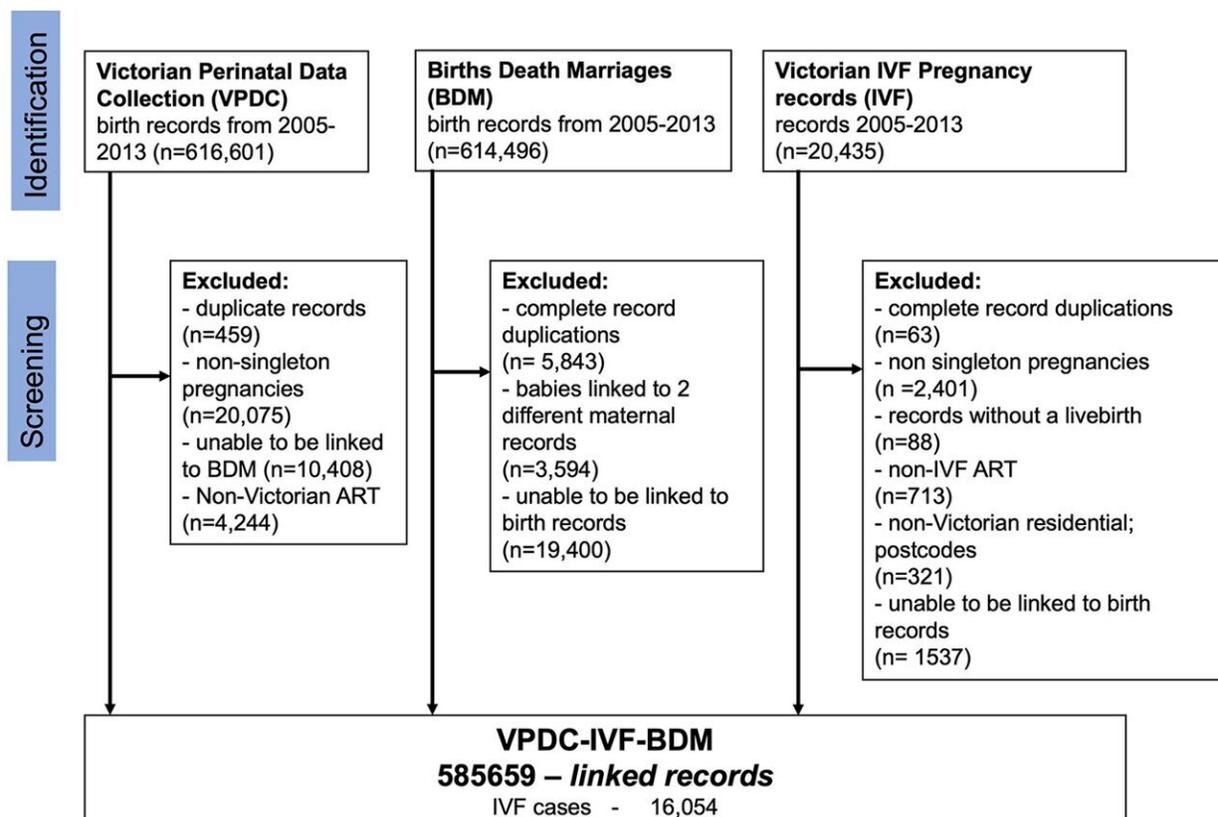


No link between IVF-assisted conception and school-age childhood development outcomes, study says

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IVF, in vitro fertilization; IVF cases, pregnancies and children identified with conception assisted by IVF; Controls, pregnancies and children not identified as IVF assisted conception; ART, assisted reproductive technology; non-IVF ART, ovulation induction and intrauterine insemination; VPDC, Victorian Perinatal Data Collection; BDM, Victorian Births Death Marriages Registry; IVF, combined Victorian IVF pregnancy record database. Credit: *PLOS Medicine*

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A comprehensive study of more than 400,000 children—with over 11,000 conceived via in-vitro fertilization (IVF)—has found no link between IVF conception and adverse developmental outcomes for school-age children.

Published on Jan. 24 in *PLOS Medicine*, the study involved collaboration between the three major IVF units in Victoria—Melbourne IVF, Monash IVF and City Fertility Centre, and incorporated data on over 400,000 [children](#) born between 2005 and 2013, 11,059 of whom were conceived via IVF.

Led by Dr. Amber Kennedy and Dr. Anthea Lindquist, the study assessed childhood developmental and educational outcomes using the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

Dr. Kennedy said, "We found no difference in performance across the five domains of the AEDC, nor in NAPLAN scores, between children who were born after IVF-assisted [conception](#) and those who were conceived without assistance."

"Some concerning evidence has previously suggested that IVF-conceived children may have poorer school-aged outcomes compared with their spontaneously conceived peers. However, our comprehensive analysis of this massive dataset has found this not to be the case. Our findings will provide important reassurance for clinicians and for current and future parents of IVF-conceived children."

Conception via IVF is common and increasing, with more than eight

million babies have been born worldwide using IVF. Five percent of children in Australia are now conceived via IVF.

The AEDC is conducted every three years and assesses children in their first year of schooling (age 4-6 years) across five developmental domains. NAPLAN is conducted annually, and assesses [educational outcomes](#) at different school ages. Grade 3 NAPLAN results were analyzed for this study.

More information: Amber L. Kennedy et al, School-age outcomes among IVF-conceived children: A population-wide cohort study, *PLOS Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1004148](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1004148)

Provided by University of Melbourne

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