

Data Collection



Joyce Cleary

Program Analyst – Best Start
Statewide Outcomes Branch
Office for Children



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Overview

- “Friendly” statistics
- Policy context behind data collection
- Role of the Office for Children
- Role of Statewide Outcomes Branch
- Local data collection
- Demographic Indicators



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Overview

- Best Start Indicators
- Monitoring and reporting on Best Start Indicators
- Data Sources for Best Start Indicators
- Examples of Indicator Analysis
- Best Start Data – the Future



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics

“Definition of statistics: The science of producing unreliable facts from reliable figures.” ...Evan Esar

“There are two kinds of statistics, the kind you look up and the kind you make up.” ...Rex Stout

“Statistics are like a bikini. What they reveal is suggestive, but what they conceal is vital.”

...Aaron Levenstein



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



“Friendly” Statistics

- Descriptive Statistics

- Counts
- Averages
- Percentages
- Rates
- Trends



The Language of Data!

- Outcomes
 - What's happening
- Indicators
 - Used to quantify and measure Outcomes
- Monitoring
 - Recording and analysing Indicators
- Reporting
 - Sharing monitoring information and using it to inform policy, programs and planning



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Data Collection – Policy Context

National Public Health Partnership, *Healthy Children – Strengthening Promotion and Prevention Across Australia. National Public Health Strategic Framework for Children 2005-2008.*

Strategic Direction 4: Build evidence and track progress for policy, programs and practice.

“We need to strengthen our capacity to collect good quality data to evaluate interventions, to promote useful research and to improve the ways we share evidence.”

With the particular aims of:

- ❖ Stronger coordinated capacity to collect, analyse and use data at National, State and Local levels
- ❖ Improved translation of evidence into policy, programs and practice



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Data Collection – Policy Context

A Fairer Victoria (2005)

- Promote strategic research and the measurement of children's health and wellbeing across the state
- Establish a Statewide integrated monitoring and reporting system that is directly linked to policy
- Develop ongoing data collection strategies to address data gaps
- Ensure data are available and utilised for policy, planning, evaluation and research
- Report regularly on how Victoria's children and adolescents are faring



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Data Collection – Policy Context

Joining the dots – A new vision for Victoria's Children (PCAC) 2004

Stipulates need for better research and data:

- Need for coordination in collating and analysing available data to aid the development of appropriate services to meet the needs of families and children
- Ensure that evidence about outcomes – and not simply numbers of service users – is collected across all service types and used in a timely fashion to improve the delivery of services.



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Data Collection – OFC Role

Office for Children:

- Improve the health, development, learning, wellbeing and safety of children
- Support families and communities
- Focus on outcomes



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Data Collection – SWO Role

Statewide Outcomes Branch

- ❖ Develop data driven and evidence based policy related to children's health, safety, learning, development and wellbeing:
 - Use data to determine priorities
 - Implement evidence based strategies
 - Monitor population outcomes
 - Evaluate current and prospective programs and policies (“Does what we do make a difference?”)



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Data Collection – Local

- Need for community level data, particularly for indicators modifiable at the Local Government Area level, so that policy and planning can be data driven and evidence based



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Data Collection – Local

Good local data will allow:

- ✓ Outcomes to be measured (monitored)
- ✓ Trends to be monitored
- ✓ Emerging issues to be identified
- ✓ Service gaps to be identified
- ✓ Comparisons and contrasts between groups
- ✓ Priorities to be set



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Communities Are Different!

“Demographic Indicators” can paint a picture of each unique community:

- Population characteristics
- Population distribution
- Projected population
- Cultural and linguistic diversity
- Family type
- Socio-economic

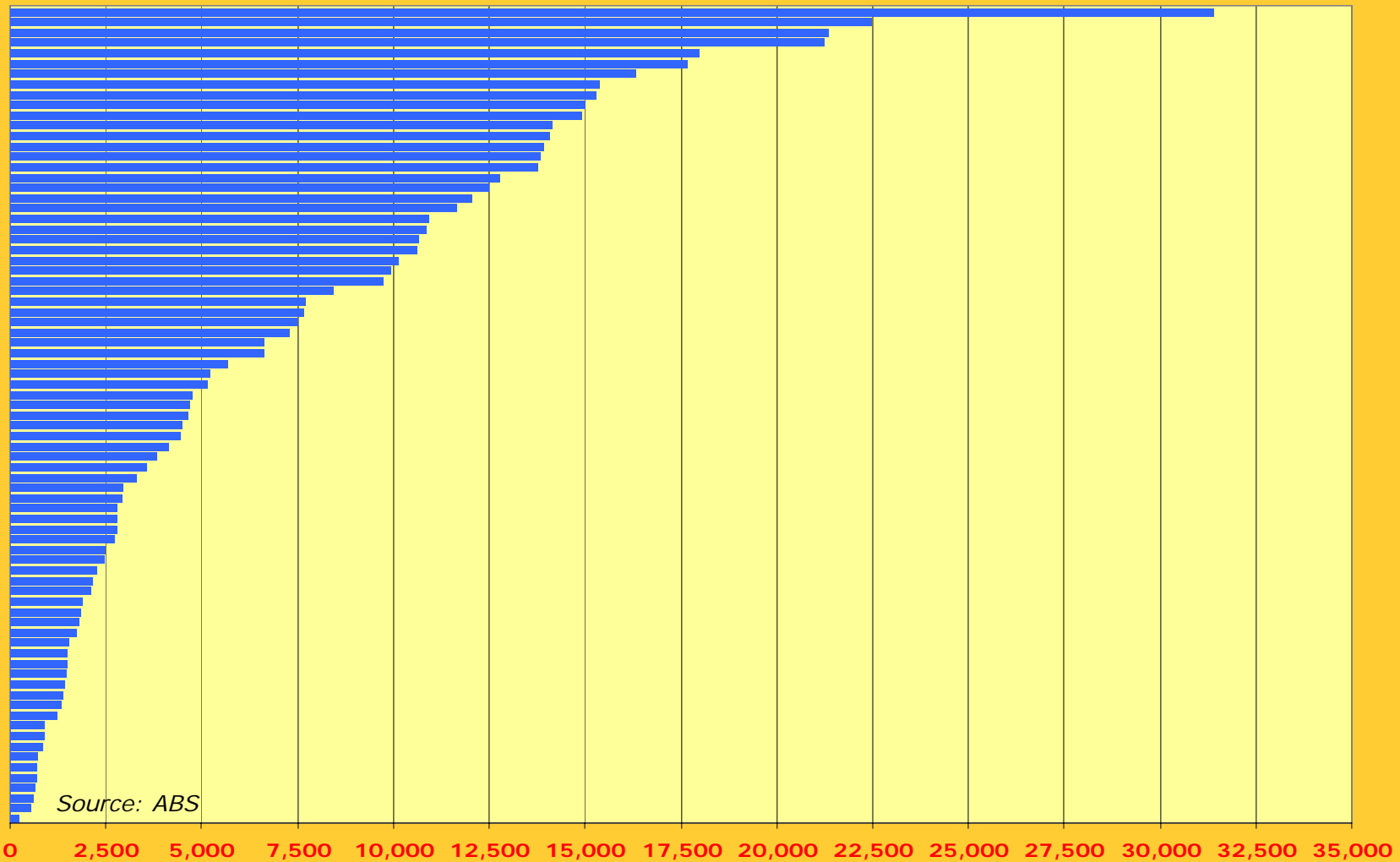


Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



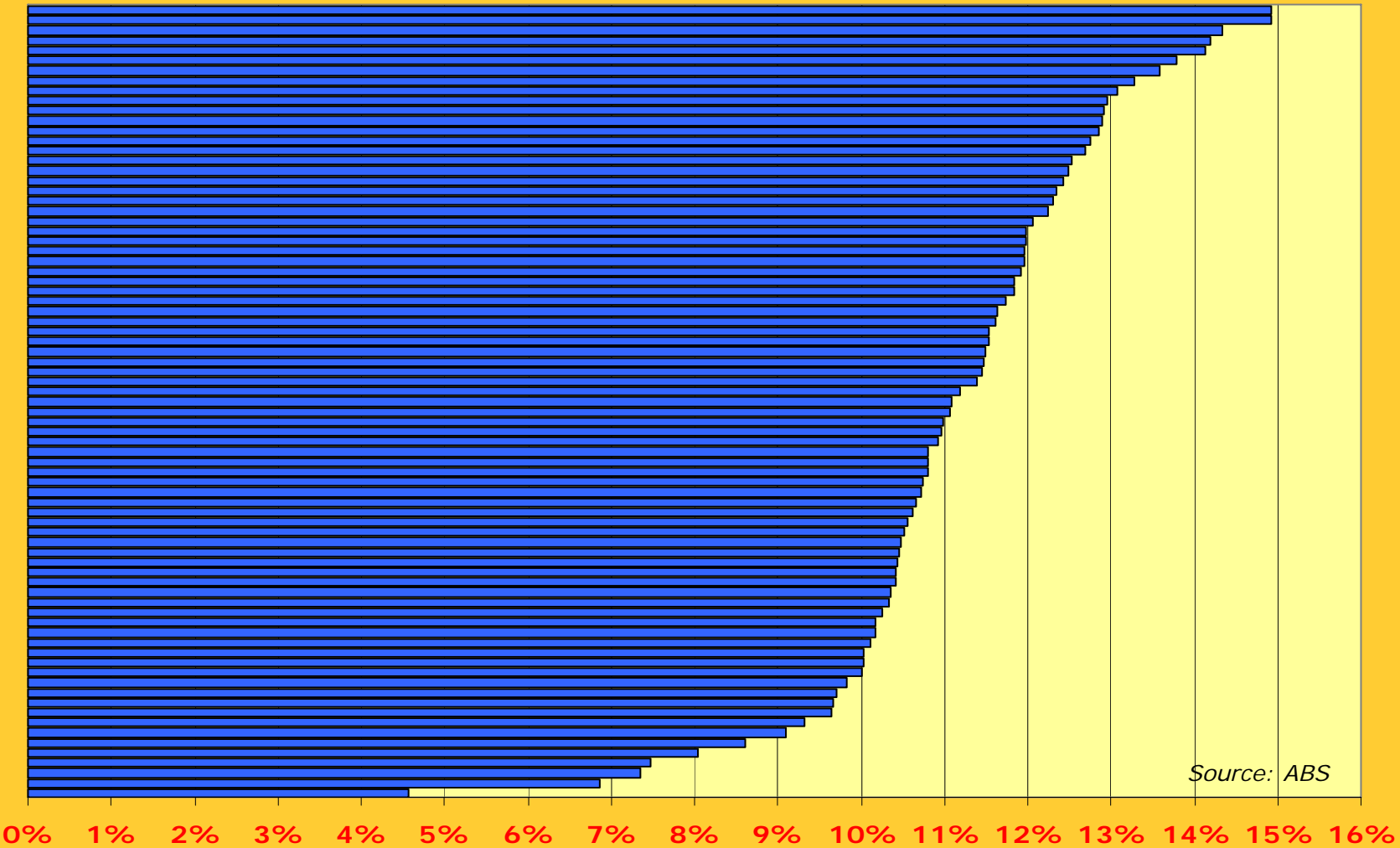
Number of Children Aged 0 – 8 in each LGA



Best Start
www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Percentage of Children Aged 0 – 8 in each LGA



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Using Demographic Indicators

In addition to “painting a picture of the community” demographic indicators can:

- Determine service demand
- Aid local service planning
- Aid with local allocation of resources
- Serve as a base for calculation of rates in other indicators
- Identify disadvantaged areas within an LGA using the ABS SEIFA indexes at Statistical Local Area and Postcode level
- Many more potential uses!!



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Selection

- Known to have a strong evidence base linking them to improved health, development, learning and wellbeing outcomes for children
- Collected regularly through existing data processes
- Susceptible to change within the short to medium term
- Provide consistent measurement across diverse project sites



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Health & Wellbeing

- ✓ Increased rate of breastfeeding
- ✓ Decreased rate of women smoking during pregnancy
- ✓ Decreased rate of children exposed to tobacco in the home
- ✓ Increased rates of immunisation
- ✓ Increased attendance at Maternal and Child Health
- ✓ Increased rate of children who are protected from the summer sun
- ✓ Increased rate of children who participate in physical activity
- ✓ Proportion of children who clean their teeth at least twice a day



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Learning and Development

- ✓ Increased rates of parents reading to their children
- ✓ Increased participation in kindergarten
- ✓ Reduced absences from primary school
- ✓ Improved reading, writing and numeracy



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Safety

- ✓ Decreased rate of re-notifications to child protection
- ✓ Decreased rate of unintentional injury
- ✓ Proportion of children whose parents report high levels of social support



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Selection

- Best Start Partnerships consider all 15 indicators in developing their community profile and community map
- However, required to focus on four priority indicators
 - At least one from each of:
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Learning and Development
 - Safety



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Monitoring

- **WHY?**

- Benefits of local level data collection (mentioned earlier)
- Measure progress within Best Start Sites
- Work towards clearly understood outcomes and building a culture of ongoing service evaluation into everyday service provision within and across services.



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Data Sources

- Office for Children (Statewide Outcomes Branch) is developing the capacity to systematically monitor and report on key aspects of safety, health, development, learning and wellbeing of children and adolescents in Victoria
- Currently seven of the fifteen Best Start Indicators are part of the Statewide Indicator Data Set



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Statewide Indicator Data Set

1. Breastfeeding
2. Immunisation
3. Maternal Child Health Attendance
4. Kindergarten Participation
5. Attendance at Primary School
6. Reading, Writing and Numerical Abilities
7. Re-notifications to Child Protection

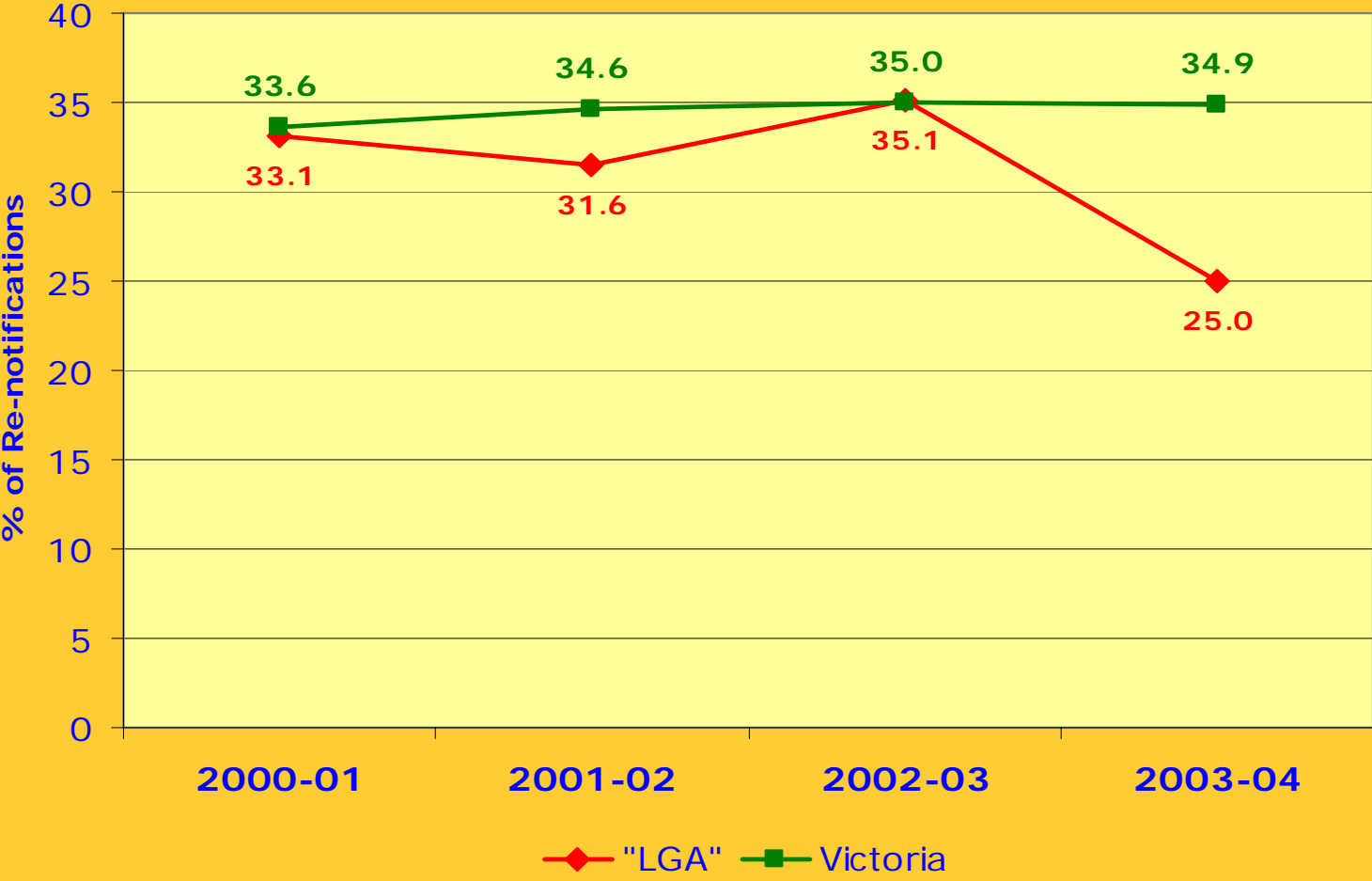


Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Rate (%) of Child Protection Re-notifications

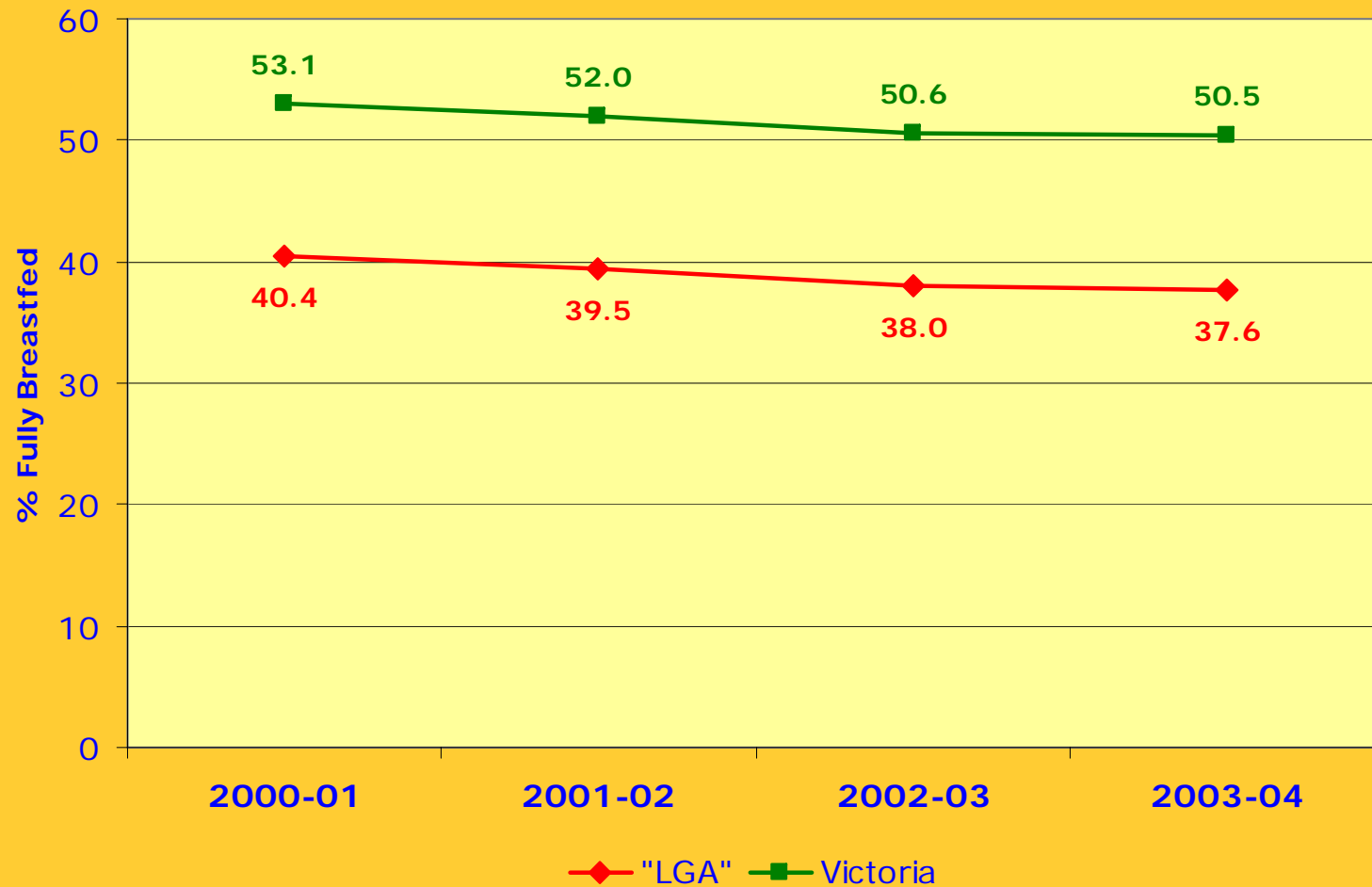


Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Percentage of infants fully breastfed at 3mths

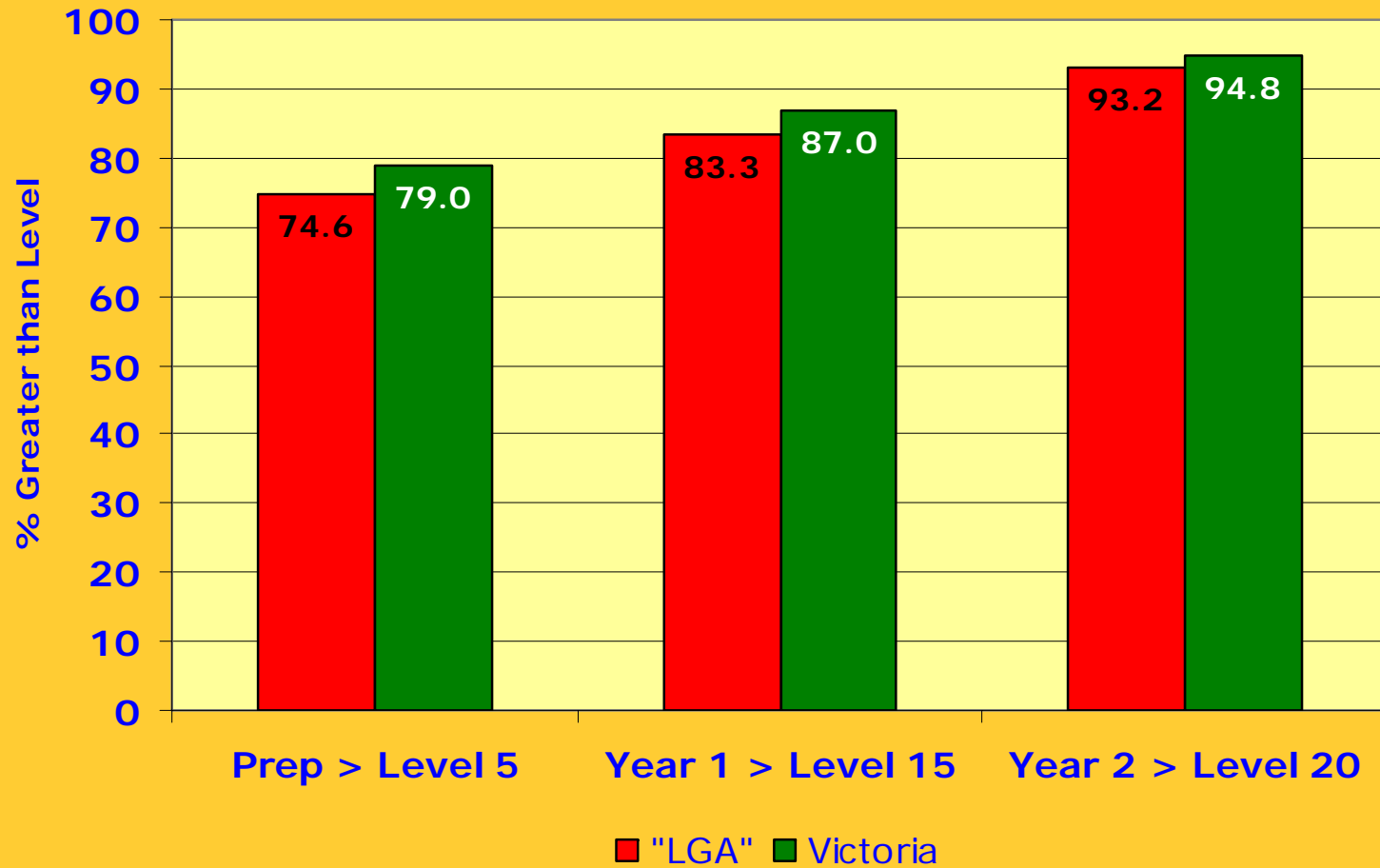


Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Reading Level Assessment 2004



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Indicators – Additional Data Collection

1. Smoking during pregnancy
2. Exposure to tobacco smoke in the home
3. Protection from summer sun
4. Participation in physical activity
5. Brushing teeth at least twice a day
6. Parents reading to their children
7. Unintentional injury
8. Parental levels of social support



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Data – The Future



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Data – The Future

- Evidence Base Catalogue (Sept '06)
- Understand importance of data collection:
 - A picture of how children and families are faring at local level
 - Outcomes to be measured (monitored)
 - Emerging issues to be identified
 - Service gaps to be identified
 - Comparisons and contrasts to be made between groups and across locations
 - Priorities to be set
 - Inform Local and State Policy
 - Improved Outcomes!



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start Data – The Future

- Don't be afraid of data and statistics!
- View data collection as an integral part of service provision
- Work with DHS staff to:
 - Interpret local indicator data and use to maximum benefit in the community



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Contact Information

Joyce Cleary

– Phone: 03 9096 7658

– Email: Joyce.Cleary@dhs.vic.gov.au



Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au

