



## The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey

### Information for professionals working with children and families

#### Background

The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey aims to:

- provide local level data that can be used to support the planning and implementation of services and programs for children and their families
- allow key outcomes to be monitored and reported at Local Government Area level, providing data that is comparable to that collected in the statewide Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey

The Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS) is currently under development within the Office for Children. VCAMS will be a statewide, integrated system, for monitoring and reporting on key outcomes relating to the health, development, safety, learning and wellbeing of children and young people in Victoria. A rolling program of new data collections is being developed to enable reporting on the VCAMS indicators. The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey is one of the new surveys.

The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey follows on from the recently completed Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey (VCHWS), a statewide survey of the parents or carers of children aged under 13 years. Results from the VCHWS can now be viewed in the State of Victoria's Children Report, (available from <http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au>).

While the VCHWS provided essential information on how children in Victoria are faring, it did not provide local level data. Therefore, the Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey is needed to support the planning and evaluation of programs and services for children within municipalities.

#### Survey Scope

The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey is intended to provide a broad overview of how children and families are faring within LGAs. Starting in February 2007, 9000 telephone interviews for the Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey will be carried out in the following 25 LGAs where Best Start programs operate:

Ballarat, Bass Coast, Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Central Goldfields, Dandenong, Darebin, Frankston, Greater Geelong, Greater Nillumbik, Greater Shepparton, Hume, Latrobe, Maribyrnong, Melton, Mildura, Moorabool, Mornington Peninsula, Wellington, South Gippsland, Swan Hill, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Yarra Ranges.

During the fieldwork period, telephone interviews will be carried out with the parents (or carers) of children aged under 13 years. Households will be contacted at random, to ensure that all families with a telephone have an equal chance of participating. The interviews will be carried out on behalf of the Department by a private research company, between February and June 2007.

The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey has been designed to provide local level data that is comparable to that collected in the VCHWS.

The interview covers a broad range of issues, including the child's health status, oral health, asthma, behaviour, maternal health during pregnancy, parental health, family functioning and the environment.

## Reporting

Results from the Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey will be available in April 2008. Examples of data items that will be provided to LGAs include:

Proportion of children with special health care needs

Children who meet nutritional guidelines for fruit and vegetable intake

Children who meet physical activity guidelines

Children with behavioural difficulties

Proportion of children who brush their teeth twice a day

Parental perceptions of neighbourhood liveability and facilities

Proportion of infants with mums who smoked during pregnancy

Proportion of children who live in smoke free households

Parental awareness of sun protection

Proportion of families with healthy family functioning

A community profile will be produced for each LGA, incorporating survey data with local level data that is available from existing data sources. The profiles will be made publicly available in electronic format.

## Limitations

The Local Level Child Health & Wellbeing Survey is just part of a rolling program of data collections that is planned by the Office for Children. Later surveys, including a survey of Aboriginal children, and surveys of children with disabilities, children in out of home care and the children of recent immigrants will provide specific data on these priority populations. The methodology for each of these new surveys will vary.

The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey is intended to give a broad overview of how families are faring in selected LGAs. It will not give detailed information on how minority populations or individual children are faring.

## Why a telephone survey?

- Data will be closely comparable to that collected in the recent, statewide Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey.
- The Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey contains questions relating to the health and wellbeing of children and their families. Respondents tend to answer these types of questions more honestly in interviews that offer greater anonymity.
- In the Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey, an extremely high response rate was achieved, with over 86% of eligible households completing a survey. The telephone methodology seemed to be highly acceptable to Victorian parents.
- Computer assisted telephone interviewing is a relatively efficient and cost effective method for contacting families. Telephone interviews can easily be rescheduled at a time to suit the respondent, regardless of whether the respondent lives in metropolitan or rural Victoria.
- As interviewers are based in a central location they can easily receive training updates and can be closely supervised to maintain data quality.

## Contact details

For further information on the Local Level Child Health and Wellbeing Survey contact Linda Hayes on 03 90965734 (or email: linda.hayes@dhs.vic.gov.au). During the fieldwork period, a toll free help line number will operate for members of the public. Public enquiries about the survey should be directed to the help line (1800 501 202).