

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) in Niagara Falls



**Community Research
in Child Development**



Project

Partners

**Initial
results**

Benefits

Understanding the Early Years

- **Project of the Applied Research Branch of Human Resources Development Canada**
- **National study focusing on community impacts on early child development**
- **Part of Government of Canada commitment to ensure that all children are ready to learn and participate in society (SFT 1997)**
- **Received by Cabinet approval in February 1999**

UEY

- **Builds on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth**
- **Extends our capacity to understand factors influencing child development outcomes**
- **Provides provincial and territorial estimates on a variety of outcome measures**
- **Allows measuring and reporting on the readiness of Canadian children to learn**

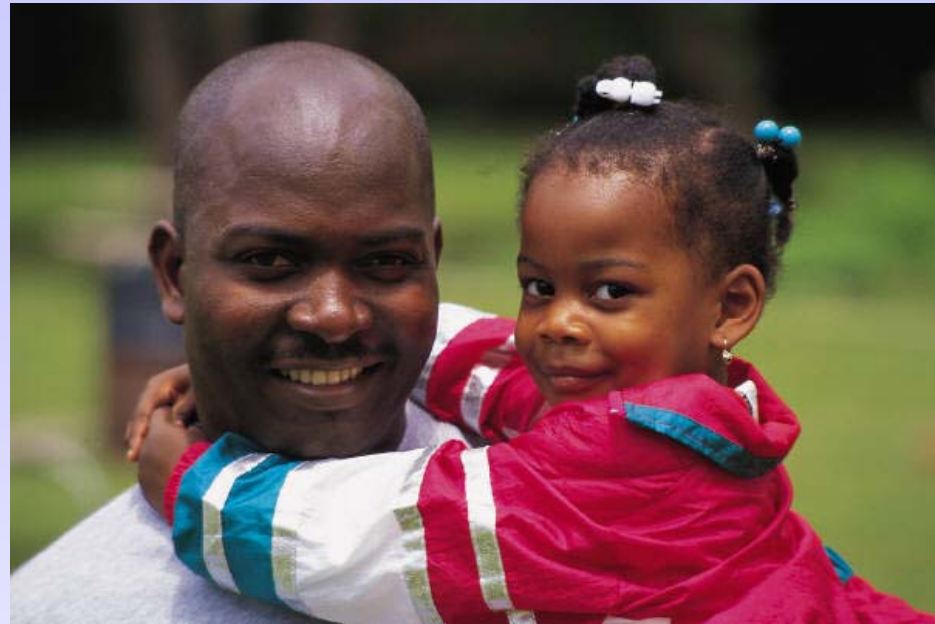


Objectives

- **Build knowledge about what enhances healthy child development**
- **Monitor progress - are child outcomes improving?**
- **Enhance community capacity and catalyze community action to improve child outcomes**

Research Questions

- **How do communities impact on child outcomes?**
- **What is the relative importance of community factors compared to other factors?**
- **What factors in the community support child development to make communities a good place to raise children?**
- **Do communities have a differential impact depending on the developmental domain & stage of development of the child?**



Policy Context

- **Compliments directions underway across Canada**
- **Consistent with vision & goals of National Children's Agenda**
- **Supports measuring & monitoring commitments made by First Ministers agreement on Early Child Development**
- **Contributes to research knowledge & information foundations of evidence-based decision making & informed policy development**

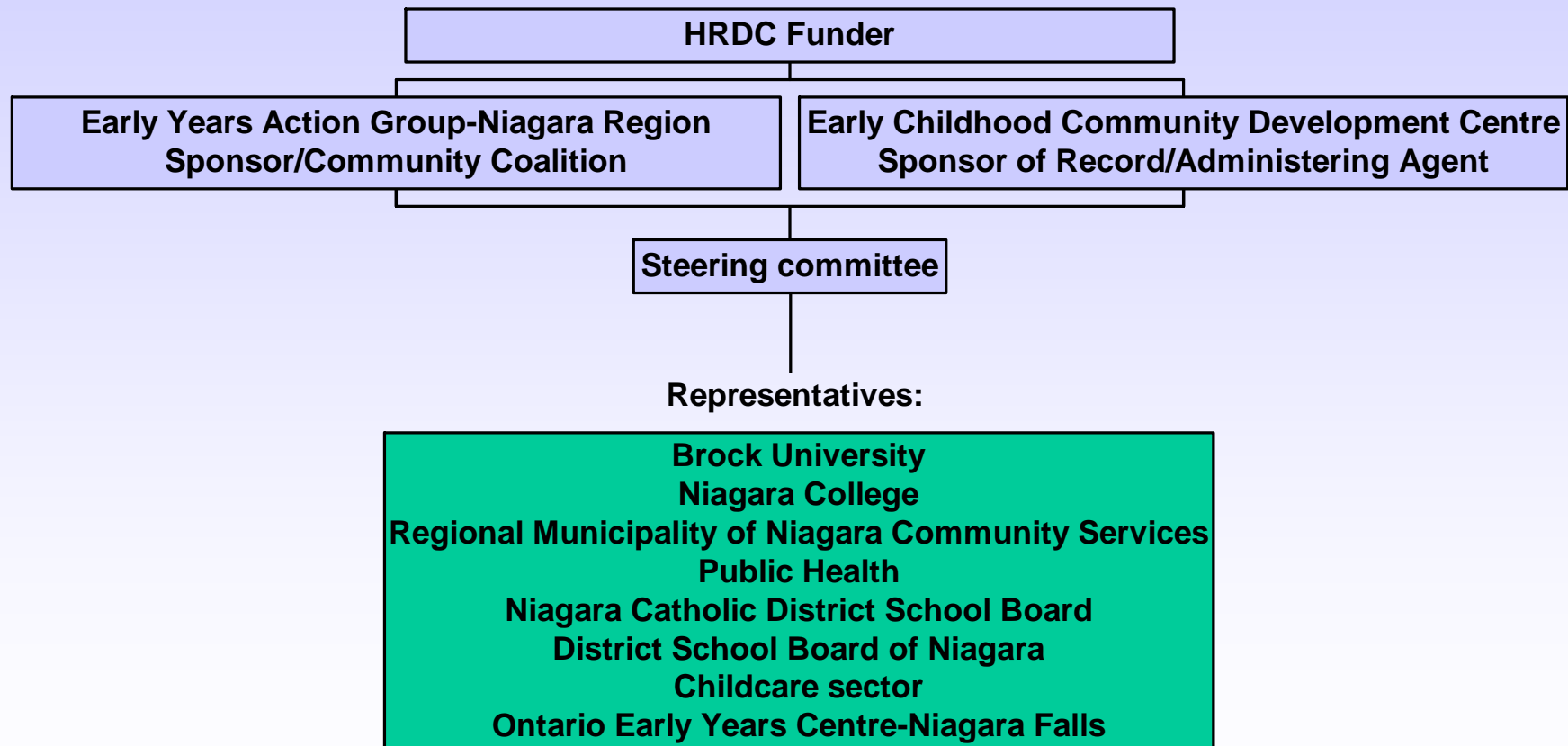
Current UEY Communities

- **Abbotsford; Coquitlam/Fraser North, BC**
- **Prince Albert; Saskatoon, SK**
- **South Eastman; Winnipeg, MB**
- **Mississauga Dixie-Bloor; Niagara Falls, ON**
- **Montreal, Qc**
- **Southwestern Region of Newfoundland**
- **Hampton, NB**
- **Prince Edward Island**

Prototype: North York, ON



UEY Niagara Structure



Research Components

- **Early Development Instrument (EDI) - measuring early child development outcomes**
- **National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth Community Study – talking to parents**
- **Community Mapping – examining the environment**

Partnerships in Action



EDI

CCSCR, Master University
School Boards
Parents


NLSCY

HRDC & Stats Can
School Boards
Parents

CMS

HRDC & Stats Can
Regional & Municipal
Governments
Community Agencies

Integrated Report
HRDC



Measuring Readiness to Learn: The EDI Study in Niagara Falls

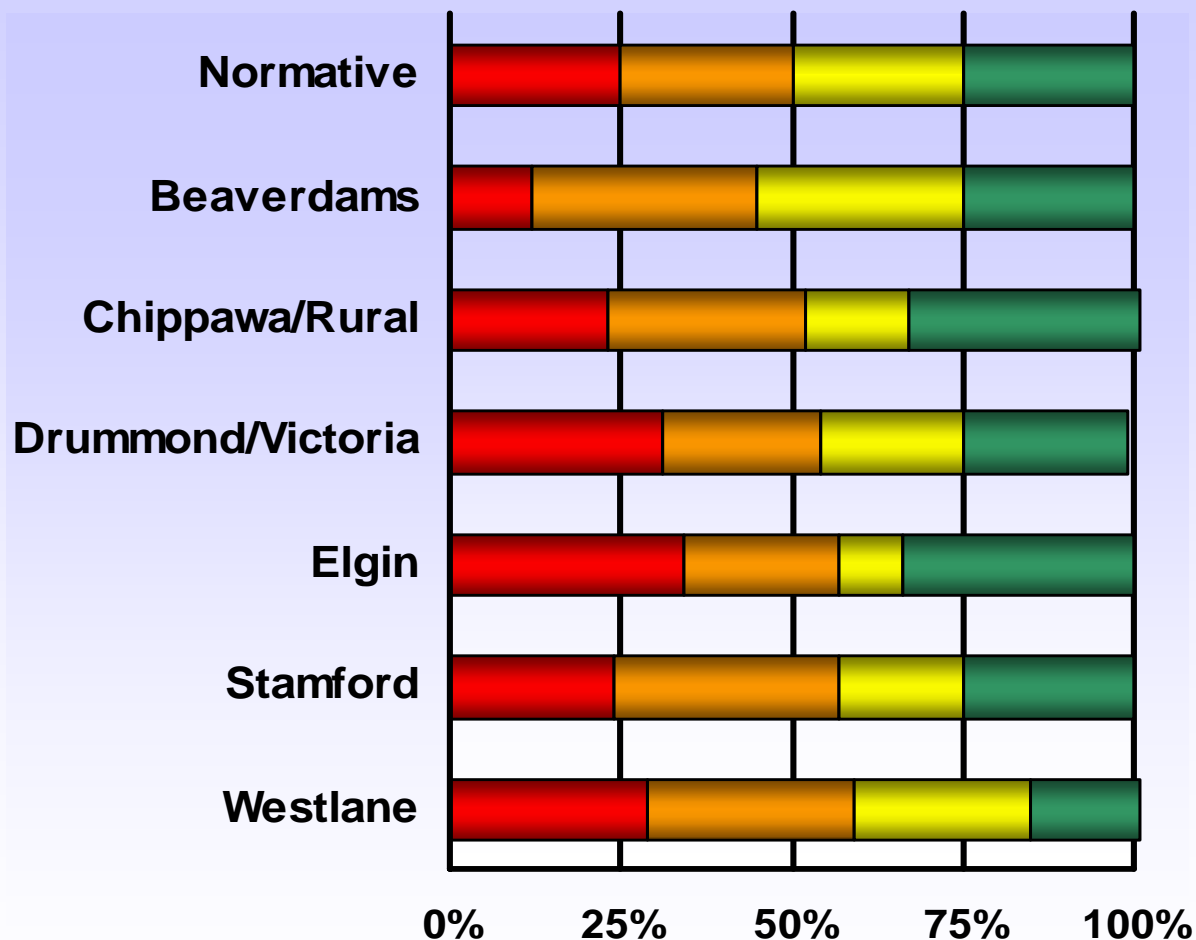
On average, Niagara Falls scored as well as, or better than, the 2001 Cohort in all domains except Social Competence and Emotional Maturity, where Niagara Falls scored lower

EDI Domain	Mean Scores	
	Cohort 2001	Niagara Falls
Physical Health & Well-being	8.77	8.78
Social Competence	8.32	8.14
Emotional Maturity	8.04	*7.72
Language & Cognitive Development	8.28	8.29
Communication Skills & General Knowledge	7.70	7.78

Age range: 4.6 to 6.8 years; special needs excluded

* Significantly lower; $p < 0.05$

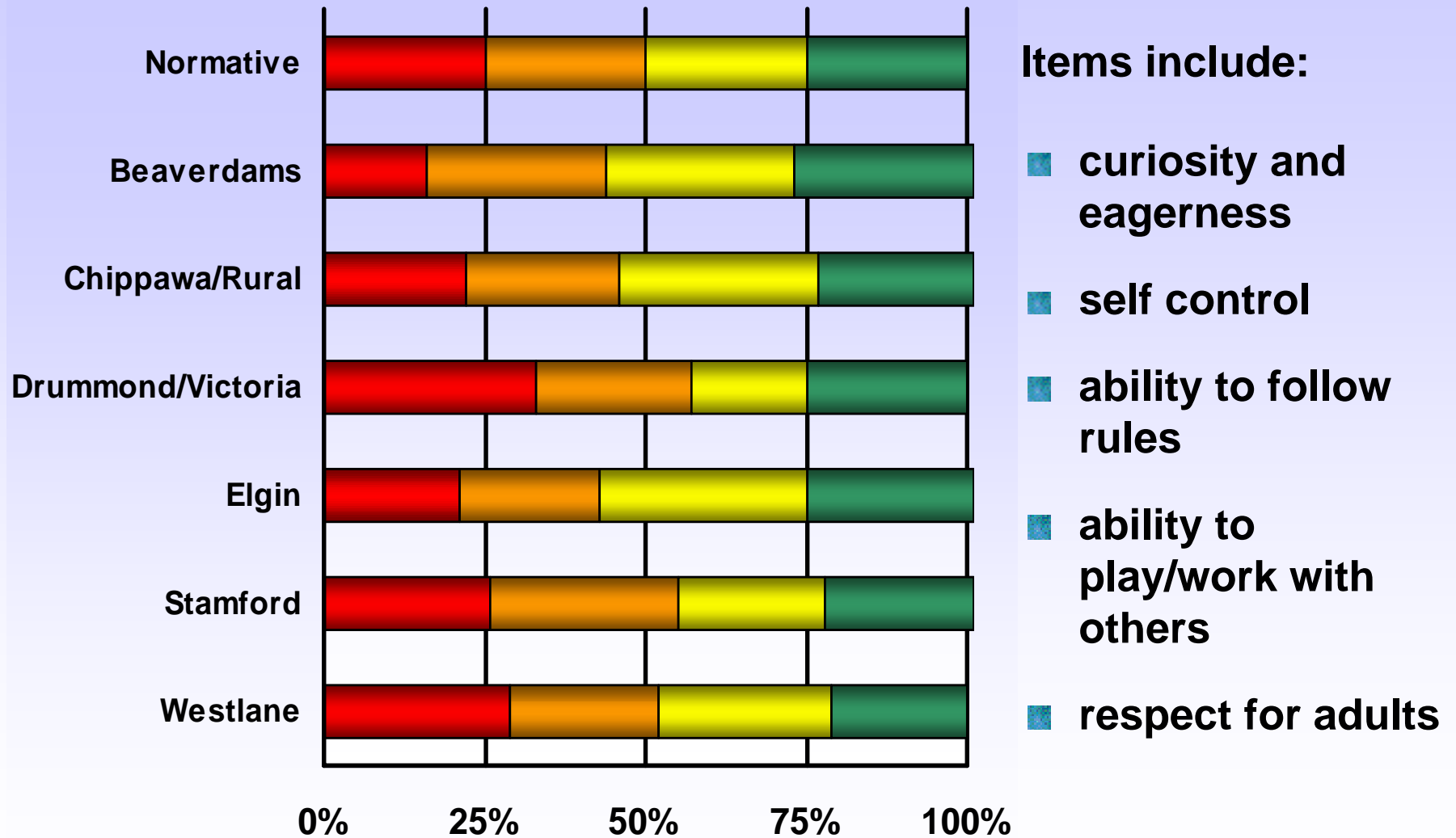
Physical Health and Well-Being



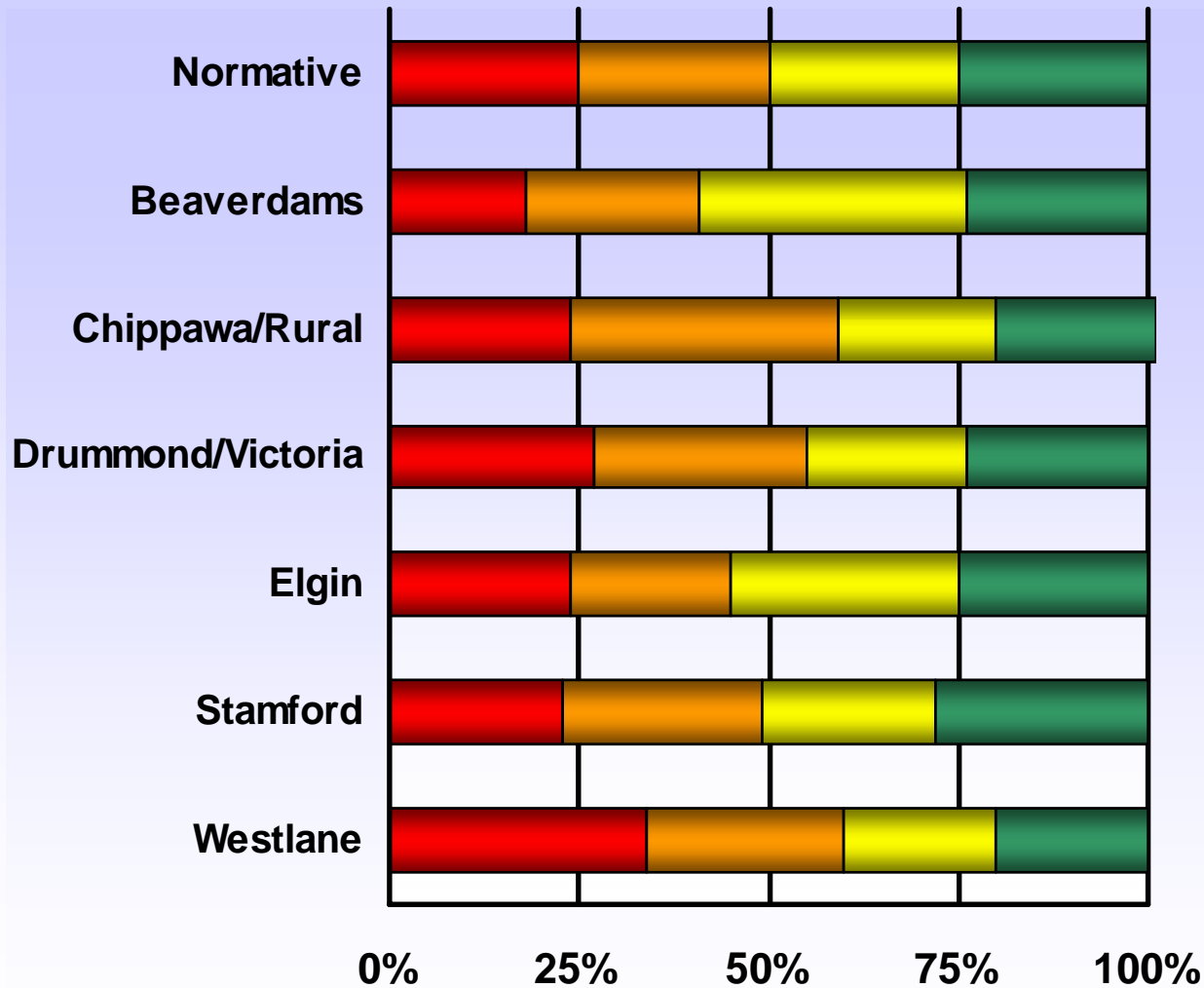
Items include:

- fine & gross motor skills
- daily living skills
- adequate energy levels
- preparedness for school (tired, late, hungry)

Social Competence



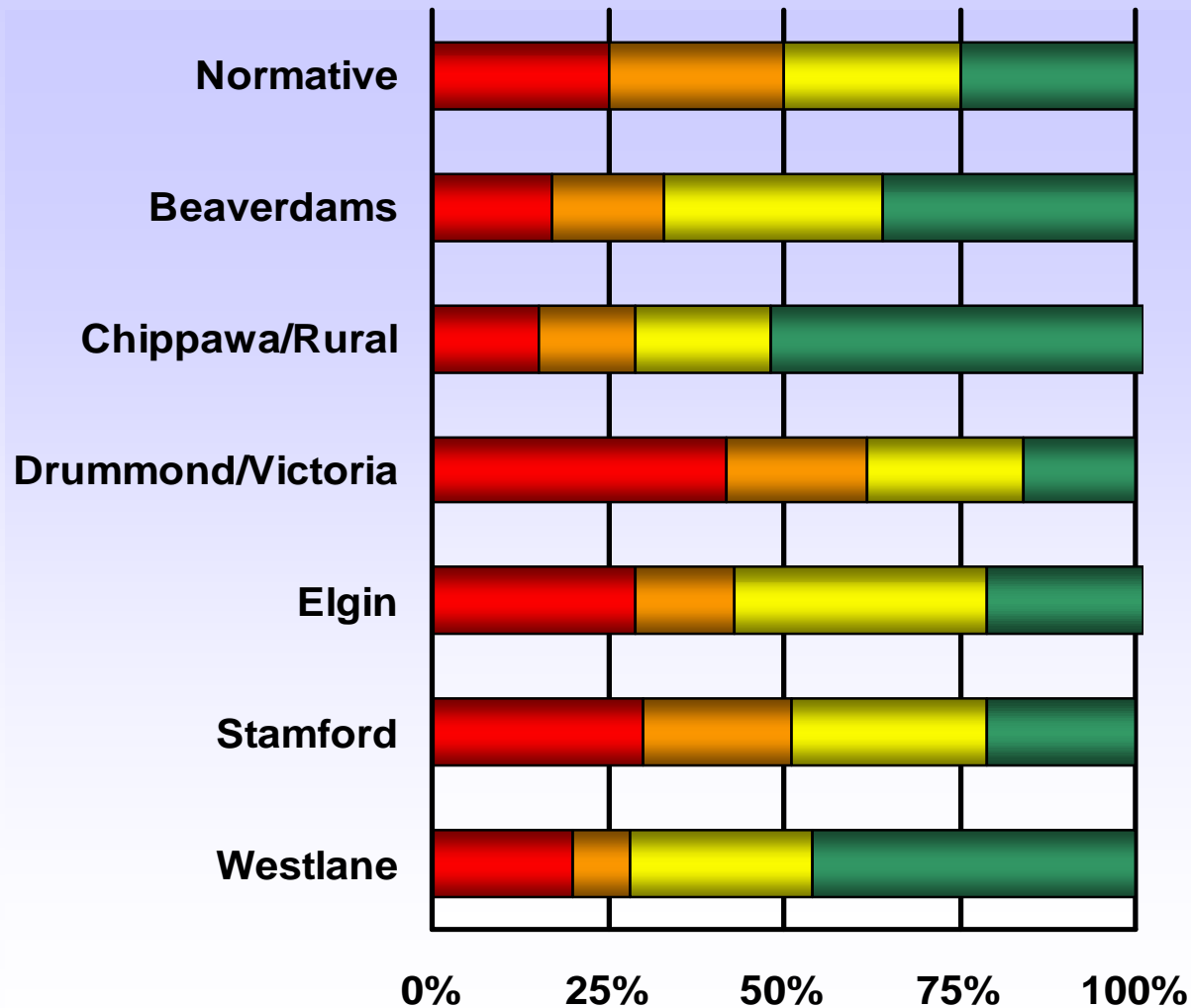
Emotional Maturity



Items include:

- prosocial behaviour – helping, tolerance, and empathy
- aggressive behaviour
- anxiety
- hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsiveness

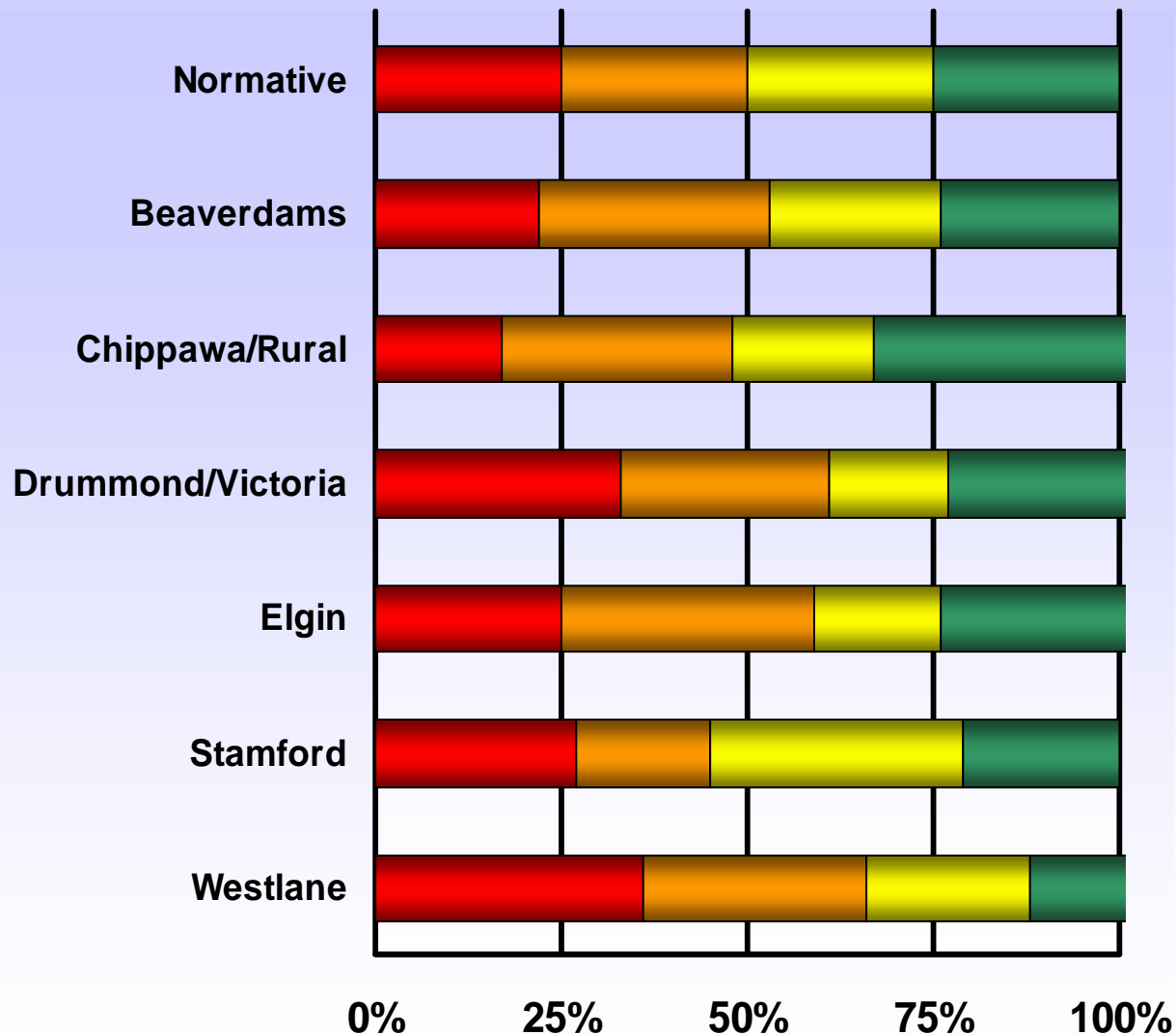
Language and Cognitive Development



Items include:

- interest in books and reading
- interest in simple math activities
- numeracy skills
- ability to understand similarities and differences
- ability to recite information from memory

Communication Skills & General Knowledge



Items include:

- ability to communicate needs and understand others
- clear articulation
- active participation in story-telling
- age-appropriate interest and knowledge

Determining Risk

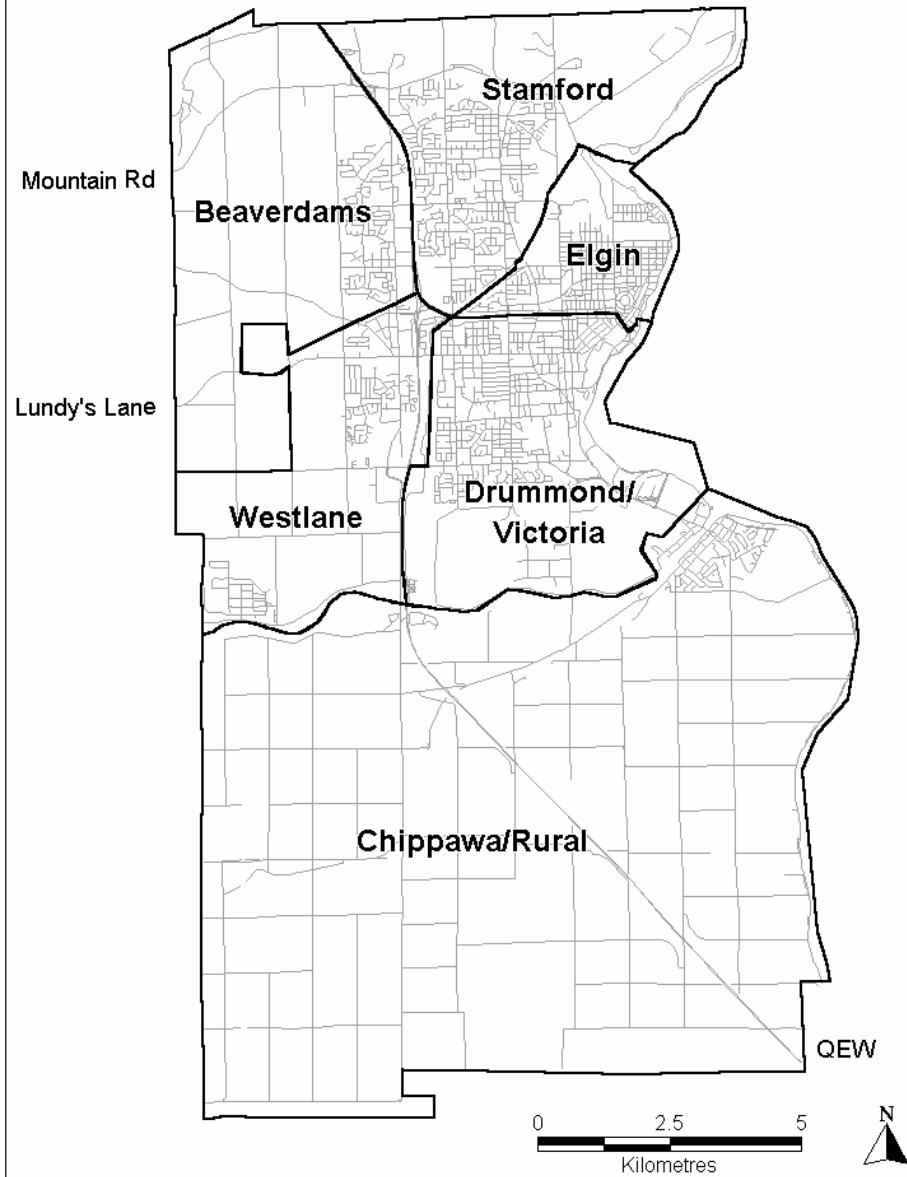
28% of children in Niagara Falls were at risk in terms of readiness to learn skills

11% scored in the lowest 10th percentile on one domain

17% scored in the lowest 10th percentile on two or more domains

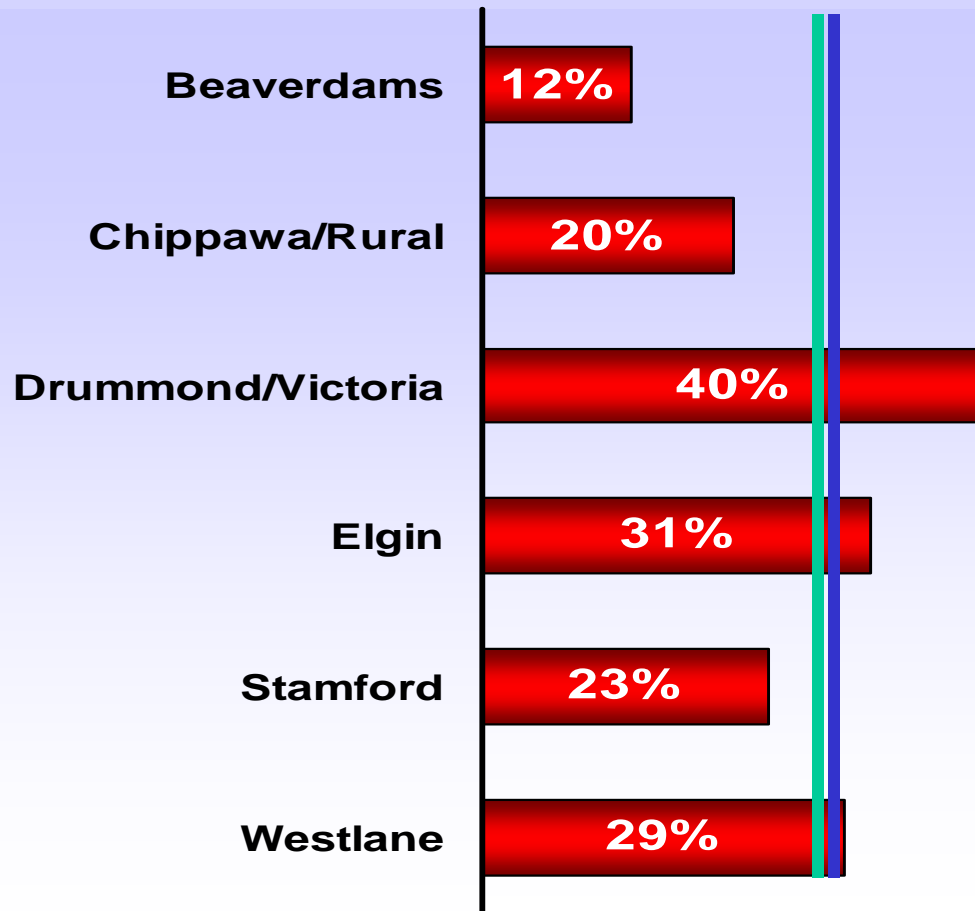


Neighbourhood Study Areas (NSA)



- **Beaverdams**
- **Chippawa/Rural**
- **Drummond/Victoria**
- **Elgin**
- **Stamford**
- **Westlane**

Distribution of Risk by NSA



■ Distribution of scores in the lowest 10th percent encountered in Niagara Falls on one or more domains

■ Percentile divisions are relative and based on local distribution

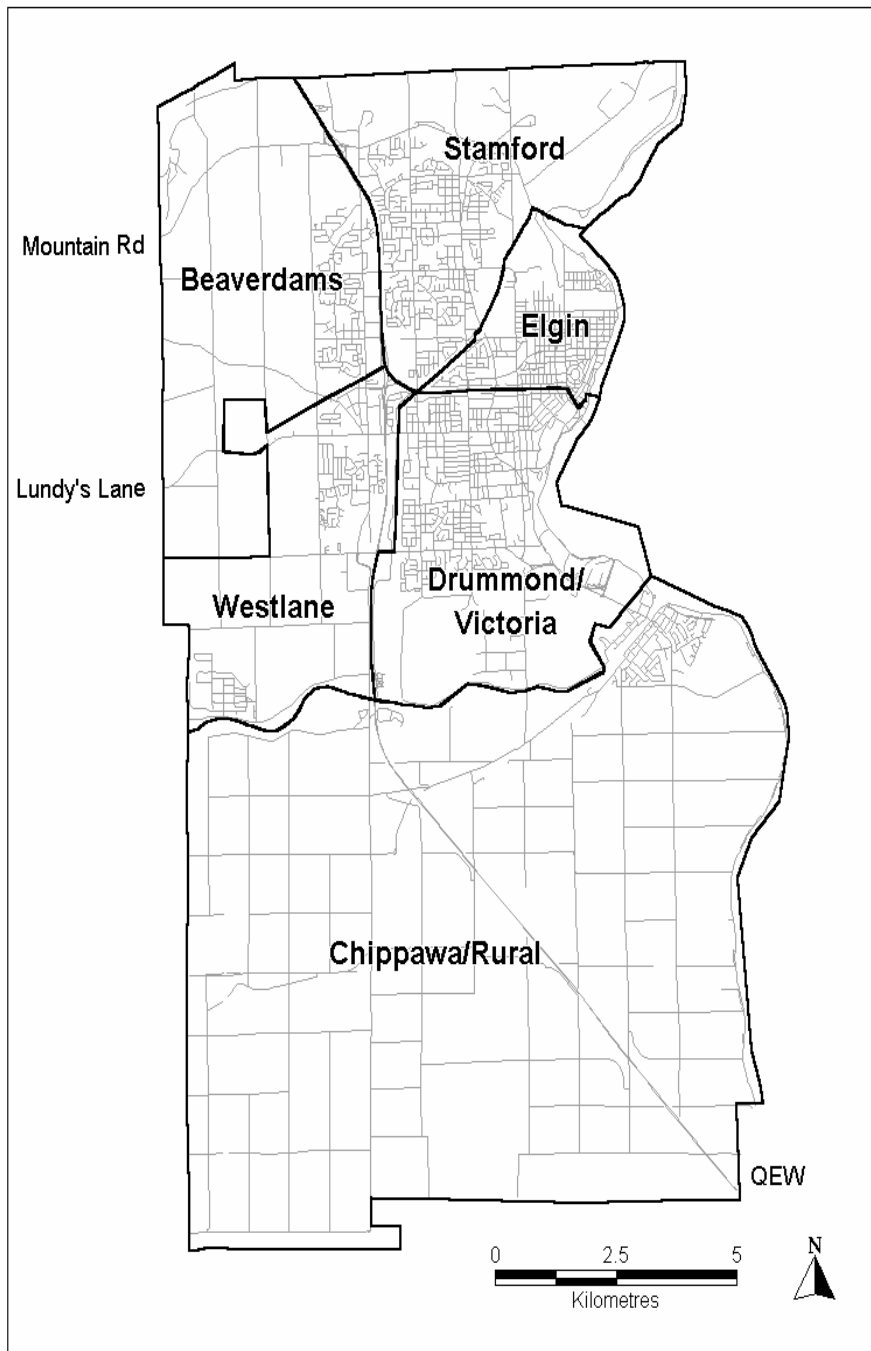
— 2001 Cohort (26%)

— Niagara Falls (28%)

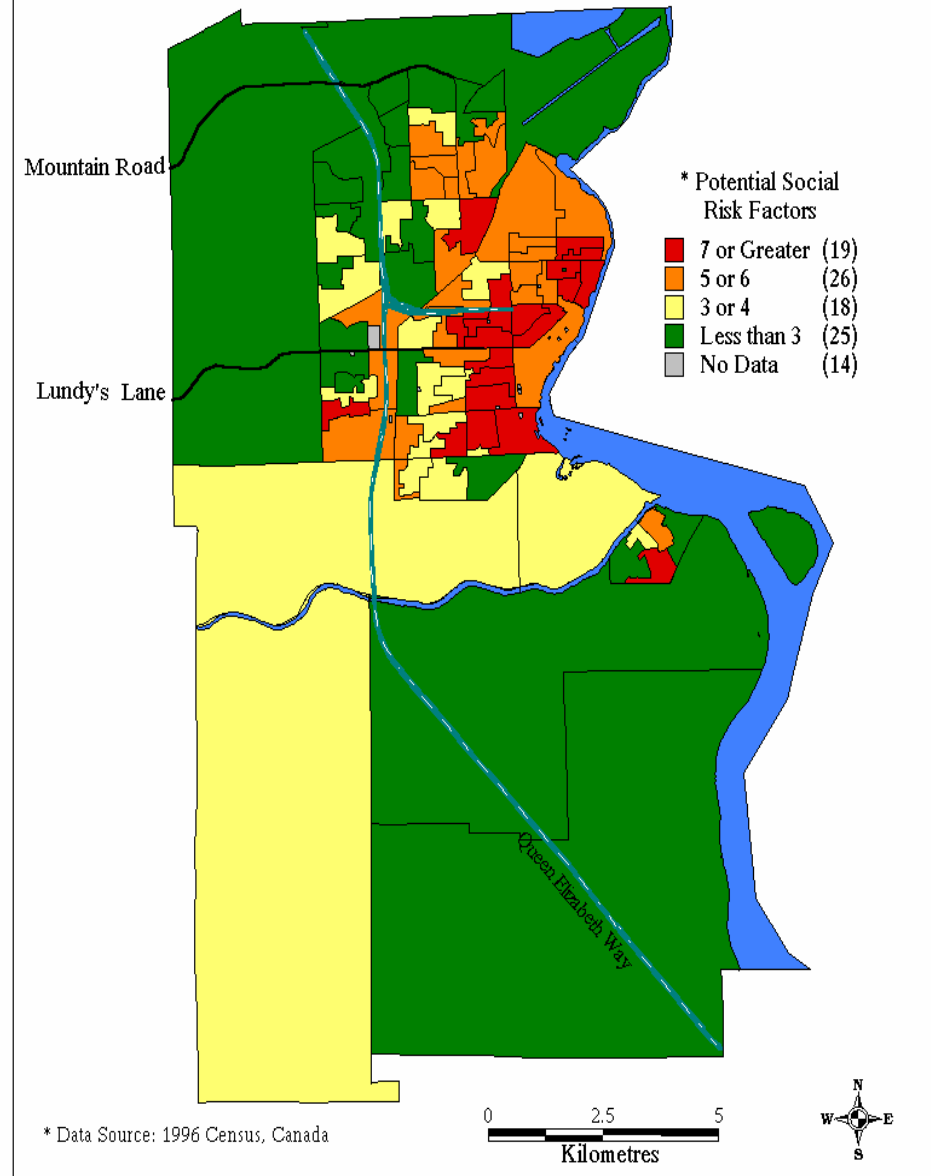
Mapping the Community: the Niagara Falls CMS

Examines socio-economics, physical environments and the location of resources in relation to readiness skills



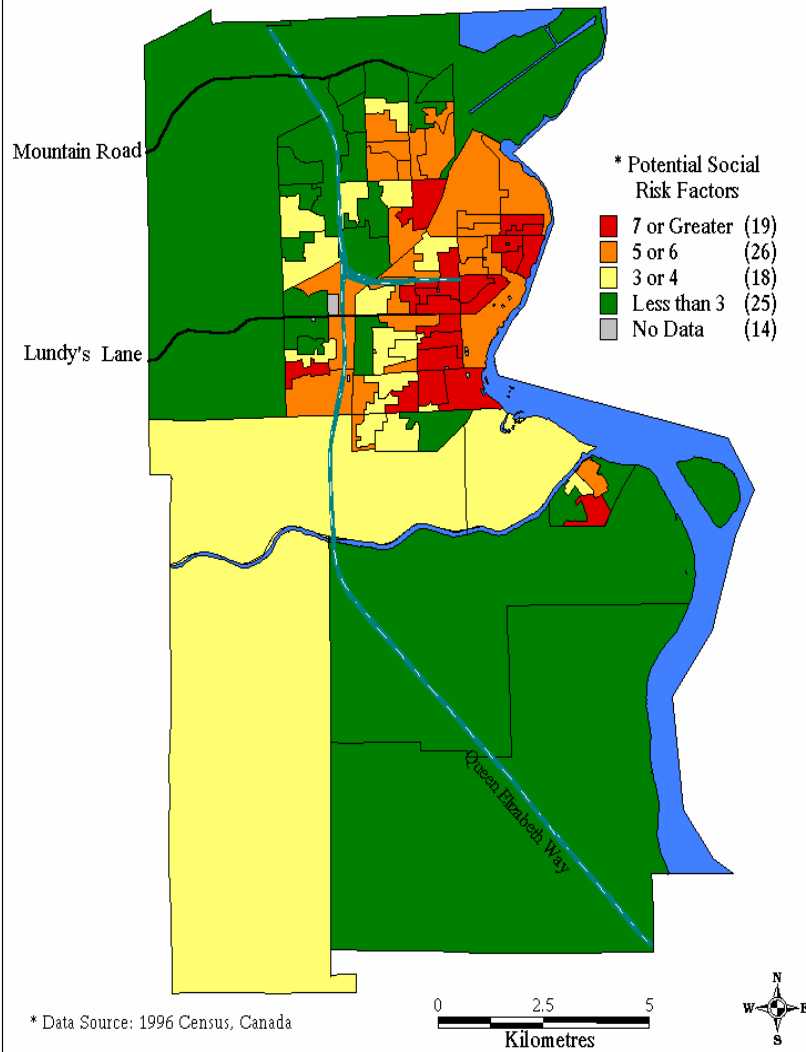


Map 11: Number of Potential Social Risk Factors in Niagara Falls

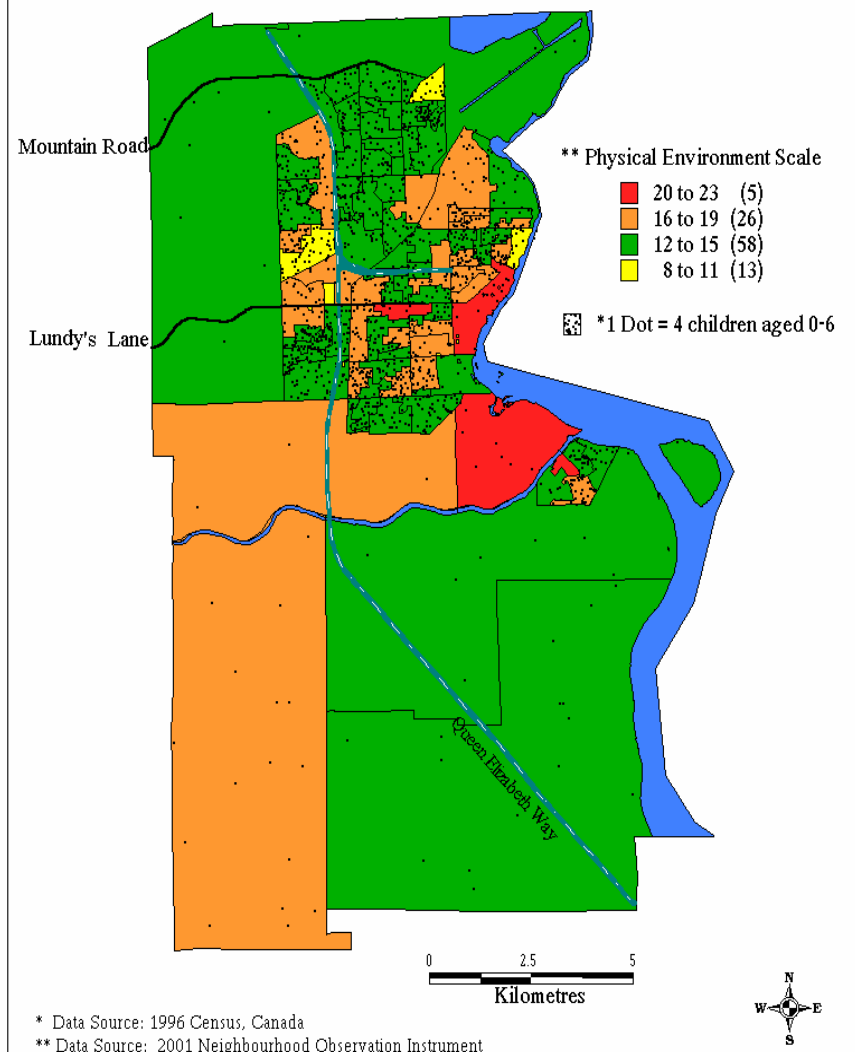


* Data Source: 1996 Census, Canada

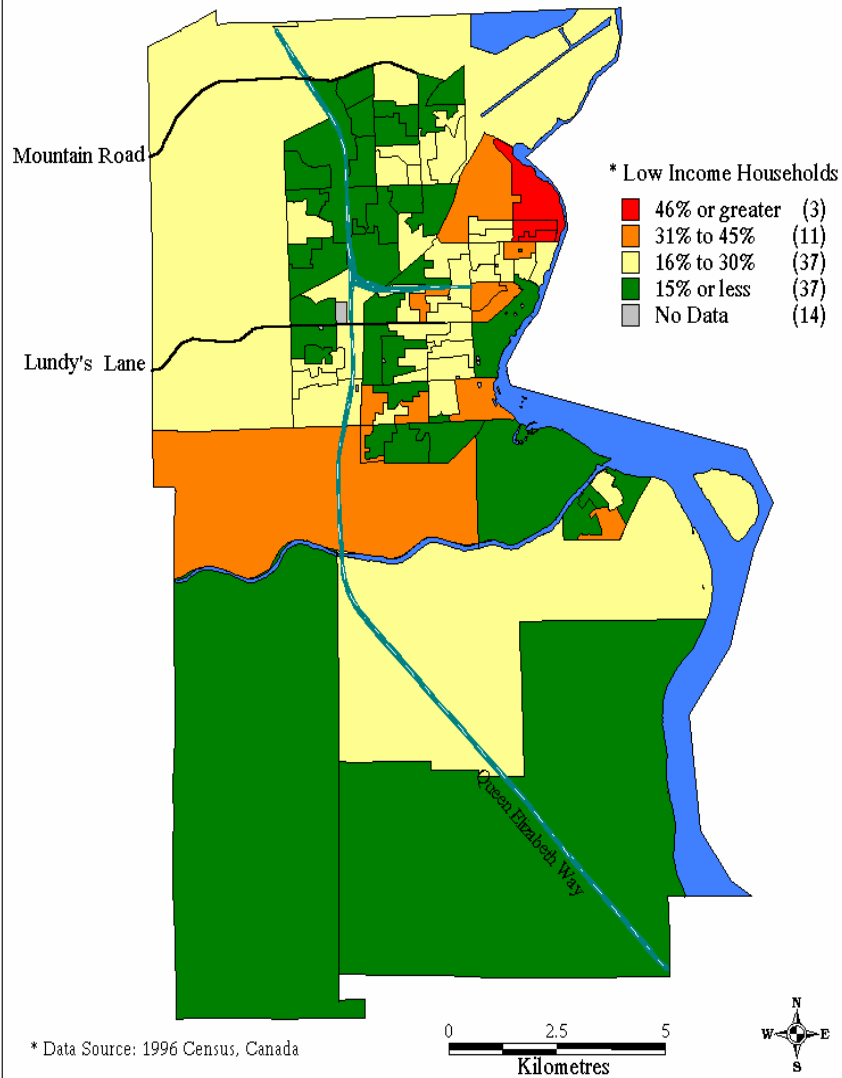
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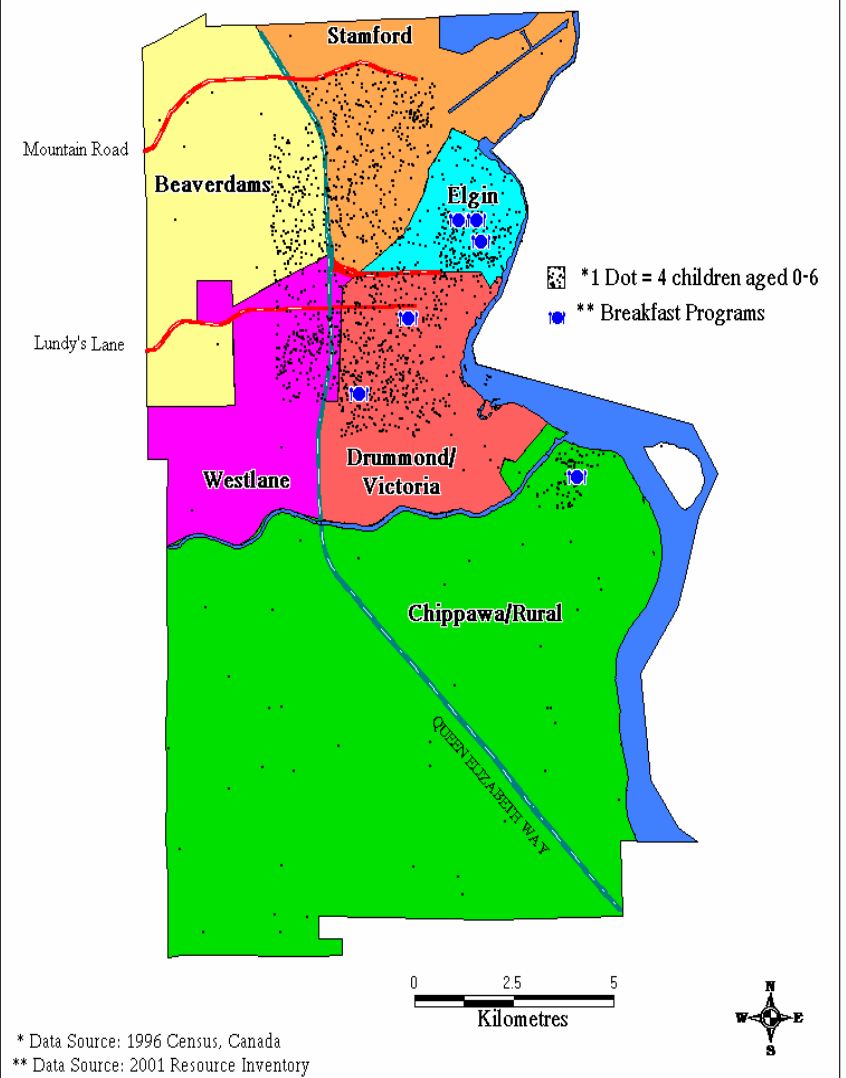
Map 14: Physical Environment Index Relative to Location of Children Aged 0-6



Map 7: Proportion of Households Below the Low Income Cut-Off



Map 23: Children Aged 0-6 and Location of Breakfast Programs



Emerging Patterns

78% of Niagara Falls' "high risk" EAs are located in the three neighbourhood identified by the EDI as having increased needs in terms of readiness to learn skills. (Westlane, Elgin & Drummond/Victoria)

57% of Niagara Falls' 0-6 population live in these neighbourhoods

Of this 57%, the majority of children (70%) are living in areas considered to be at "higher risk"

(Social Index provided by Statistics Canada based on 1996 Census data)



The Benefits of Partnership

Build community capacity

**Contribute to knowledge on
Federal , Provincial & local level**

Inform policy & programs

**Enhance data based decision
making**

Help our children succeed