Child Safety Data

Introduction

This document provides an overview of the standard data files used by Child Safety Performance Reporting and Analytics that <u>may</u> be available to researchers.

Researchers who intend to request data from the department for their research are encouraged to contact the department's Research team, to clarify data availability prior to making their research application, by emailing researchandevaluation@dcssds.qld.gov.au.

A large number of corporate family support and child protection measures are made publicly available on the department's Our Performance website. Researchers should familiarise themselves with the data on this website.

Data outside of these measures may not be easily extractable or available. Corporate data sources do not support longitudinal analysis.

Child Safety do not have permission to provide data from other departments and agencies (e.g. Education) to third parties. Researchers need to contact other departments directly and seek permission to access their data.

Researchers interested in linking data files across government departments should contact Queensland Government Statisticians Office (QGSO) for availability and costings.

Data Content

While the following data may be available, it is important to note that each measure listed below may need to be manually extracted by a departmental officer. Large requests for data may not be able to be accommodated.

- *Unique identifiers:* child ICMS ID (masked)

- *Demographic characteristics of children, young people and carers:* age, sex, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification. The majority of the below data can be provided with this demographic breakdown.

- *Intake (12 months ending reference period):* date of intake, intake category outcome (child concern report or notification), intake source, departmental intake region, geographic location (based on home address at the time of intake).

- *Investigation and/or assessment (I&A) (12 months ending reference period):* I&A response priority, date of assessment commencement, assessment commencement timeframes, date of assessment completion, outcome of investigation and/or assessment, departmental assessment region, departmental assessment district, departmental assessment child safety service centre.

- *Ongoing intervention (as at a reference date):* intervention type, child protection order type and length (where applicable), assigned departmental region, assigned departmental district, assigned departmental child safety service centre.

- *Living arrangements of children and young people (as at a reference date):* placement type (e.g., foster care, kinship care, residential care), length of time in placement, whether they are placed with sibling/s, assigned departmental region, assigned departmental district, assigned departmental child safety service centre.

- *Carer families (as at a reference date):* carer approval type, first time carers, carer approval start date, whether they are grandparent carers, length of time as a carer, number of children and young people placed with carer, assigned departmental region, assigned departmental district, assigned departmental child safety service centre.

Date Ranges

Start of period: Data is generally available back to 2010

End of period: Data is generally available three months after the reference date e.g., for the reference period 31 March, data is generally available from 30 June.

Researchers typically request date ranges that correspond to calendar years or the standard financial year (1 July to 30 June). Child Safety data is reported with a reference date of each quarter (31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December). Data at these reference points can be for either the year ending the reference date, or as at the reference date (depending on the dataset).

Note that researchers should take into consideration the above time frames, and the time required for organisational data extraction and approval processes to occur. For example, if the data requested is not readily available in standard reports, additional timeframes will be required, depending on the complexity of the data.

Changes In Data Over Time

Note that significant changes in child safety's structure, practice (service delivery) and policies, or the broader environment (e.g., pandemics) may constitute "breaks in data timeseries". Researchers should consider these changes when examining patterns over time. Some considerations (presented in approximate chronological order) are:

- From October 2022 - An extended review and complete strategy was implemented by a specialist centralised team to assist Child Safety Service Centres to review and prioritise investigations and assessments within available resources. This included the ability to finalise investigations with an outcome of 'no investigation and assessment outcome' where the investigation and assessment was open for more than 100 days, had not commenced and where no new or significant information had been reported to the department
- September 2019 – Amendments to investigation and assessment completion timeframes commenced. From 1 September 2019, timeframes for completion of investigations and assessments were extended from 60 days to 100 days from when the notification is recorded. This extension better reflects family led decision making processes, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families; as well as increased safety planning and support now offered by Child Safety in the investigation and assessment processes

- October 2018 — Legislative amendments enabling the Court to make a Permanent Care Order come into effect. Permanent Care Orders grant guardianship to a suitable person who is committed to preserving the child's identity, the child's connection to their culture of origin and the child's relationship with members of their family. No contact by Child Safety is required after the order is made
- July 2017 – Amendments to the Child Protection Act 1999 commenced. From 1 July 2017, early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals are required to report child safety concerns where there is a reasonable suspicion that the child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and there is not a parent willing and able to protect the child from harm.

Data Structures

- The data structure varies from dataset to dataset: often datasets have similar content but with a different data structure and counting rules.
- The two basic structures are:
  - One row per child or young person (e.g. "per placement record", "child protection order")
  - One row per transaction or event per child or young person (e.g., "per intake", "per entry into care", "per investigation and/or assessment outcome")
- The Department will work with the researchers to determine the data structure that would best align with their intended analysis.