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Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status in the Australian day-care setting: developmental concerns of parents and carers.

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OBJECTIVE: To trial the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) as an instrument for reporting developmental concerns for Australian preschool children. **METHOD:** A cross-sectional survey of parents

and carers of 262 children attending five day-care centres and two kindergartens in Melbourne was conducted between October and November 1999. Parents and carers completed the written PEDS questionnaire, comprising 10 questions eliciting concerns about learning, development and behaviour, and answered questions about the acceptability and use of the PEDS. RESULTS: Of 445 children, 389 were eligible for inclusion. Complete parent and carer PEDS data were available for 262 children (67% response: 47% boys; 53% girls) aged from 18 months to 5 years, 9 months. Most parents found the PEDS questionnaire easy to complete (98%) and likely to be useful to health professionals (89%). Twenty-four children (9%) were classified as being at high-risk of disabilities and 49 (19%) were classified as being at medium-risk of disabilities. Parents of 125 children (48%) reported no concerns. The prevalence of parental concerns was similar to the USA norming sample. Carers reported similar prevalences of concerns. Although overall agreement was high, parent/carer kappa-values were modest, being highest for the gross motor ($\kappa = 0.40$) and social-emotional ($\kappa = 0.37$) domains. CONCLUSIONS: The PEDS is acceptable to parents of Australian preschool children, with a prevalence of significant concerns (i.e. children at high- and medium-risk of developmental problems) that is similar to those in the USA. Further research is needed to assess what factors differentially influence whether a concern is felt in a particular domain for a particular child.