Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Discussion paper

Living environment

The effects of physical and social environments on the health and wellbeing of children and young people

Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA acknowledges the unique contribution of Aboriginal people's culture and heritage to Western Australian society. For the purposes of this report, the term 'Aboriginal' encompasses Western Australia's diverse language groups and also recognises those of Torres Strait Islander descent. The use of the term 'Aboriginal' in this way is not intended to imply equivalence between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, though similarities do exist.

Suggested citation

Commissioner for Children and Young People 2019, *Discussion paper – Living environment: The effects of physical and social environments on the health and wellbeing of children and young people*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth.

Alternative formats

On request, large print or alternative format copies of this report can be obtained from the Commissioner for Children and Young People at:

Commissioner for Children and Young People WA
Ground Floor, 1 Alvan Street
Subiaco WA 6008

Telephone: 08 6213 2297
Facsimile: 08 6213 2220
Email: info@ccyp.wa.gov.au
Web: ccyp.wa.gov.au

ISBN: 978-0-9876376-4-2

Contents

Environment is a key influence on children and young people's health and wellbeing. Places and spaces have a significant impact on child development, with research showing that physical surroundings shape a child's interactions with others and their life experiences into adulthood.

Physical and social environments are made up of many components, encompassing places and spaces where people play, learn, work and live. This includes playgrounds and parks, buildings such as schools, homes and shopping centres, transport infrastructure and recreational and community facilities.

The places and spaces children inhabit have a strong influence on how they experience life – their involvement in the community, engagement in school and enjoyment of social activities. These places and spaces help children to maintain social connections, inspire creativity and imagination, and lead healthy, active lifestyles. Some studies are also suggesting that certain personality traits in children are shaped by where they live.[1]

The right to play and enjoy community life in places and spaces that are safe and welcoming is something all children and young people are entitled to. These rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (the Convention)[2], which was ratified by Australia in 1991.

The Convention states that all children and young people have the right:

- to a clean and safe environment where they can play and rest. Governments have a responsibility to create environments conducive to these outcomes (Article 31);
- to a standard of living in which all their basic needs are met (Article 27); and
- to an opinion on matters that affect their lives, and that these opinions should be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).[3]

Background

The role of the Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to monitor, promote and advocate on behalf of all children and young people living in Western Australia, highlighting issues and undertaking research relevant to their wellbeing.

The Commissioner's work has regard to the Convention, acting on the principle that parents, families and communities have the primary role in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of their children and young people and should be supported in carrying out their role. Special regard must be given to those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or vulnerable or disadvantaged for any reason.

Similarly, the Commissioner's Statement of Commitment[4] outlines the right to be safe and feel safe everywhere; the right to a healthy life; and the right to play, have fun and be active. Enjoying all these rights is dependent on being able to live in a clean, safe community, having access to play spaces and other services and facilities, and having stable and secure housing.

The Commissioner has consulted with thousands of children and young people on a range of issues relevant to their wellbeing. Children and young people consistently say that the environment in which they live has a significant impact on their health and wellbeing. They also say that the love and support of their family and friends, safe and secure housing, a good education, and access to recreational opportunities and other community facilities are very important to them. They are concerned about their environment, and sometimes they do not feel safe, at home, at school or in their local community.

Children and young people have views and ideas about how things can be improved, and they want to be included in the design of public places and spaces, so they feel safe and welcome and can make a meaningful contribution to community life.

The Commissioner prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in all work of the office and in our work with other organisations. In order to support WA organisations to identify and manage risks that affect the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people they are in contact with, and develop their own child safe strategies, the Commissioner has developed a range of Child Safe Organisations resources. This work is important in the context of the built environment – how do we ensure that child safe principles are embedded into the design, culture and leadership, policies and procedures of community places and spaces that children and young people inhabit?

One of the ways in which the Commissioner monitors child wellbeing is through the Wellbeing Monitoring Framework (WMF). A component of the WMF is the Indicators of Wellbeing, designed to be a practical resource that provides a single, collated overview of the wellbeing of WA's children and young people and helps to identify what is working and where changes in policies and practices are required.

The Indicators data is structured across three domains: learning and participating; healthy and connected; and safe and supported. The three domains take into consideration how families, communities and services enable children to be healthy, safe and learning. It monitors many important attributes of place and space, including home and community safety, quality of relationships and social connections, levels of physical activity and engagement with schooling and other important services.

In 2019, the Commissioner for Children and Young People reinstated a focus on the living environment, commissioning a review of the latest national and international

research findings examining the impact of physical and social environments on children's health and wellbeing.

Undertaken by Dr Carmen Lawrence, the review examined a number of studies and inquiries undertaken in Australia and internationally, looking broadly at the impact of changing urban and rural environments on children and young people.[5]

Findings of the review are discussed in more detail, below.

Demographic and social profile of children and young people in WA

Western Australia is home to more than 598,000 children and young people, which is 23.1 per cent of WA's total population. From 2018 to 2058, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) projects that WA's population will more than double to reach over 6.1 million people, with just over 1.2 million of these being children and young people. It is anticipated to be the largest percentage increase across Australia.[6]

The geographical distribution of children and young people across WA remains largely unchanged. In 2017, around 74 per cent of the population of 0 to 17 year olds resided in metropolitan Perth, just under 17 per cent resided in regional areas and just under 10 per cent in remote areas of WA.

There has been a small increase in the number of children and young people in WA between June 2016 and June 2017. The number of children and young people increased in the metropolitan area by 1.1 per cent, remained relatively stable in regional areas and there was a slight decrease in remote areas.

It is important to consider how future urban planning, our built and natural environments, changing housing densities and employment patterns will be impacted by increases in population, particularly as most of the growth is expected to occur in the Perth metropolitan area.[7]

What the research tells us

While many recent studies on the linkages between physical and social environments and health and wellbeing have taken place in the United States and Europe and focus predominantly on adults, a sufficient amount of child-centred Australian research now exists to enable a comprehensive analysis of the most consistent findings.

Specifically, this research shows an increasing understanding of the linkages between place and space and health and wellbeing, highlighting that the social and economic environments in which children live, as well as individual child and parental characteristics, have a significant influence on wellbeing and health outcomes.

Healthy communities – why place matters

Place attachment and its impacts on health and wellbeing

"I love living here. There is lots of nature. I love to play soccer... The sun is bright and the grass is green. It is beautiful here." 10 year-old

High quality, nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults are essential for a child's healthy development.[8] Attachment is one component of the relationship between a child and their caregiver(s) which corresponds to the child feeling safe, secure and protected.[9]

Similarly, children form attachments to place – their homes, their neighbourhoods and their broader communities. The places where children grow up can have a significant lifelong influence on their wellbeing; forming these attachments early allows children to develop essential components of their identity, underpinning feelings of security, safety and belonging.[10]

Evidence strongly suggests that children and young people who grow up in socially cohesive neighbourhoods and communities with good access to services, high quality natural environments and positive relationships between adults and children enjoy better outcomes across a range of indicators, including schooling and education, health, community life, employment opportunities and economic development.

Further, local communities can play a significant role in supporting vulnerable children and counteracting some of the effects of crime and community dysfunction; building trustful, respectful relationships has a powerful impact and can be the circuit breaker that creates a pathway for positive change.[11] When children and young people form a positive attachment to the places and spaces around them, they are also more likely to raise concerns and seek help if they don't feel safe and supported within their community.[12]

For Aboriginal children and young people, a vibrant culture and connection to community are significant factors in strengthening resilience. Evidence shows that connection to culture is fundamental to Aboriginal children and young people's identity and wellbeing, intrinsically connected to their family and relationship to the land.[13]

Attributes of communities

There is increasing recognition that neighbourhoods and communities are highly influential in children's lives.

Research[14] has shown that a number of important attributes of place shape how healthy a community is. These can be grouped broadly into social characteristics (community relationships, community safety and resilience) and aspects of the

physical environment (greenspace and the natural environment, pollution and accessibility of transport and other services).

Community relationships

Good relationships are a critical attribute of healthy, well-functioning communities.

In consultations undertaken by the Commissioner, children and young people consistently cite spending time with family and friends, being able to participate actively in their community and being respected and listened to as critical to their wellbeing – all outcomes that are facilitated by good relationships.

Similar studies have yielded comparable findings. In 2010 and 2013 Australian researchers asked 108 children aged eight to 12 years about their communities.[15] Most children thought that caring, supportive relationships were the heart of communities. They highlighted good neighbours, family and friends, get-togethers, time with parents, caring people and being listened to, as key aspects of a good community.[16]

Children who knew their neighbours and got on well with them described feeling safe and happy because they knew there were people looking out for them.[17] They also reported that relationships with other adults in their community, for example shop-keepers and bus drivers, influenced their feelings of safety; either making them feel safe and welcome or unwelcome and uncomfortable.

Community safety

"In my point of view, the most important thing in life is having opportunities and the feeling that you're safe in the local environment, and not worried that it's not safe around your home." Young person

Feeling safe in their neighbourhood and other communities or groups is essential for young children in particular, as it provides them with the confidence to explore and learn about their environment outside of the family. Children and young people who feel safe in the various communities they interact with – whether this is their local neighbourhood, a sporting club, a school group or another community facility, are more likely to have the confidence to explore and develop their independence, develop healthy relationships with other adults and speak up if they feel unsafe.

As autonomy increases and children and young people become more independently mobile in their neighbourhoods, parental perceptions of safety are also important. Research has shown that parental perceptions of safety, irrespective of actual crime rates, may influence the extent to which children are able to interact with community spaces - parks and greenspace in particular.[18] Further, it appears that areas with more greenspace have lower crime rates and better parental perceptions of safety.[19]

Resilience

Resilient communities display certain characteristics that may make them more likely to thrive in the face of adversity.[20] Some of these characteristics include the ability to learn new skills, the ability to maintain and repair infrastructure and the capacity to respond proactively to change.[21]

While the qualities of resilient communities are relevant across a range of policy contexts, they are particularly pertinent when considering communities that have been displaced or disrupted by natural disasters.

With the continued and growing threats of natural disasters including drought, bushfires and flooding[22], particularly in regional areas and urban fringes, it is timely to pay closer attention to the protective factors that make communities strong and how policy and planning processes can make better use of the evidence to drive better outcomes for everyone in the community, including children and young people.

Most disasters, by definition, destroy valued places and spaces. Losing homes, schools, and natural and built recreation areas can be particularly devastating for children and young people and have a profoundly negative impact on a range of wellbeing indicators. [23]

This is particularly relevant for Aboriginal children and young people and their families, many of whom have been, and continue to be, impacted significantly by the intergenerational trauma associated with dispossession and displacement from traditional lands. Maintaining a strong connection to culture and country, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas is a critical component of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal children and young people.

Green space and the natural environment

"I really enjoy going to local wetlands, going for walks and bird watching." 10 year-old

Parks and green space are a vital component of healthy communities and provide everyone with valuable opportunities to play, rest and socialise.

There are wide-ranging and well-documented benefits that come with access to green space, from the family backyard to public open spaces and natural bushlands. These have been documented in several research studies and include increased physical activity, pro-social behaviour and general life satisfaction, better cognitive performance, a reduction in stress, anxiety and aggression. The benefits increase with both the amount of access and length of exposure.[24]

These findings are consistent with what children and young people report to the Commissioner and others; that the natural environment provides them with valuable

opportunities to socialise with family and friends, participate in sporting and recreational activities and helps them to feel safe, calm and grounded.[25]

Pollution

Exposure to toxins and air and noise pollution are known to be detrimental to a child's health, with many studies confirming that children's healthy development is compromised when they live in areas with high levels of pollution, particularly from traffic emissions. These studies also show that children and young people who live in low socio-economic areas are more likely to be exposed to pollution by living in places of heavy industry, near airports and busy roads. [26]

Australian studies have found that high levels of air pollution can negatively affect children's cognitive functioning, with children living in some heavy-industry towns (specifically, in areas where they are exposed to arsenic, cadmium and lead level contamination) performing more poorly on developmental and educational indices. Comparable data from similar areas in WA is not readily available.[27]

There is an increasing amount of evidence to suggest that increasing the amount and quality of public greenspace also has a significant part to play in improving environmental outcomes, by improving air quality (filtering pollution) and buffering noise.[28]

While it appears that planning decisions affecting children and young people have not traditionally considered the impacts of pollution, given the evidence it may now be timely to consider these issues more closely – particularly the role greenspace plays in delivering better environmental outcomes and how it might be factored more deliberately into community planning.

Accessibility – transport and other services

An accessible, affordable transport system is an important part of a healthy community; research shows that young people's access to job opportunities, social life, education, physical activity and independent mobility are all adversely affected by poor transport options.[29]

With the Perth metropolitan area continuing to sprawl and increasing numbers of children and young people living on the urban fringes, it is a concern that in many areas, cycling and public transport networks are still not well developed. This makes it difficult for children and young people to move about safely and independently, impeding their ability to play and form valuable social connections. With Perth having the highest per-capita car use of any capital city in Australia (and ranking among the highest in the world), this is a significant issue for children and young people.[30]

While some research suggests that living in non-metropolitan areas may increase the likelihood of participating in community life, with more face-to-face contact outside

the home with community members[31], people living in regional areas still face significant challenges accessing transport and other services. This includes access to adequate housing, community infrastructure, essential services and opportunities to participate in recreational and cultural activities that may not be accessible within walking distance.

Children and young people across Western Australia consistently raise these issues with the Commissioner and cite them as a significant barrier to participating in the community.

Schools, recreation venues, community facilities and health care services must all be accessible to children and young people. These places all play a practical role in the community, but many also act as important meeting hubs where children and young people gather and develop social networks. For Aboriginal children and young people in particular, there is evidence that recreation programs contribute to school retention and educational outcomes, social and cognitive skills, physical and mental health and wellbeing, social inclusion and cohesion, connection to culture, and a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour.[32]

For children and young people with disability, being able to safely access community places and spaces is particularly important, with research suggesting they are at greater risk of social exclusion, with fewer opportunities to access play settings and activities than their peers.[33] It is important that play settings are safe, accessible and developmentally appropriate for all children and young people to engage in free and spontaneous play.

Social exclusion and locational disadvantage

"The children of [my town] are exposed to things that they should not be, such as drugs and alcohol, family abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and physical abuse. They need places where they can go and feel wanted and needed. They don't like going to school because they know that there are people in the school that are just there to work and make money. They can tell when people don't care about them. They need people that care about them, people that are willing to give them their own time to listen and help and be their friends." 17 year-old

While most children and young people in WA are faring well, there are many who live in communities where entrenched pockets of poverty, limited access to education and employment opportunities and social dysfunction are a concern. Children living in these communities are likely to experience social exclusion, lacking the opportunities and resources to participate fully in their communities.[34] This is also referred to as 'locational disadvantage'.[35]

Children and young people living in low socio-economic status areas are disproportionately at-risk of becoming socially excluded. Research suggests that

neighbourhood disadvantage is linked to poorer health outcomes, lower educational attainment, diminished wellbeing, and more behavioural problems, with low household income and low parental education being strong predictors of children's mental health.[36]

Research conducted by the Australian Housing Urban Research Institute (AHURI) of public housing in Perth found that locational disadvantage is certainly a concern, with access to services and spaces that support wellbeing varying greatly between suburbs and diminishing with distance from the city centre.[37]

Within the greater Perth metropolitan area, the ABS Socioeconomic Indices for Areas (SEIFA) data shows the most disadvantaged suburbs are Kwinana, Mandurah, Rockingham and Armadale, followed by Belmont and Gosnells. These areas are characterised by large pockets of unemployment and housing disadvantage. Child Exclusion Scores in the Perth metropolitan area also show that Girrawheen (58.16) and Balga-Mirrabooka (54.95) scored very highly.

In contrast, Child Social Exclusion Scores were very low in City Beach (0.33), Floreat (0.49), Swanbourne-Mt Claremont (0.60) and Cottesloe (0.67).[38]

Children who live in communities with high unemployment, low incomes and limited access to services are more likely to be exposed to higher levels of crime, violence and antisocial behaviour[39], with research finding that children exposed to these behaviours feel very unsafe in their communities.[40]

In turn, these children and young people are at a higher risk of negative long-term outcomes including substance abuse, anxiety-related disorders and exhibiting future violent behaviour.[41] [42] For very young children, repeated exposure to community violence in particular can contribute to problems forming positive and trusting relationships[43] and is strongly associated with children experiencing conduct problems.[44]

It should be stated that poverty does not cause criminal behaviour. However, the experience of being poor does create material and social conditions (high levels of stress, mental health issues, lack of access to services etc) that increase the likelihood of being a victim or perpetrator of criminal behaviour.[45]

A high proportion of people living in regional, rural or remote areas are at risk of being socially excluded.[46] Research conducted by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) recently found that 36 per cent of Australian children living in remote and very remote areas were facing the highest risk of social exclusion.[47]

In many regional and remote communities, inadequate housing is often one of the most obvious markers of disadvantage. Housing infrastructure, in very remote communities in particular, is often vastly inadequate and dwellings are very

overcrowded. WA children living in remote and very remote areas are seven times more likely to be homeless (2.1% of children) than children living in outer regional areas (0.3% of children).[48]

This issue disproportionately impacts on Aboriginal children and young people and their families.

The built environment

The built environment is a component of place and space. Put simply, the built environment refers to all the things we see around us - houses, schools, shops, walkways, railways, parks, recreational facilities and community centres.

There is a well-established link between the built environment and children's activity levels and participation in their community, which in turn is predictive of their overall health and wellbeing.[49]

Reviews of the research have found that children's play and physical activity are influenced by features of the built environment and that these environments can facilitate or impede social interactions for children and young people. For example, in inner-city areas where housing density and street traffic is high and open space may be limited, children's opportunities for independent play may be compromised.

As an important component of the built environment, attention must also be paid to the increasing amount of evidence which strongly demonstrates the influence of the natural environment on health and wellbeing. Local parks and bushlands are a critically important part of the community, facilitating valuable opportunities to gather, play and socialise.

We must ensure that these spaces are safe, developmentally appropriate and accessible to all, served by well-connected foot or cycle paths and public transport.

Housing – urban sprawl, high-rise apartment living and overcrowding

Every child and young person has the right to enjoy an adequate standard of living, which includes access to safe, secure housing.[50] According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, housing adequacy is determined by a number of factors, including:

- legal security of tenure
- availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure
- affordability
- accessibility
- habitability
- location
- cultural adequacy.[51]

These rights are enshrined in a number of human rights treaties, including the UNCRC.

Housing quality is a key determinant of children's health and wellbeing.[52] A range of poor child health and developmental outcomes are associated with poorly-maintained housing, overcrowding, unstable tenancy arrangements and exposure to pollutants.[53] Poorly maintained or unsuitable housing also places children at risk of injury or accident.

In the context of the built environment, the location of a child's dwelling is critical, as this influences how easily they can play and socialise with friends, how they get to school, and access services and other recreational opportunities. As children grow older and gain more independence but are still reliant on foot and cycle paths or public transport, their proximity to these amenities becomes even more important.

Urban sprawl

"I wish we had more parks where I live. There aren't enough parks." Young person

As Western Australia's population grows, the way we live is changing. Increasingly, housing is expanding to the outskirts of the metropolitan area, with many homes being built on smaller blocks in large housing developments. This means that many traditional backyard spaces no longer exist.[54] Perth's expansion is also resulting in a reduction of greenspace including large pockets of native vegetation, being cleared to make way for new housing.[55]

The factors are significant for children and young people and their families; with reduced opportunities for play in the family backyard, or smaller parks within close proximity to houses, opportunities for active recreation and independent mobility are being compromised.[56]

Lower-density urban sprawl has also been linked to obesity and other lifestyle-diseases, as it is typically associated with higher private vehicle use and reduced access to public transport and other local services. Those living on the metropolitan outskirts are also more likely to have lower incomes and are vulnerable to other forms of disadvantage and social exclusion – commonly known as the 'suburbanisation' of disadvantage.[57]

High-rise apartment living

The most recent Census data shows increasing numbers of families with children living in apartments[58] – almost 44 per cent of all families (defined by the ABS as two or more persons) living in apartments in Australia.[59]

Apartments are a significant component of high-rise living, with 38 per cent of all occupied apartments being within four or more story blocks.[60]

As more children and young people and their families live in higher density environments, it is important to consider current research into how these living environments influence health and wellbeing.

While the available evidence on the impact on children and young people is less clear, some studies suggest that high-rise living is associated with reduced levels of independent activity and opportunities to play, which in turn has a negative influence on mental health and behavioural outcomes.[61]

Families participating in Australian research have also highlighted some of their concerns with these types of living arrangements, specifically around safety, lack of dedicated play spaces, lack of access to daylight, and excessive noise.[62]

However, evidence also shows that in well-planned communities that promote mixed-land use and have good access to public transport and local amenities, social connections, physical activity and community engagement may increase[63], delivering positive outcomes for everyone.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding is generally an indicator of poor housing quality and due to the increased contact between residents, is associated with increased risk of infection, psychological distress and compromised cognitive development in children. Additionally, children and young people are more likely to be exposed to family tension, conflict and violence from the increased stress levels of adults living in close proximity to one another.[64]

Overcrowding limits people's access to the basic amenities which are necessary for maintaining good health, including washing, laundry, hygienic food storage and preparation, and safe disposal of waste.[65]

Aboriginal children and young people are more likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts to live in overcrowded conditions, and in turn more likely to experience poorer health outcomes.[66]

While it is acknowledged that for many Aboriginal communities, larger households are associated with stronger social connections and better behavioural and emotional outcomes for children,[67] this should not be confused with overcrowding, which remains a significant issue for many Aboriginal communities. This is particularly the case in regional and remote areas where housing and infrastructure is often poorly-maintained and does not meet the needs of the families who live there.[68]

Responses to overcrowding and other issues in Aboriginal communities must be place-based, designed by people in that community and tailored to that community's needs.[69]

Conclusion

There is now a strong evidence base that shows physical and social environments have a profound impact on children and young people, across all domains of wellbeing and across the lifespan from early childhood into adulthood.

Child-friendly communities facilitate growth, independence and a sense of belonging in children and young people. Safe, accessible places and spaces are an important component of healthy communities and increase social cohesion.

Children and young people have strong views about the world around them, and want to be involved in decisions that affect them – particularly those that involve the communities in which they live.

An opportunity now exists for policy and planning processes to take greater account of the important attributes of place and space to make informed, evidence-based decisions. What makes communities strong? And importantly, how can we prioritise the needs of children and young people and facilitate their meaningful contribution to these processes?

Creating safe, nurturing environments with resources, support and opportunities to enable all children and young people to reach their potential is a collective responsibility and government, the non-government sector and the WA community must work together to achieve this.

Actions the Commissioner will undertake

A valuable opportunity exists for the Commissioner's work across a number of portfolios to inform built environment planning and design processes. The Commissioner will:

Undertake further consultation with children and young people about what constitutes healthy, accessible, friendly and safe places and spaces. The consultations will have a particular focus on ensuring children and young people are meaningfully and tangibly engaged with community planning and other creative processes, and facilitating and supporting children and young people to provide high-level feedback and recommendations for required action.

Progress the development of a Child Impact Assessment tool that considers, in the context of the built environment, the impact of any proposed legislation, policy or strategy on the rights, interests and wellbeing of children and young people.

Continue to engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the views and needs of children and young people and their families are duly considered in all planning and development processes. This includes work to embed Child Safe Principles into these processes.

Endnotes

[1] Amir, D., Jordan, M. R., McAuliffe, K., Valeggia, C. R., Sugiyama, L. S., Bribiescas, R. G., Dunham, Y. 2019, The developmental origins of risk and time preferences across diverse societies. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General.*

[2] United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, retrieved September 2019 from <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

[3] Ibid

[4] Commissioner for Children and Young People [website] ccyp.wa.gov.au

[5] The World Health Organization (WHO) broadly defines the social determinants of health as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. According to the WHO, significant social determinant indicators include:

- Socio-economic status
- early years indicators (eg birth weight)
- social exclusion
- employment and work
- housing and homelessness
- the built and natural environments
- rural vs urban settings
- community and neighbourhoods

[6] Commissioner for Children and Young People 2019, *Profile of Children and Young People in WA – January 2019,* Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth

[7] Ibid

[8] National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2004, *Young children develop in an environment of relationships, Working Paper No. 1,* Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University.

[9] Benoit D 2004, *Infant-parent attachment: Definition, types, antecedents, measurement and outcome, Paediatric Child Health*, Vol 9, No 8.

[10] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p. 14.

[11] Wayland S & Hindmarsh G 2017, *Understanding safeguarding practices for children with disability when engaging with organisations*, Child Family Community Australia, Australian Institute of Family Studies, p. 3.

[12] Commissioner for Children and Young People WA 2016, *Child Safe Organisations WA: Guidelines*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth.

[13] Commissioner for Children and Young People WA 2011, *Speaking out about wellbeing – Aboriginal children and young people speak out about culture and identity*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth.

[14] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished].

[15] Bessell S & Mason J 2014, *Putting the pieces in place: Children, communities and social capital in Australia*, Australian National University and University of Western Sydney, p. 22.

[16] Bessell S 2016, *Communities Matter: Children's views on community in Australia*, Australian National University.

[17] Bessell S 2016, *Communities Matter: Children's views on community in Australia*, Australian National University, p. 19.

[18] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p.38

[19] Ibid

[20] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished].

[21] Arup International Development 2011, *Characteristics of a Safe and Resilient Community – Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Study,* International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies https://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/96986/Final_Characteristics_Report.pdf

[22] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished]

[23] Ibid

[24] Ibid

[25] Commissioner for Children and Young People [website] ccyp.wa.gov.au; Queensland Family and Child Commission 2018, *This Place I Call Home, The views of children and young people growing up in Queensland*, Queensland Government.

[26] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p.24.

[27] Ibid, p. 25

[28] Ibid, p. 35.

[29] Commissioner for Children and Young People 2010, *Built Environment Issues paper*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth.

[30] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished]

[31] Ibid

[32] Commissioner for Children and Young People 2015, *Listen to Us: Using the views of WA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to improve policy and service delivery*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth, p. 15.

[33] Commissioner for Children and Young People 2013, *Speaking Out About Disability*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth.

[34] Miranti R et al. 2018, *Child Social Exclusion, Poverty And Disadvantage In Australia*, NATSEM, Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA), University of Canberra, p. 4.

[35] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p. 16.

[36] Ibid

[37] Ibid

[38] Miranti R et al. 2018, *Child Social Exclusion, Poverty And Disadvantage In Australia*, NATSEM, Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA), University of Canberra.

[39] Webster C & Kingston S 2014, *Crime and Poverty*, in Reducing Poverty in the UK: A collection of evidence review, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, p. 149.

[40] Bessell S 2016, *Communities Matter: Children's views on community in Australia*, Australian National University, p. 26.

[41] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished]

[42] Ibid

[43] Guerra NG & Dierkhising MA 2011, *The Effects of Community Violence on Child Development*, Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development.

[44] Ibid

[45] Schwartz M 2010, *Building communities, not prisons: Justice reinvestment and Indigenous over-imprisonment*, Australian Indigenous Law Review, Vol 14, No 1.

[46] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished]

[47] Ibid

[48] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019, *Children's Headline Indictors: Homelessness*, AIHW.

[49] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished]

[50] https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/projects/housing-homelessness-and-human-rights

[51] https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/projects/housing-homelessness-and-human-rights

[52] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished]

[53] Ibid

[54] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p. 18.

[55] Ibid

[56] Ibid

[57] Ibid

[58] The ABS defines a flat or apartment to include: all dwellings in blocks of flats or apartments. These dwellings do not have their own private grounds and usually share a common entrance foyer or stairwell. This category also includes flats attached to houses such as granny flats, and houses converted into two or more flats

[59] ABS 2017, *Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016*, retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Apartment%20Living~20>

[60] Ibid

[61] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p. 54

[62] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p. 53

[63] Ibid

[64] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished], p. 53

[65] Commissioner for Children and Young People, Indicators of Wellbeing [website] ccyp.wa.gov.au

[66] Commissioner for Children and Young People, Indicators of Wellbeing [website] ccyp.wa.gov.au

[67] Lawrence, Dr C 2019, *The Effects of Physical and Social Environments on the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People [unpublished]

[68] Of the people in WA who are homeless and living in a very remote location, 72 per cent are considered homeless as a result of severe overcrowding. In contrast, of the 58 per cent of WA people who are homeless in the Perth metropolitan area, only 38 per cent are homeless as a result of severe overcrowding

[69] Commissioner for Children and Young People 2019, *Improving the Odds for WA's Vulnerable Children and Young People*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Perth, p. 18