least some decisions about themselves, higher than for entrants in earlier years (65.1%).

- **School**

- The proportion of participants attending school in a mainstream class has been increasing over time. For participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20, 78.5% of children attended school in a mainstream class, compared to 60.5% of those in earlier years.
- Involvement of families and carers in their child's education was reasonably high, with 75.4% of parents/carers of 2019-20 being satisfied that their child's school listens to them in relation to their child's education (compared to 73.2% of prior year entrants).
- Most respondents thought their child was happy at school (69.4% of 2019-20 entrants compared to 67.3% of prior year entrants).
- Of 2019-20 entrants who had the opportunity to sit a NAPLAN test, 60.3% had sat one and 26.8% were exempt. For prior year entrants, the percentage sitting was lower, at 50.2%, and the percentage exempt was higher, at 38.9%. The nationwide exemption rate in 2019 was 1.8% (disability being one of the two reasons for exemption). The percentage missing the tests for reasons other than exemption appears higher than the national average (12.9% compared to 5%-10%).
- 12.7% of participants had ever been suspended from school (compared to 13.3% of prior year entrants), and this rate varies considerably by school year and gender. Although not directly comparable, suspensions do seem more prevalent amongst NDIS participants than amongst NSW public school students. For NDIS participants in K-2, "ever suspended" rates were 8.8% for males, 2.9% for females, and 7.1% overall, compared to yearly suspension rates of 2.4% for males, 0.4% for females, and 1.4% overall for K-2 students attending NSW public schools.

Box 3.2: Baseline indicators for participants entering in 2019-20 – overall (continued)

- **Relationships**

- Almost three quarters (72.8%) of parents/carers did not think there was enough time to meet the needs of all family members. However the majority of respondents reported that their child fits into everyday family life (87.5%, similar to 86.8% for prior year entrants) and gets along with their siblings (70.1% compared to 73.0%).
- More than half (53.6%) of parents/carers never go out without their child (similar to 51.6% for prior year entrants). Of those who do go out without their child, 94.5% use informal care (the child stays with siblings, extended family, family friends or by themselves) – higher than the 89.4% for prior year entrants.

- **Participation**

- Overall, participation in mainstream activities tends to be low for this cohort. Only 11.2% of parents/carers of 2019-20 entrants use a mainstream school holiday program, and only about half of children (50.2%) spend time after school and on weekends with friends or in mainstream group activities, however this is higher than for prior year entrants (36.6%). The majority (72.2%) of parents/carers thought that their child was welcomed or actively included in these activities (compared to 74.9% of prior year entrants).
- For 2019-20 entrants, 66.8% of parents/carers said they would like their child to have more opportunity to be involved in activities with other children, lower than for entrants in earlier years (81.4%), and 87.9% of these perceived their child's disability as a barrier to being more involved (84.4% for prior years).

Box 3.3: Baseline indicators for participants entering in 2019-20 – participant characteristics

- Across most domains, the participant's level of function, primary disability type, age, and where they live are the characteristics most predictive of outcomes in the multiple regression models, which control for other factors.
- Most participant outcomes vary significantly by primary disability type. Participants with a sensory disability generally experience better outcomes than those with other disabilities. In particular, participants with hearing impairment tended to have better baseline outcomes, and participants with autism or global developmental delay tended to have worse baseline outcomes. Participants with a physical disability or visual impairment were the most likely to be attending school in a mainstream class, and those with Down syndrome, intellectual disability, or global developmental delay were the least likely. Parents/carers of participants with a sensory disability were the least likely to be worried about the effect of their child's disability on other children, whereas parents/carers of participants with autism were the most likely to be worried.
- Almost all baseline outcomes vary significantly with participant level of function and annualised plan budget. Participants with higher level of function / lower annualised plan budget tend to have better baseline outcomes, particularly those related to daily living and relationship domains, than those with lower level of function / higher annualised plan budget. In particular, participants with higher level of function are more likely to attend school in a mainstream class. Participants with higher level of function / lower plan budget were also more likely to have sat a NAPLAN test and manage the demands of their world.
- Comparing baseline outcomes by age, older children exhibited more independence and had a greater say in decisions, as would be expected due to normal age-related development. The percentage attending school in a mainstream class declined with age.
- Female participants are more likely than males to have a genuine say in decisions about themselves, to make friends with people outside the family, and to attend school in a mainstream class.
- Compared to non-Indigenous participants, Indigenous participants were less likely to be becoming more independent, to be developing functional, learning and coping skills, and to attend school in a mainstream class. Indigenous participants are also less likely to live with their parents, and more likely to live in public housing.
- In general, CALD participants tend to have more positive baseline outcomes than non-CALD participants in the area of family life, but less positive outcomes in the areas of community participation and friendships. CALD participants are more likely to manage their emotions, get along with their siblings and attend school in a mainstream class.
- In general, baseline outcomes were more positive for participants living in small regional towns and remote/very remote areas compared to those for participants living in major cities and larger regional centres. For example, participants living in small rural towns and remote/very remote areas were significantly more likely to be developing functional, learning and coping skills appropriate to their ability and circumstances, manage their emotions well and get along with their siblings.
- Participants with self-managed plans were more likely to show evidence of growing independence, and more likely to attend school in a mainstream class.

Box 3.3: Baseline indicators for participants entering in 2019-20 – participant characteristics (continued)

- COVID-19 was associated with a number of changes to participant outcomes, with most changes being positive.
- For example, positive changes were observed for children getting along with their siblings, fitting in with the everyday life of the family, becoming more independent, and parents/carer thinking there is enough time to meet the needs of all family members.
- However, the percentage of children who spend time away from their parents/carers other than at school has dropped to a lower level during the pandemic.

3.2 Outcomes framework questionnaire domains

Starting with the milestone of school commencement, this life stage follows children through to the early teenage years. Typically these years are characterised by increasing independence and development of relationships inside and outside the family. Hence the outcomes framework seeks to measure the extent to which participants:

- Grow in independence (domain DL, daily living)
- Are welcomed and educated in their local school (domain LL, lifelong learning)
- Form friendships with peers and have positive relationships with family (domain REL, relationships)
- Participate in local social and recreational activities (domain S/CP, social, community and civic participation).

The LF questions for participants in the starting school to age 14 cohort allow a deeper investigation into the experiences of participants in educational and school settings, with eight extra questions devoted to these areas. There are also three extra questions about developing independence (on managing the demands of the world and becoming more independent), one on relationships (about the effect on siblings), and four on social participation (about vacation care and after school activities).

Participants answer the outcomes questionnaire applicable to their age/schooling status at the time of interview. Hence the starting school to age 14 baseline cohort comprises children who have started school and are aged 14 or younger when they enter the Scheme.

3.3 Comparison of 2019-20 entrants with prior year entrants on key characteristics

As discussed in Section 2.3, differences between participants by key characteristics (such as disability type and level of function) can occur over time, for example due to phasing in the transition period. A brief summary of how 2019-20 entrants compare to participants entering in the earlier three year period with respect to key characteristics is provided in this section.

Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 summarise distributions by key characteristics for 2019-20 and prior year entrants.

Figure 3.1 Distributions by key characteristics – 2019-20 entrants compared with prior year entrants

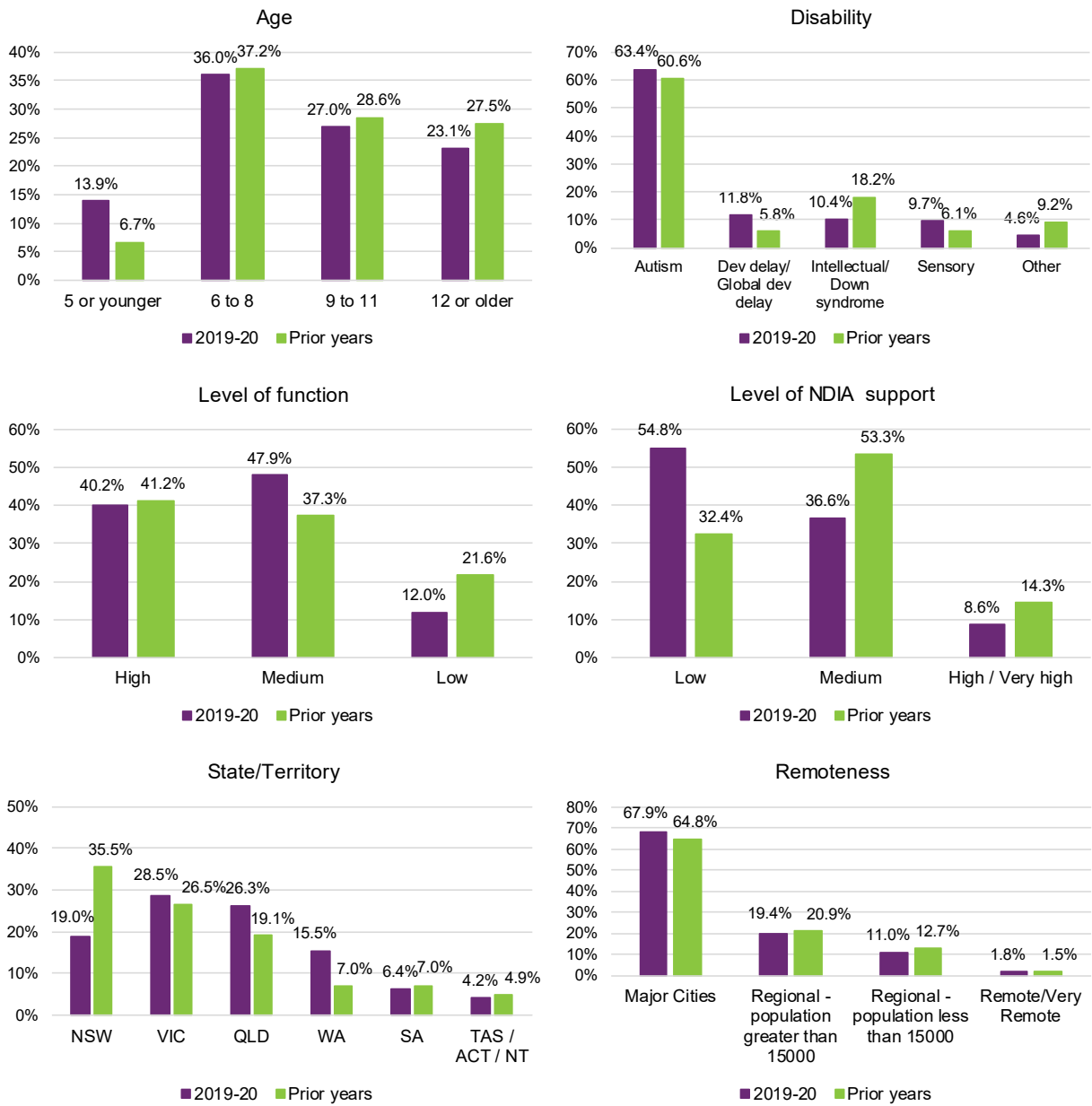
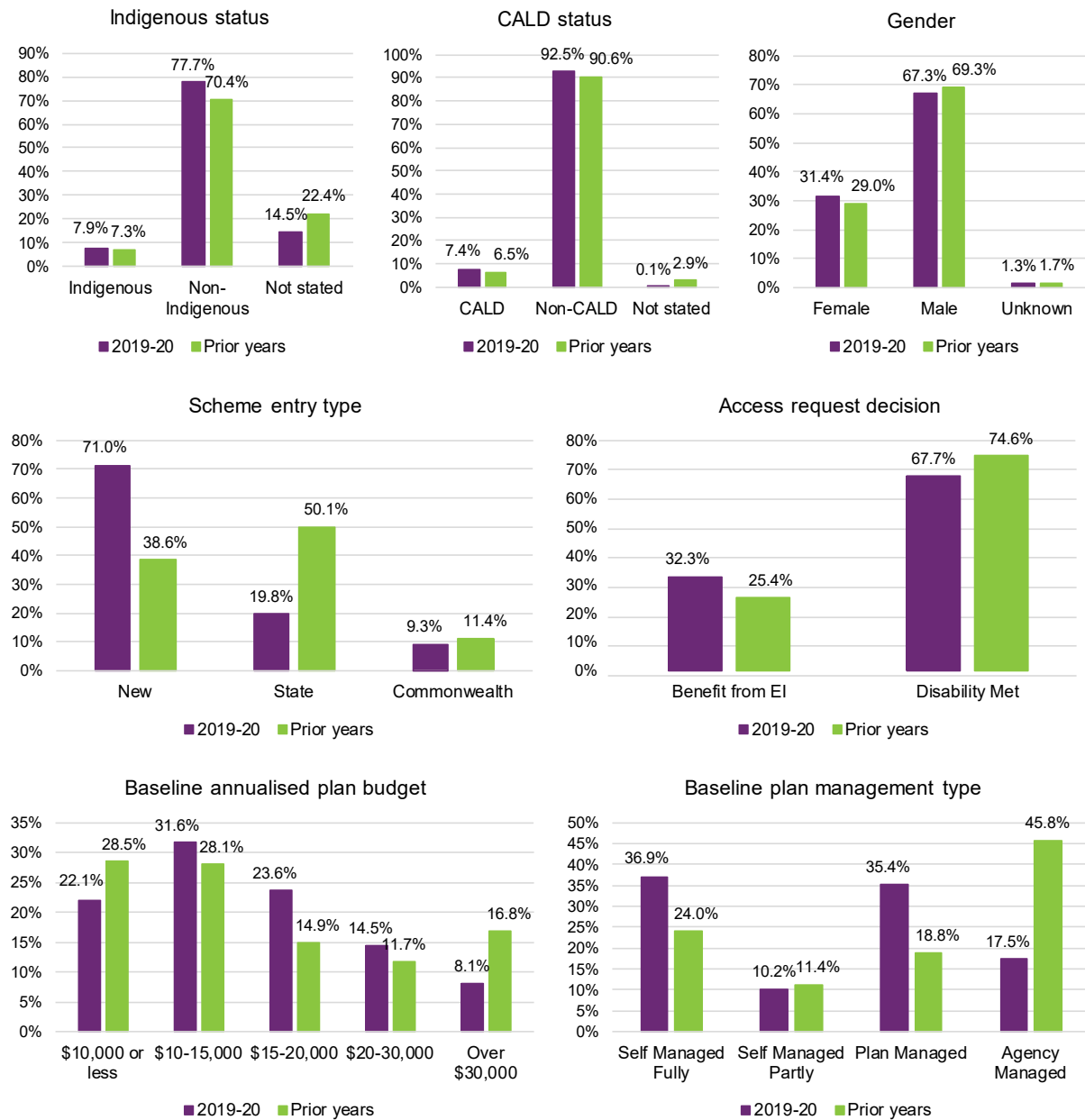


Figure 3.2 Distributions by key characteristics – 2019-20 entrants compared with prior year entrants



The graphs in Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 show that compared to prior year entrants, participants who entered the Scheme in 2019-20 tend to be:

- Younger (13.9% aged 5 or younger and 23.1% aged 12 or older, compared to 6.7% and 27.5% for prior year entrants).
- More likely to have developmental delay or global developmental delay (11.8% compared to 5.8% for prior year entrants, probably reflecting the younger age distribution), slightly more likely to have autism (63.4% compared to 60.6%) or a sensory disability (hearing or visual impairment or another sensory/speech disability, 9.7% compared to 6.1%), and less likely to have an intellectual disability or Down syndrome (10.4% compared to 18.2%) or other disabilities (4.6% compared to 9.2%).
- More likely to have medium level of function (47.9% compared to 37.3%) and less likely to have low level of function (12.0% compared to 21.6%). The percentages with

high level of function were similar (40.2% for 2019-20 entrants compared to 41.2% for prior year entrants).

- More likely to require a low level of NDIA support through the participant pathway (54.8% compared to 32.4%) and less likely to require a medium (36.6% compared to 53.3%) or high/very high (8.6% compared to 14.3%) level of support.
- Less likely to live in NSW (19.0% compared to 35.5%) and more likely to live in WA (15.5% compared to 7.0%) or QLD (26.3% compared to 19.1%).
- Much more likely to have not received services from State/Territory or Commonwealth programs prior to entering the Scheme (71.0% compared to 38.6%).
- More likely to have entered the Scheme for early intervention (s24) (32.3% compared to 25.4%) and less likely to have entered due to disability (s25) (67.7% compared to 74.6%).
- More likely to have baseline annualised plan budget between \$10,000 and \$30,000 (69.8% compared to 54.7%) and less likely to have annualised plan budget \$10,000 or less (22.1% versus 28.5%) or over \$30,000 (8.1% versus 16.8%).
- More likely to fully self-manage their baseline plan (36.9% compared to 24.0%) or to use a plan manager (35.4% compared to 18.8%) and less likely to agency manage (17.5% compared to 45.8%).

However, distributions by remoteness, Indigenous status, CALD status and gender were similar between 2019-20 entrants and prior year entrants.²⁴

3.4 Baseline indicators for participants entering in 2019-20 – overall

Participant living and housing arrangements

At baseline, 93.2% of participants in the starting school to age 14 group who entered the Scheme in 2019-20 lived with their parents, 3.0% lived with other family members and 2.1% with non-relatives, such as foster carers.

The percentage living with their parents at baseline is slightly higher for 2019-20 entrants (93.2%) compared to entrants from earlier years (89.6%).

Most participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20 (91.2%) are in a private home either owned or rented from a private landlord. 6.9% of participants live in a private home rented from a public authority. Compared to entrants in earlier years, a slightly higher percentage lives in a private home (91.2% compared to 89.4%) and a slightly lower percentage lives in public housing (6.9% versus 8.3%).

Independence

Baseline levels of independence are generally low for this cohort. For example, for 2019-20 entrants:

- 19.6% of parents/carers say their child manages their emotions well
- 26.2% think their child is developing functional, learning and coping skills appropriate to their ability and circumstances
- 37.5% think their child is becoming more independent.

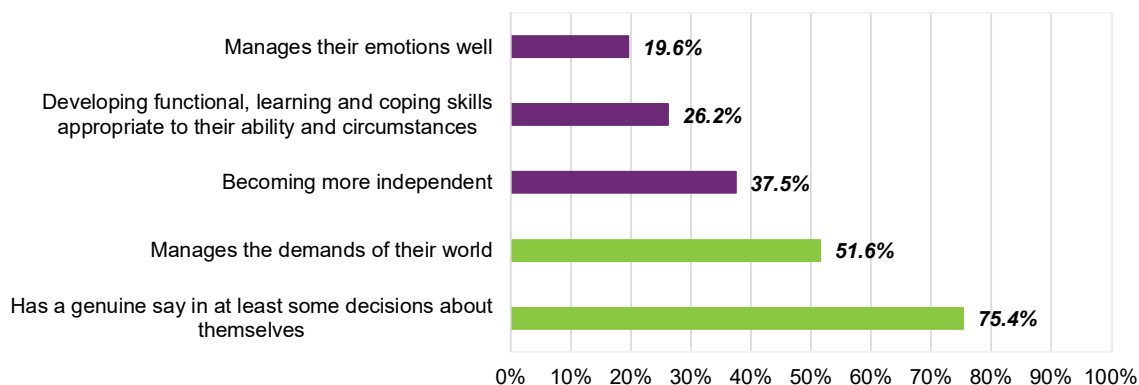
²⁴ Chi-squared tests for differences in the distributions were performed, but due to the large volume of baseline data, they are powered to detect very small differences. For participants from starting school to age 14, there was no significant difference for Indigenous status ($p=0.41$), but all other p -values were less than 0.0001.

These percentages are slightly lower than for entrants in earlier years (possibly reflecting the younger age distribution).

More positively:

- 51.6% of parents/carers think their child manages the demands of his/her world, higher than for entrants in earlier years (42.5%)
- 75.4% of children have a genuine say in at least some decisions about themselves, higher than for entrants in earlier years (65.1%).

Figure 3.3 Independence indicators – 2019-20 entrants

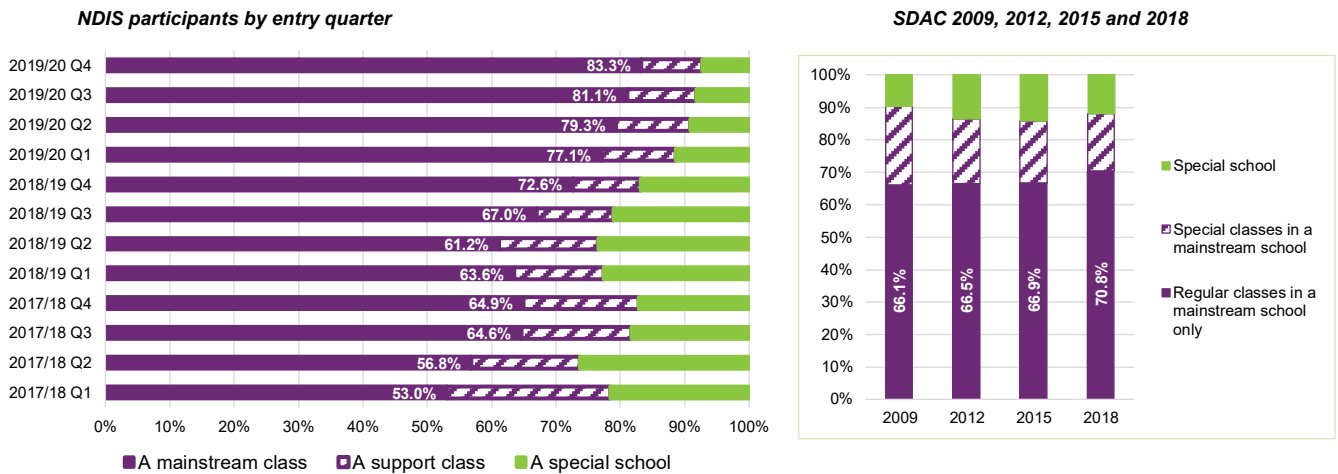


School

For participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20, 78.5% of children responding to the SF who attended school (or were home schooled) did so in a mainstream class (73.0% of those responding to the LF). These percentages were considerably higher than for those entering in earlier years (60.5% and 66.2%, respectively), reflecting a general increasing trend over time. For participants entering the Scheme in the three years to 30 June 2020 who attended either a mainstream class, a support class within a mainstream school, or a special school, Figure 3.4 shows the percentages in these three educational settings by entry quarter. For comparison, Figure 3.4 also shows percentages of students with disability by class/school type obtained from the ABS SDAC, showing a slight increase between 2015 and 2018, from 66.9% to 70.8%.²⁵

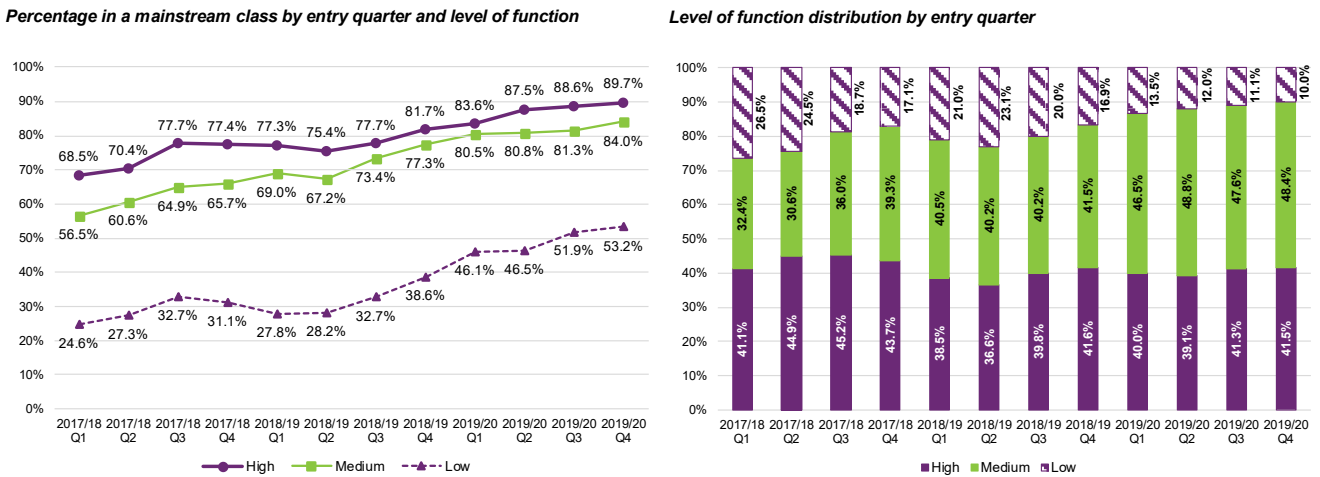
²⁵ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/education-and-skills/engagement-in-education> The chart includes all students with disability (regardless of severity).

Figure 3.4 Type of class/school by entry quarter



The increasing trend towards mainstream class attendance does not appear to be driven by changes in level of function. Although level of function has been changing over time, with an increasing percentage in the medium level of function group and a decreasing percentage in the low level of function group in recent quarters (right hand chart of Figure 3.5), the trend towards mainstream class attendance has been observed for all three level of function groups, as shown in the left plot of Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Percentage in a mainstream class by entry quarter and level of function (left plot), and level of function distribution by entry quarter (right plot) – NDIS participants attending school in either a mainstream class, a support class, or a special school



Involvement of families and carers in their child’s education was reasonably high: based on the LF, 75.4% were satisfied that their child’s school listens to them in relation to their child’s education, 80.4% knew their child’s goals at school, and 72.1% thought their child’s education was matched to those goals.

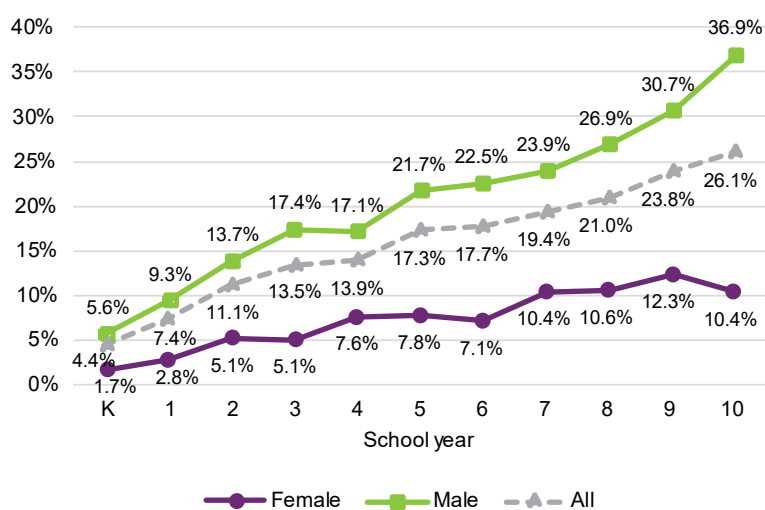
Regarding the child’s experience at school, 69.1% of LF respondents thought that their child was learning at school, 75.3% thought that their child was genuinely included and 69.4% thought that they were happy at school. 61.2% of children had been involved in co-curricular activities at school, most commonly in school plays or concerts.

Of 2019-20 entrants who had the opportunity to sit a NAPLAN test, 60.3% had sat one, 26.8% were exempt, 7.4% said they did not want their child to sit, and 4.7% said that the school didn't want them to. For prior year entrants, the percentage sitting was lower, at 50.2%, and the percentage exempt was higher, at 38.9%.

Nationwide statistics reveal that the NAPLAN exemption rate in 2019 was 1.8%, much lower than the 26.8% for NDIS participants. The higher rate for NDIS participants is not surprising since disability is one of two reasons students can be granted an exemption (the other being language other than English). Nationally in 2019, the percentage absent or withdrawn averages around 6% altogether: 5% for the primary school years 3 and 5, 6% for year 7, and 10% for year 9. For NDIS participants, altogether 12.9% missed the test for reasons other than exemption (either the parent/carer or the school did not want them to sit (12.1%) or they were absent on the day (0.8%)) – slightly higher than national figures.

A relatively high proportion of children (11.9% from the LF and 12.7% from the SF) had ever been suspended from school. These percentages are slightly lower than for prior year entrants (13.3% for the SF and 15.6% for the LF). Percentages ever suspended vary considerably by gender and school year, as shown in Figure 3.6 (SF results). By year 10, more than one-quarter (26.1%) of NDIS participants have ever been suspended: more than one in three male participants (36.9%) and one in 10 female participants (10.4%).

Figure 3.6 Percentage of NDIS participants ever suspended from school by gender and school year



Available State/Territory benchmarks on school suspensions report statistics on a calendar year basis, and most only report on a number of suspensions, rather than a number of students suspended, basis. Since the same student can be suspended more than once, number of suspensions will be higher than number of students suspended. The NSW Department of Education reports public school statistics on both bases, yielding an average of 1.55 suspensions per student suspended for 2019.

Data on short (up to four school days) or long (five to 20 school days) suspensions and expulsions for NSW public schools in 2019 are shown in Table 3.1, which also shows percentages of NDIS participants ever suspended from the SF.

Table 3.1 NSW public school suspensions (short or long) for calendar year 2019 compared with NDIS participants ever suspended, by gender and school year

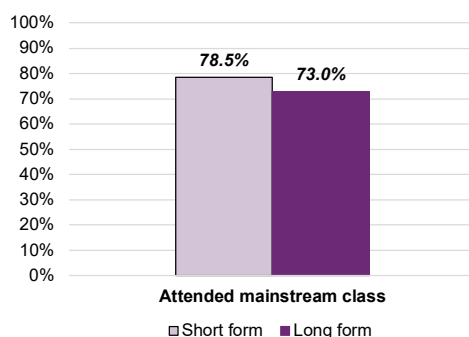
Year	NSW 2019 males	NSW 2019 females	NSW 2019 all	NDIS ever males	NDIS ever females	NDIS ever all	NSW 2019 M/F	NDIS ever M/F
K-2	2.4%	0.4%	1.4%	8.8%	2.9%	7.1%	6.6	3.0
3-6	5.3%	1.0%	3.2%	19.6%	6.9%	15.5%	5.4	2.9
7-10	19.2%	8.6%	14.1%	26.8%	10.9%	21.2%	2.2	2.5
11-12	7.0%	2.4%	4.6%	^	^	^	^	^
All Grades	8.7%	3.1%	6.0%	^	^	^	^	^
K-10	8.8%	3.2%	6.1%	15.8%	6.0%	12.7%	2.8	2.6

^ masked due to small cell counts

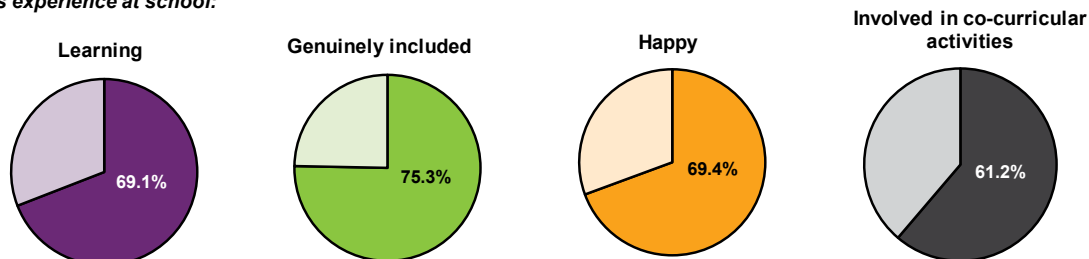
Since the NSW statistics are on a school (calendar) year basis, it is not possible to directly compare them to the NDIS results, which are on an “ever suspended” basis. However, the early primary years should be roughly comparable, and the percentages for NDIS participants in K-2 (8.8% for males, 2.9% for females, and 7.1% overall) do seem high compare to yearly suspension rates of 2.4% for males, 0.4% for females, and 1.4% overall for K-2 students attending NSW public schools. (Rates may vary by State/Territory also, and this has not yet been fully investigated).

Table 3.1 also shows ratios of male to female rates of suspension for NSW public schools and NDIS participants. The ratio is similar for K-10 overall (2.6 for NDIS participants and 2.8 for NSW public schools) but varies by school year, being lower for NDIS participants compared to NSW public schools in K-2 and 3-6, but higher in 7-10.

Figure 3.7 School experiences – 2019-20 entrants²⁶



Child's experience at school:



²⁶ In the top graph, differences between LF and SF results arise because only a subset of participants respond to the LF. The bottom graph shows results for LF participants.

Relationships

In relation to family life, only 27.2% of parents/carers of participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20 think there is enough time to meet the needs of all family members, lower than the 45.3% for the birth to starting school cohort. 54.6% of those with more than one child expressed some concern about the effect of having a sibling with disability on their other children (somewhat lower than for entrants in earlier years (62.3%)). However, 70.1% say that their child with disability gets along with their siblings. 87.5% say that their child fits into everyday family life (often or sometimes). The percentages getting along with their siblings and fitting in with the everyday life of the family are similar for prior year entrants (73.0% and 86.8%, respectively).

53.6% of parents/carers say they never go out without their child (similar to 51.6% for prior year entrants). Of those who do go out without their child, 94.5% use informal care (the child stays with siblings, extended family, family friends or by themselves) – higher than the 89.4% for prior year entrants. However, only 41.8% say they are happy with their childcare arrangements (slightly lower than 44.0% for prior year entrants).

Regarding friendships, 40.4% of participants have friends they enjoy spending time with (somewhat lower than 46.5% for prior year entrants), and 62.6% are able to make friends with people outside the family (similar to 61.4% for prior year entrants).

Participation

Overall, participation in mainstream activities tends to be low for this cohort. For participants entering in 2019-20, only 11.2% of parents/carers use a mainstream school holiday program (similar to 10.1% of those entering in prior years). Only about half (50.2%) of children spend time after school and on weekends with friends or in mainstream group activities, however this is higher than for prior year entrants (36.6%). 72.2% of parents/carers thought that their child was welcomed or actively included in these activities (compared to 74.9% of prior year entrants).

For 2019-20 entrants, 66.8% of parents/carers said they would like their child to have more opportunity to be involved in activities with other children, lower than for entrants in earlier years (81.4%). 87.9% of these perceived their child's disability as a barrier to being more involved, similar to entrants in earlier years (84.4%).

57.7% of parents/carers said they had some difficulty in finding vacation care that welcomed their child, slightly lower than 62.0% for prior year entrants.

3.5 Baseline indicators for participants entering in 2019-20 – participant characteristics

Baseline indicators for participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20 have been analysed by participant characteristics using one-way analyses and multiple regression modelling.

Across most domains, the participant's level of function, primary disability type, age, and where they live are the characteristics most predictive of outcomes in the multiple regression models, which control for other factors.

Key findings for each characteristic are summarised below. Tables summarising the direction of the effect for selected characteristics, in the regression models for selected outcomes, are also included. The arrow symbols in the tables indicate whether participants from a group are more likely (up arrow) or less likely (down arrow) to respond "Yes" to a question. Table 2.1 (in the participants from birth to starting school chapter) provides a key to aid interpretation of the arrow symbols, including some examples.

Primary disability

Most participant outcomes vary significantly by primary disability type. Typically, for a given disability type, the direction (positive or negative) of the relationship with outcomes is consistent for all domains.

Table 3.2 shows baseline participant outcomes for which primary disability type is a significant ($p < 0.05$) predictor in the multiple regression model, and the direction of the effect for selected disability types.²⁷

Table 3.2 Relationship of disability type with the likelihood of selected outcomes

Outcome	Participant primary disability					
	Developmental delay	Global developmental delay	Intellectual disability	Down syndrome	Cerebral palsy	Hearing Impairment
Lives with their parents	↓	↓	↓			
Lives in home owned or rented from private landlord	↓	↓	↓		↓	
Developing functional, learning and coping skills	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑
Manages their emotions well	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Becoming more independent	↑	↑		↑	↑	↑
Spends time away from parents/carers other than at school	↓	↓				↑
Spends time with friends without an adult present	↓		↑		↑	↑
Has a genuine say in decisions about herself/himself		↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
Attends school in a mainstream class	↑	↓	↓	↓	↑	↑
Gets along with his/her siblings	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Can make friends with people outside the family	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

²⁷ The reference category for the models is autism (the largest disability group for this age range). Hence the arrows are interpreted relative to participants with autism, for example, a green “up” arrow means better than participants with autism.

Outcome	Participant primary disability					
	Developmental delay	Global developmental delay	Intellectual disability	Down syndrome	Cerebral palsy	Hearing impairment
There is enough time to meet the needs of all family members	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Fits in with the everyday life of the family	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Has friends he/she enjoys playing with	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑
Spends time after school and on weekends with friends and/or in mainstream programs	↓	↓			↑	↑
Is welcomed or actively included in these activities	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑
Parent/carer would like child to be more involved	↓	↓				↓
Child's disability is a barrier to being more involved	↓	↓	↓		↓	↓

Disability type was a significant ($p < 0.05$) predictor in all but two of the 18 regression models.²⁸

Controlling for other variables, for participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20:

- Participants with a hearing impairment have uniformly better baseline outcomes than participants with other disabilities. For example, they are more likely to be:
 - Developing functional, learning and coping skills appropriate to their ability and circumstances (72.0% compared to 26.2% overall)
 - Becoming more independent (75.8% compared to 37.5% overall)
 - Spending time after school and on weekends with friends and/or in mainstream programs (75.5% compared to 42.1% overall), where they are more likely to be welcomed or actively included (91.7% compared to 72.2% overall).
- Participants with cerebral palsy also tend to have better baseline outcomes than participants with most other disability types.
- Participants with autism tend to have worse baseline outcomes than participants with other disabilities. For example, they are less likely to manage their emotions well

²⁸ The two indicators for which disability was not significant were "The child lives with their parents" and "I would like my child to have more opportunity to be involved in activities with other children".

(9.7% compared to 19.6% overall), and less likely to be able to make friends with people outside the family (55.4% compared to 62.6% overall).

- Participants with global developmental delay, intellectual disability or Down syndrome are less likely to have a genuine say in decisions about themselves, and less likely to attend school in a mainstream class. Participants with Down syndrome are the least likely to attend school in a mainstream class (30.7% compared to 80.2% overall).
- Controlling for other factors, participants with developmental delay or global developmental delay were significantly less likely to spend time after school and on weekends with friends and/or in mainstream programs. However, their parents/carers were significantly less likely to want them to be more involved.
- The small group of participants with a psychosocial disability had significantly worse baseline results on some indicators, being less likely to get along with their siblings (46.1% compared to 70.1% overall) and to fit in with the everyday life of the family (69.9% compared to 87.5%).

There are also significant differences for some LF indicators:

- Compared to an overall percentage of 60.3%, the percentage who have sat a NAPLAN test was much lower for children with Down syndrome/intellectual disability (26.2%) and much higher for children with a sensory disability (80.0%).
- Parents/carers of participants with autism were less likely to think their child was genuinely included at school (72.0% compared to 83.8% for other disability types combined).
- The percentage of parents/carers who said their child's school was their first choice was lower for participants with Down syndrome/intellectual disability (57.1%) and higher for participants with a sensory disability (79.1%), compared to 63.6% overall.
- The percentage of parents/carers who said they had faced pressure to place their child in a particular class or school was higher for participants with Down syndrome/intellectual disability (22.9%) and autism (22.5%) and lower for participants with a sensory disability (7.0%), compared to 20.3% overall.
- Participants with autism (13.8%) and Down syndrome / intellectual disability (12.9%) were more likely to have been suspended from school, and those with a sensory disability were less likely to have been suspended (2.3%).
- Participants with a sensory disability were more likely to manage the demands of their world (79.1% compared to 51.6% overall).
- Parents/carers of participants with a sensory disability were less likely to be worried about the effect of having a sibling with disability on their other children (25.0%) and parents/carers of participants with autism were more likely to be worried (59.4%).

Comparing 2019-20 entrants with prior year entrants, baseline results by disability are generally similar. As for 2019-20 entrants, participants with hearing impairment tended to have better baseline outcomes, and participants with autism or global developmental delay tended to have worse baseline outcomes.

For both entry period cohorts, participants with a physical disability or visual impairment were the most likely to be attending school in a mainstream class, and those with Down syndrome, intellectual disability, or global developmental delay were the least likely. Also for both cohorts, parents/carers of participants with a sensory disability were the least likely to be worried about the effect of their child's disability on other children, whereas parents/carers of participants with autism were the most likely to be worried.

The more positive baseline results for participants with cerebral palsy were more pronounced for 2019-20 entrants.

Level of function / annualised plan budget²⁹

Almost all baseline outcomes vary significantly with participant level of function and annualised plan budget. Baseline indicators are generally better for participants with higher level of function / lower annualised plan budget.

Table 3.3 shows baseline participant outcomes for which level of function and annualised plan budget are significant ($p < 0.05$) predictors in the multiple regression model, and the direction of the effect.

Table 3.3 Relationship of level of function and plan budget with the likelihood of selected outcomes

Outcome	Higher level of function	Lower annualised plan budget
Lives in home owned or rented from private landlord	↑	↑
Developing functional, learning and coping skills	↑	↑
Manages their emotions well	↑	↑
Becoming more independent	↑	↑
Spends time away from parents/carers other than at school	↑	↑
Spends time with friends without an adult present	↑	↑
Has a genuine say in decisions about herself/himself	↑	↑
Attends school in a mainstream class	↑	↑
Gets along with his/her siblings	↑	↑
Can make friends with people outside the family	↑	↑
There is enough time to meet the needs of all family members	↑	↑
Fits in with the everyday life of the family	↑	↑
Has friends he/she enjoys playing with	↑	↑

²⁹ Note that variations in baseline outcomes by annualised plan budget reflect characteristics associated with having a higher or lower plan budget, rather than the amount of the plan budget itself, since participants are at the start of their first plan at baseline.

Outcome	Higher level of function	Lower annualised plan budget
Spends time after school and on weekends with friends and/or in mainstream programs	↑	↑
Is welcomed or actively included in these activities	↑	↑
Child's disability is a barrier to being more involved	↓	↓

Level of function and annualised plan budget were significant ($p < 0.05$) predictors in all but two of the 18 regression models.³⁰

Controlling for other variables, for participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20:

- Participants with higher level of function have better baseline outcomes for all indicators in Table 3.3. In particular:
 - The percentage of children developing functional, learning and coping skills appropriate to their ability and circumstances decreases from 39.8% for participants with high level of function, to 18.1% for those with medium level of function, and 12.8% for those with low level of function.
 - The percentage of parents/carers who say their child is becoming more independent decreases from 51.4% for participants with high level of function, to 30.4% for those with medium level of function, and 18.7% for those with low level of function.
 - Participants with higher level of function are more likely to be able to make friends with people outside the family (75.6% compared to 57.0% of those with medium level of function and 41.3% for those with low level of function), and to have friends they enjoy playing with (52.3%, 35.0%, 22.3%).
 - Participants with higher level of function are more likely to spend time with friends and/or in mainstream programs when they are not at school (50.4% compared to 40.3% of those with medium level of function and 21.3% for those with low level of function), and more likely to be welcomed or actively included when they do so (80.2%, 66.2%, and 60.8%).
 - Participants with higher level of function are more likely to attend school in a mainstream class (87.4%, 81.7%, and 49.2%).
- Participants with a lower baseline plan budget also have better baseline outcomes for most of the indicators, generally reflecting the trends by level of function. For example:
 - The percentage of parents/carers who say there is enough time to meet the needs of all family members decreases from 37.2% for annualised plan budget \$10,000 or less to only 10.0% for annualised plan budget over \$30,000.

³⁰ Neither level of function nor annualised plan budget were significant predictors of whether the child lives with their parents, or of whether the parent/carer would like their child to be more involved in activities with other children.

- The percentage of parents/carers who say their child fits in with the everyday life of the family decreases from 93.0% for annualised plan budget \$10,000 or less to 71.3% for annualised plan budget over \$30,000.

There were also some significant differences by level of function and plan budget for LF indicators. For example, participants with higher level of function / lower plan budget were more likely to:

- Have sat a NAPLAN test (64.5% of those with high level of function compared to 24.6% of those with low level of function; 73.3% of those with plan budget \$10,000 or less compared to 37.5% of those with plan budget over \$30,000).
- Manage the demands of their world (60.5% compared to 38.3% of those with low level of function; 69.0% of those with plan budget \$10,000 or less compared to 32.6% of those with plan budget over \$30,000).

Parents/carers of participants with high level of function / lower plan budget were also less likely to be worried about the effect of having a sibling with disability on their other children.

Comparing 2019-20 entrants with participants entering in earlier years, baseline trends by level of function and annualised plan budget are very similar. For both 2019-20 entrants and prior year entrants, baseline indicators are generally better for participants with higher level of function / lower annualised plan budget, particularly those related to the daily living and relationship domains. Whilst the overall percentage attending school in a mainstream class is higher overall for 2019-20 entrants compared to prior year entrants, relativities by level of function show a similar trend.

Age, gender, Indigenous status and CALD status

Table 3.4 shows baseline participant outcomes for which age, gender, Indigenous status or CALD status are significant ($p < 0.05$) predictors in the multiple regression model, and the direction of the effect.

Table 3.4 Relationship of age, gender, Indigenous status and CALD status with the likelihood of selected outcomes

Outcome	Participant is older	Participant is female	Participant is Indigenous	Participant is from a CALD background
Lives with their parents			↓	↑
Lives in home owned or rented from private landlord			↓	
Developing functional, learning and coping skills			↓	
Manages their emotions well	↑		↓	↑
Becoming more independent	↑		↓	↓
Spends time away from parents/carers other than at school	↑			↓

Outcome	Participant is older	Participant is female	Participant is Indigenous	Participant is from a CALD background
Spends time with friends without an adult present	↑			
Has a genuine say in decisions about herself/himself	↑	↑		↓
Attends school in a mainstream class	↓	↑	↓	↓
Gets along with his/her siblings	↓			↑
Can make friends with people outside the family		↑		↓
There is enough time to meet the needs of all family members	↓	↓		↑
Fits in with the everyday life of the family			↑	↑
Has friends he/she enjoys playing with	↑	↑		↓
Spends time after school and on weekends with friends and/or in mainstream programs	↑	↑		↓
Is welcomed or actively included in these activities	↑	↑		↓
Parent/carer would like child to be more involved	↑			
Child's disability is a barrier to being more involved		↓		

Age³¹

Age was a significant predictor in 12 of the 18 regression models.

In nine cases baseline outcomes were better for older children, often reflecting the expected growth in independence with age. For example, older participants were more likely to spend time away from their parents other than at school, and spend time with friends without an adult present. They were also more likely to have a genuine say in decisions about themselves (83.0% for participants aged 12 or older compared to 71.3% for those five or younger).

³¹ Note this is the cross-sectional effect of age on baseline outcomes, rather than longitudinal.

Some baseline indicators appear to be better for children aged five or younger (13.9% of 2019-20 entrants in the starting school to age 14 cohort are in this age range), after which a deterioration is observed in the age range approximately six to 11, followed by an improvement for those aged 12 or older. For example, on a one-way basis, the percentage of children who manage their emotions well was 26.3% for those aged five or younger, decreasing to 17%-18% for those aged six to 11, then increasing to 21.2% for those aged 12 or older.

Some baseline indicators were less positive for older children. Older participants were less likely to:

- Attend school in a mainstream class (65.5% of those aged 12 or older, compared to 89.3% of those aged 5 or younger)
- Get along with their siblings (66.5% of those aged 12 or older, compared to 79.6% of those aged 5 or younger).

Parents/carers of older children were also less likely to think there was enough time to meet the needs of all family members (23.9% of those aged 12 or older, compared to 42.4% of those aged 5 or younger), and more likely to want their child to be more involved in activities with other children (68.6% of those aged 12 or older, compared to 59.9% of those aged 5 or younger).

There were also some significant differences by age for LF indicators. Satisfaction with their child's schooling tended to decrease with age of the child, with the percentage of parents/carers who:

- Think their child is genuinely included at school decreasing from 82.3% for those aged eight or younger, to 68.7% for those aged nine to 11, and 63.2% for those aged 12 or older.
- Are satisfied that their child's school listens to them in relation to their child's education decreasing from 78.4% for those aged eight or younger, to 70.6% for those aged nine to 11, and 68.6% for those aged 12 or older.
- Say their child's school was their first choice decreasing from 69.4% for those aged eight or younger, to 58.2% for those aged nine to 11, and 53.5% for those aged 12 or older.

Gender

Gender was a significant predictor in eight of the 18 regression models. In all but one of these, females had more positive outcomes than males.

Controlling for other factors, for participants entering the Scheme in 2019-20, female participants were more likely to:

- Have a genuine say in decisions about themselves (78.3% compared to 73.9% for males)
- Attend school in a mainstream class (82.4% compared to 79.1% for males).
- Make friends with people outside the family (66.0% compared to 61.0% for males), and have friends they enjoy spending time with (45.0% compared to 38.4%).
- Spend time outside school with friends or in mainstream programs (46.5% compared to 40.0% for males), and to be welcomed or actively included when they do so (75.8% compared to 70.4%).

Parents/carers of female participants were also less likely to perceive their child's disability as a barrier being more involved (86.0% compared to 88.7% for males).

However, the models also indicated that parents/carers of female participants were significantly less likely to think there was enough time to meet the needs of all family members. On a one-way basis, the difference was negligible.

On a one-way basis, female participants were much less likely to have been suspended from school (6.0% for the SF and 5.1% for the LF) than male participants (15.8% for the SF and 14.6% for the LF). The ratio of male to female suspension rates is 2.6, the same as that observed for NSW public school students suspended in calendar year 2019.

Indigenous status

Indigenous status was a significant predictor in seven of the 18 regression models.

Two of these indicators related to living/housing arrangements, with Indigenous participants being significantly less likely to:

- Live with their parents (75.0% compared to 95.1% for non-Indigenous participants).
- Live in a home that is owned by their family or rented from a private landlord (70.9% compared to 93.1% for non-Indigenous participants). Conversely, Indigenous participants are much more likely to live in public housing (24.8% compared to 5.2%).

Looking at other indicators, parents/carers of Indigenous participants were more likely to say that their child fits in well with the everyday life of the family (88.6% versus 87.4% for non-Indigenous participants, on a one-way basis).

However, Indigenous participants were significantly less likely to be:

- Developing functional, learning and coping skills appropriate to their ability and circumstances (20.0% versus 27.0% for non-Indigenous participants), managing their emotions (16.1% versus 19.9%), and becoming more independent (31.7% versus 37.7%).
- Attending school in a mainstream class (73.2% compared to 80.3% for non-Indigenous participants).

CALD status

CALD status was a significant predictor in 13 of the 18 regression models.

In general, CALD participants tend to have more positive baseline outcomes than non-CALD participants in the area of family life, but less positive outcomes in the areas of community participation and friendships.

CALD participants were significantly more likely to live with their parents at baseline (97.1% compared to 93.0% for non-CALD participants).

CALD participants were also more likely to manage their emotions (28.7% versus 18.8% for non-CALD participants), and to get along with their siblings (76.3% versus 70.0%).

Parents/carers of CALD participants were also more likely to say that their child fits in with the everyday life of the family (90.5% versus 87.2% for non-CALD participants).

However, CALD participants were less likely to:

- Be gaining in independence (35.9% compared to 37.6% for non-CALD participants).
- Have a genuine say in decisions about themselves (62.9% versus 76.4%).
- Spend time away from their parents/carers other than at school (12.8% versus 26.1%).
- Attend school in a mainstream class (70.0% compared to 81.1%).

- Be able to make friends with people outside the family (54.1% versus 63.2%) and have friends they enjoy spending time with (33.0% versus 41.0%).
- Spend time outside school with friends or in mainstream programs (32.4% versus 42.8%), and to be welcomed or actively included when they do so (69.9% versus 72.4%).

From the LF, parents/carers of CALD participants were less likely to say they have had pressure to place their child in a particular class or school (10.9% compared to 20.6% for non-CALD participants).

Comparing baseline outcomes by age, gender, Indigenous and CALD status for 2019-20 entrants with prior year entrants:

- Trends by age are largely similar, with older children exhibiting more independence and having a greater say in decisions, as would be expected due to normal age-related development. For both 2019-20 entrants and prior year entrants, the percentage attending school in a mainstream class declined with age.
- Differences by gender are consistent, with females being more likely than males to have a genuine say in decisions about themselves, to make friends with people outside the family, and to attend school in a mainstream class.
- The more extensive modelling for 2019-20 entrants this year identified Indigenous status as a significant predictor for seven out of 18 baseline indicators, compared to four out of the six indicators modelled last year. Common to both entry period cohorts, Indigenous children were less likely to be becoming more independent, to be developing functional, learning and coping skills, and to attend school in a mainstream class. Differences in living and housing arrangements identified in one-way analyses for prior year entrants were supported by the regression modelling for 2019-20 entrants. However, the higher likelihood for Indigenous children to fit in with the everyday life of the family identified in regression models for 2019-20 entrants was not noted for prior year entrants, and conversely, the higher likelihood for Indigenous participants to spend time with friends without an adult present was identified in regression models for prior year entrants but not for 2019-20 entrants.
- Differences between CALD and non-CALD participants are largely consistent, with CALD participants being more likely to manage their emotions well but less likely to have positive baseline outcomes for some areas of community participation and friendships. An additional positive indicator was identified for 2019-20 entrants, with CALD participants found to be more likely to get along with their siblings.

Geography

Table 5.3 shows baseline participant outcomes for which State/Territory or remoteness are significant ($p < 0.05$) predictors in the multiple regression model, and the direction of the effect.^{32,33}

³² Remoteness uses the Modified Monash Model (MMM), <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/modified-monash-model-fact-sheet> 1=metropolitan, 2=regional centres, 3=large rural towns, 4=medium rural towns, 5=small rural towns, 6=remote communities, 7=very remote communities. 6 and 7 are combined due to small numbers.

³³ Reference categories in the models are NSW for State/Territory and 1 (metropolitan) for remoteness.

Table 3.5 Relationship of State/Territory and remoteness with the likelihood of selected outcomes

Outcome	State/Territory							Remoteness				
	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT	2	3	4	5	6/7
Lives with their parents	↑	↑		↑	↑		↑					
Lives in home owned or rented from private landlord	↑	↑		↑	↓	↓	↓		↓		↑	↓
Developing functional, learning and coping skills					↑		↓				↑	↑
Manages their emotions well			↓				↑				↑	↑
Becoming more independent		↑	↑	↑	↑					↑	↑	↑
Spends time away from parents/carers other than at school			↑	↑	↑		↓		↑	↑	↑	↑
Spends time with friends without an adult present	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑				↑	↑
Has a genuine say in decisions about herself/himself	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑			↑		↑	
Attends school in a mainstream class	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑			↑		↑	↑
Gets along with his/her siblings					↑	↑	↑					↑
Can make friends with people outside the family	↑	↑	↑		↑		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
There is enough time to meet the needs of all family members	↓			↓	↑	↓	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑
Fits in with the everyday life of the family	↑	↓		↓			↑	↑			↑	↑
Has friends he/she enjoys playing with	↓		↑						↑			↑
Spends time after school and on weekends with friends and/or in mainstream programs	↑	↓	↑	↑	↓							↑

Outcome	State/Territory							Remoteness				
	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	ACT	NT	2	3	4	5	6/7
Is welcomed or actively included in these activities										↑	↑	↑
Parent/carer would like child to be more involved	↓	↑						↓		↓	↓	

State/Territory

There are some differences in baseline outcomes by State/Territory of residence. For example, controlling for other factors:

- Participants from NSW and NT were less likely than participants in other States and Territories to attend school in a mainstream class.
- Participants from NSW and QLD were less likely than participants in other States and Territories to spend time friends without an adult present.
- Parents/carers of participants from WA were less likely to think there is enough time to meet the needs of all family members (22.6%, compared to 27.2% overall) and participants from NT were more likely to think so (42.9%).
- Parents/carers of participants from WA were also less likely to think their child fits well into the everyday life of the family (84.6%, compared to 87.5% overall) and participants from NT were more likely to think so (93.9%).

Remoteness

Remoteness was a significant predictor in 16 of the 18 regression models.³⁴

In general, baseline outcomes were more positive for participants living in small regional towns and remote/very remote areas compared to those for participants living in major cities and larger regional centres. For example, participants living in small rural towns and remote/very remote areas were significantly more likely to:

- Be developing functional, learning and coping skills appropriate to their ability and circumstances.
- Manage their emotions well (24.5% of participants living in remote/very remote communities compared to 19.6% of those living in major cities).
- Get along with their siblings (79.0% of participants living in remote/very remote communities compared to 70.3% of those living in major cities).

In addition, parents/carers of participants living in remote/very remote communities were more likely to think there was enough time to meet the needs of all family members (34.2% compared to 26.2% for those living in major cities).

The percentage who are able to make friends with people outside the family tends to increase with increasing remoteness: from 61.0% of participants living in major cities, to

³⁴ One-way analyses by remoteness do not always appear consistent with the results of regression modelling. In general, one-way analyses for remoteness should be interpreted with care due to the potential for confounding (for example, participants in remote/very remote areas are more likely to be Indigenous, and to be younger). Multiple regression modelling controls for known sources of confounding and indicates the effect of remoteness after adjusting for these other factors.

64.9%-65.4% for those living in regional centres and large rural towns, and 67.0%-67.5% for those living in more remote areas.

Participants living in remote/very remote communities are much more likely to live in public housing (27.9% compared to 6.9% overall).

Comparing 2019-20 entrants with prior year entrants, baseline outcomes show similar variations by State/Territory and remoteness, for most indicators. In particular, children from remote/very remote areas tend to have more positive baseline results than those from major cities, across many indicators.

Plan management type^{35,36}

Table 3.6 shows baseline participant outcomes for which plan management type is a significant ($p < 0.05$) predictor in the multiple regression model, and the direction of the effect.

Table 3.6 Relationship of plan management type with the likelihood of selected outcomes

Outcome	Self managed fully	Self managed partly	Plan managed
Lives with their parents	↑	↑	↑
Lives in home owned or rented from private landlord	↑	↑	↑
Developing functional, learning and coping skills			↓
Manages their emotions well	↓	↓	↓
Becoming more independent	↑		↓
Spends time away from parents/carers other than at school	↑		
Has a genuine say in decisions about herself/himself	↑	↑	↑
Attends school in a mainstream class	↑	↑	↑
Gets along with his/her siblings			↓
Can make friends with people outside the family			↓
There is enough time to meet the needs of all family members	↓	↓	↓

³⁵ Note that these baseline differences reflect characteristics of participants whose families/carers choose to self manage, rather than the self-management process itself (since the results are at the start of the participant's first plan).

³⁶ Reference category in the models is Agency-managed.

Outcome	Self managed fully	Self managed partly	Plan managed
Fits in with the everyday life of the family	↓	↓	↓
Has friends he/she enjoys playing with	↑	↑	
Spends time after school and on weekends with friends and/or in mainstream programs	↑	↑	↑
Parent/carer would like child to be more involved	↑	↑	↑
Child's disability is a barrier to being more involved	↑		

There were significant differences by plan management type for 16 of the 18 baseline regression models.

Participants who self-manage fully are more likely to show evidence of growing autonomy. They are more likely to be gaining in independence, more likely to spend time away from their parents/carers other than at school, and (along with participants who self-manage partly and those who use a plan manager) more likely than those with Agency-managed plans to have a genuine say in decisions about themselves (78.1% of those who self-manage fully compared to 71.0% of those with Agency-managed plans).

Participants who self-manage (fully or partly) and those who use a plan manager are more likely than those with Agency-managed plans to attend school in a mainstream class (86.5% of those who self-manage fully, 77.2% of those who self-manage partly or use a plan manager, and 74.8% of those with Agency-managed plans).

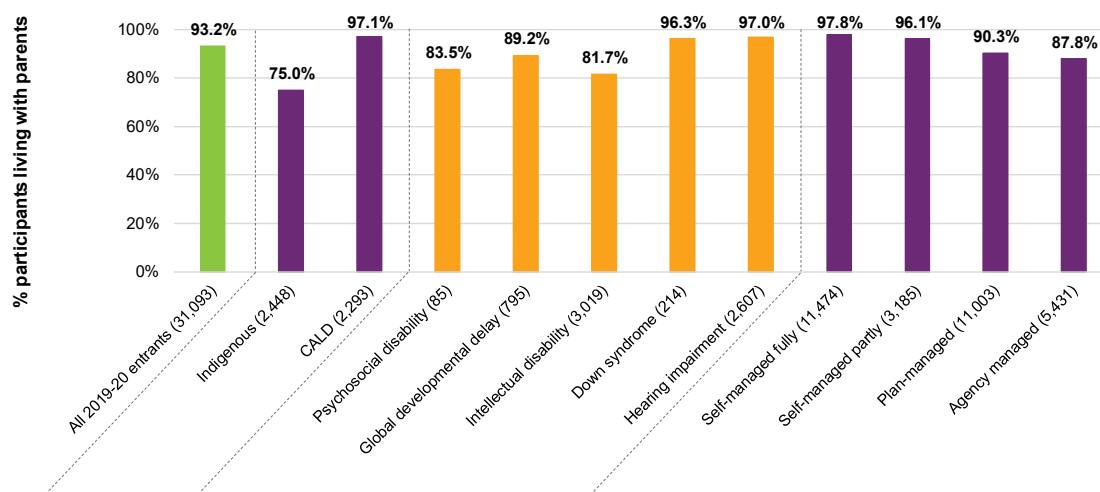
Participants who self-manage (fully or partly) and those using a plan manager are also significantly more likely to spend time outside school with friends or in mainstream programs (50.5% of those who self-manage fully, 43.3% of those who self-manage partly, 36.1% of those who use a plan manager, and 35.3% of those with Agency-managed plans).

However, parents/carers of participants who self-manage (fully or partly) and those using a plan manager are less likely to say their child manages their emotions well, less likely to think there is enough time to meet the needs of all family members, and less likely to think their child fits into the everyday life of the family.

Parents/carers who self-manage (partly or fully) or have a plan manager were more likely to want their child to be more involved in activities with other children (68.6% for those who self-manage fully compared to 62.5% of those with Agency-managed plans). Those who fully self-manage were more likely to perceive their child's disability as a barrier to greater involvement (89.0% compared to 85.0% of those with Agency-managed plans).

Participants who self-manage or use a plan manager are more likely than those who Agency-manage to live with their parents (97.8% of those who fully self-manage compared to 87.8% of those with Agency-managed plans). They are also less likely to live in public housing (2.1% compared to 12.0% for those with Agency-managed plans).

Figure 3.8 Percentage of participants living with their parents at baseline – 2019-20 entrants



Comparing 2019-20 entrants with those entering in prior years, the same trends by plan management type were observed for living and housing arrangements. For both groups, participants with self-managed plans were more likely to show evidence of growing independence, and more likely to attend school in a mainstream class.

Unemployment rate

A higher unemployment rate was generally associated with worse baseline outcomes, although participants living in higher unemployment areas were more likely to fit in with the everyday life of the family, and more likely to live with their parents.

Impact of COVID-19

The methodology for investigating the impact of COVID-19 has been outlined in Section 2.4.

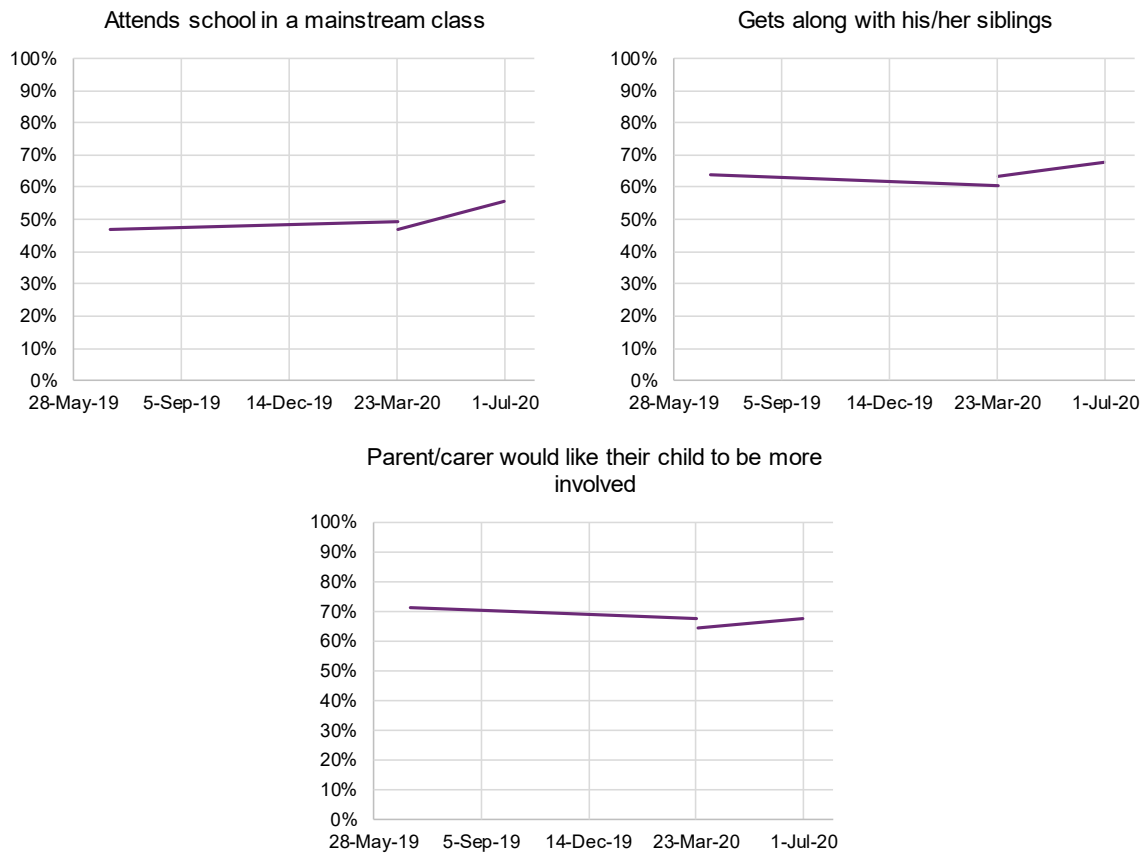
For participants from starting school to age 14 who entered the Scheme in 2019-20, there were 10 indicators for which one or both of the COVID-related terms was significantly different from zero.

For three of these indicators, there was a change in slope before and after the assumed COVID impact date:

- The percentage of children who attend school in a mainstream class increased at a slightly greater rate over the post-COVID period.
- The percentage of children who get along with their siblings showed both a step up and a positive change in slope, from a slight decreasing trend to an increasing trend following 23 March 2020.
- The percentage of parents/carers who say they would like their child to be more involved in activities with other children showed a step down and a positive change in slope, from a slight decreasing trend to an increasing trend following 23 March 2020.

The fitted trends for these indicators are shown in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9 Estimated trend over time for indicators where there was a change in slope post-COVID

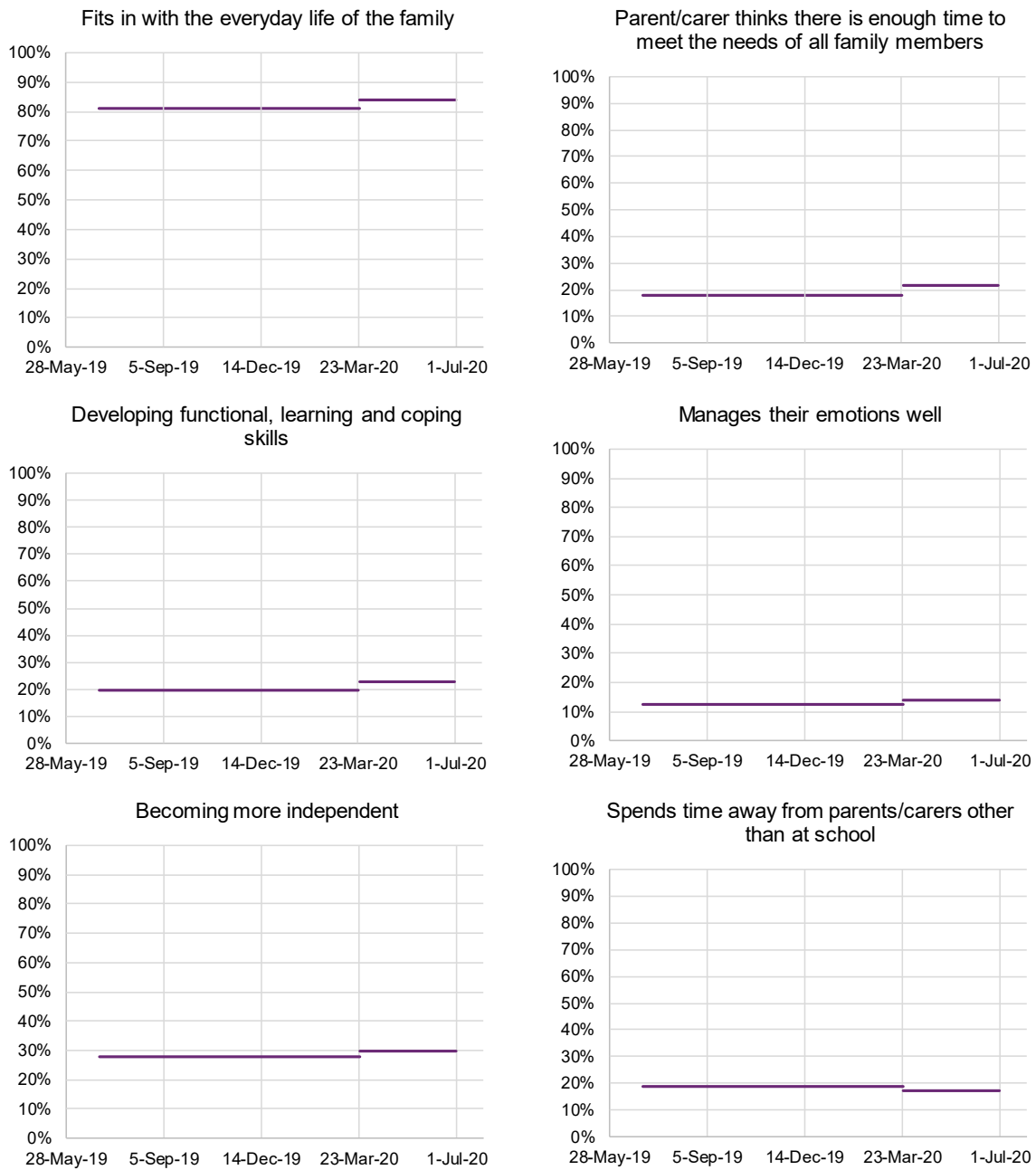


Other indicators for which only a step change was observed include:

- The percentage of parents/carers who say their child fits in with the everyday life of the family, and the percentage who think there is enough time to meet the needs of all family members: there were significant positive step changes in both these indicators at 23 March 2020.
- The percentage of children developing functional, learning and coping skills appropriate to their ability and circumstances, the percentage who manage their emotions well, and the percentage becoming more independent: there were significant positive step changes in these indicators at 23 March 2020.
- The percentage of children who spend time away from their parents/carers other than at school: there was a significant step down in this indicator at 23 March 2020.

The fitted trends for these indicators are shown in Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10 Estimated trend over time for indicators where there was a step change but no change in slope post-COVID



Box 3.4 summarises the key findings from this section.

Box 3.4: Summary of findings

- Most participant outcomes vary significantly by primary disability type. Participants with a sensory disability generally experience better outcomes than those with other disabilities. In particular, participants with hearing impairment tended to have better baseline outcomes, and participants with autism or global developmental delay tended to have worse baseline outcomes. Participants with a physical disability or visual impairment were the most likely to be attending school in a mainstream class, and those with Down syndrome, intellectual disability, or global developmental delay were the least likely.
- Almost all baseline outcomes vary significantly with participant level of function and annualised plan budget. Participants with higher level of function / lower annualised plan budget tend to have better baseline outcomes than those with lower level of function / higher annualised plan budget. In particular, participants with higher level of function are more likely to attend school in a mainstream class.
- Comparing baseline outcomes by age, older children exhibited more independence and had a greater say in decisions, as would be expected due to normal age-related development. The percentage attending school in a mainstream class declined with age.
- Females are more likely than males to have a genuine say in decisions about themselves, to make friends with people outside the family, and to attend school in a mainstream class.
- Indigenous children were less likely to be becoming more independent, to be developing functional, learning and coping skills, and to attend school in a mainstream class.
- In general, CALD participants tend to have more positive baseline outcomes than non-CALD participants in the area of family life, but less positive outcomes in the areas of community participation and friendships.
- In general, baseline outcomes were more positive for participants living in small regional towns and remote/very remote areas compared to those for participants living in major cities and larger regional centres.
- Participants with self-managed baseline plans were more likely to show evidence of growing independence, and more likely to attend school in a mainstream class.
- COVID-19 was associated with a number of changes to participant outcomes, with most changes being positive. For example, positive changes were observed for children getting along with their siblings, fitting in with the everyday life of the family, becoming more independent, and parents/carer thinking there is enough time to meet the needs of all family members. However, the percentage of children who spend time away from their parents/carers other than at school has dropped to a lower level during the pandemic.