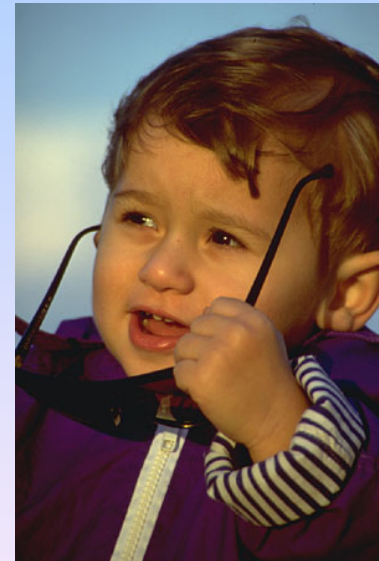# Understanding the Early Years (UEY) in Niagara Falls

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?**
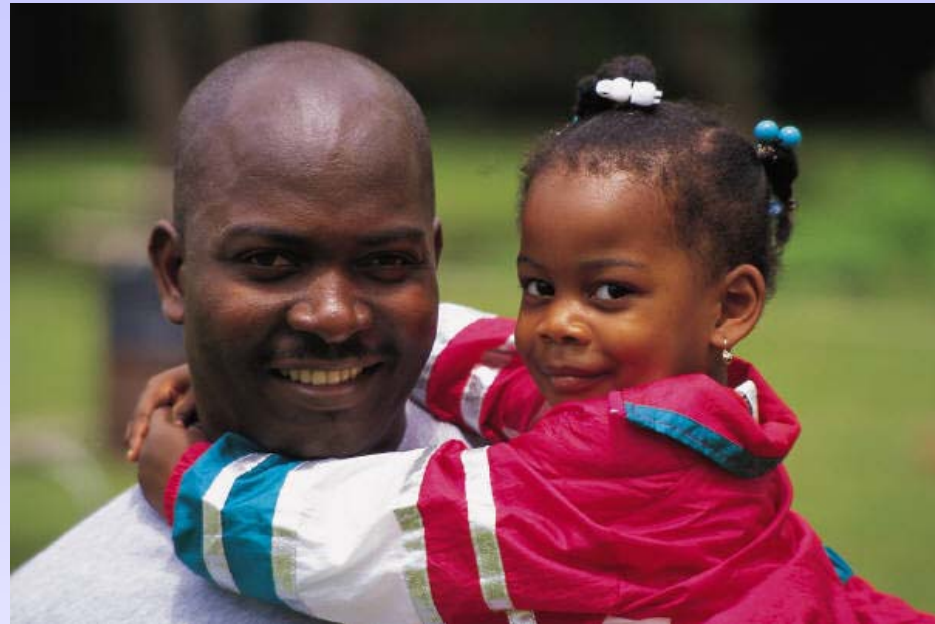
Policy Context

- **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**
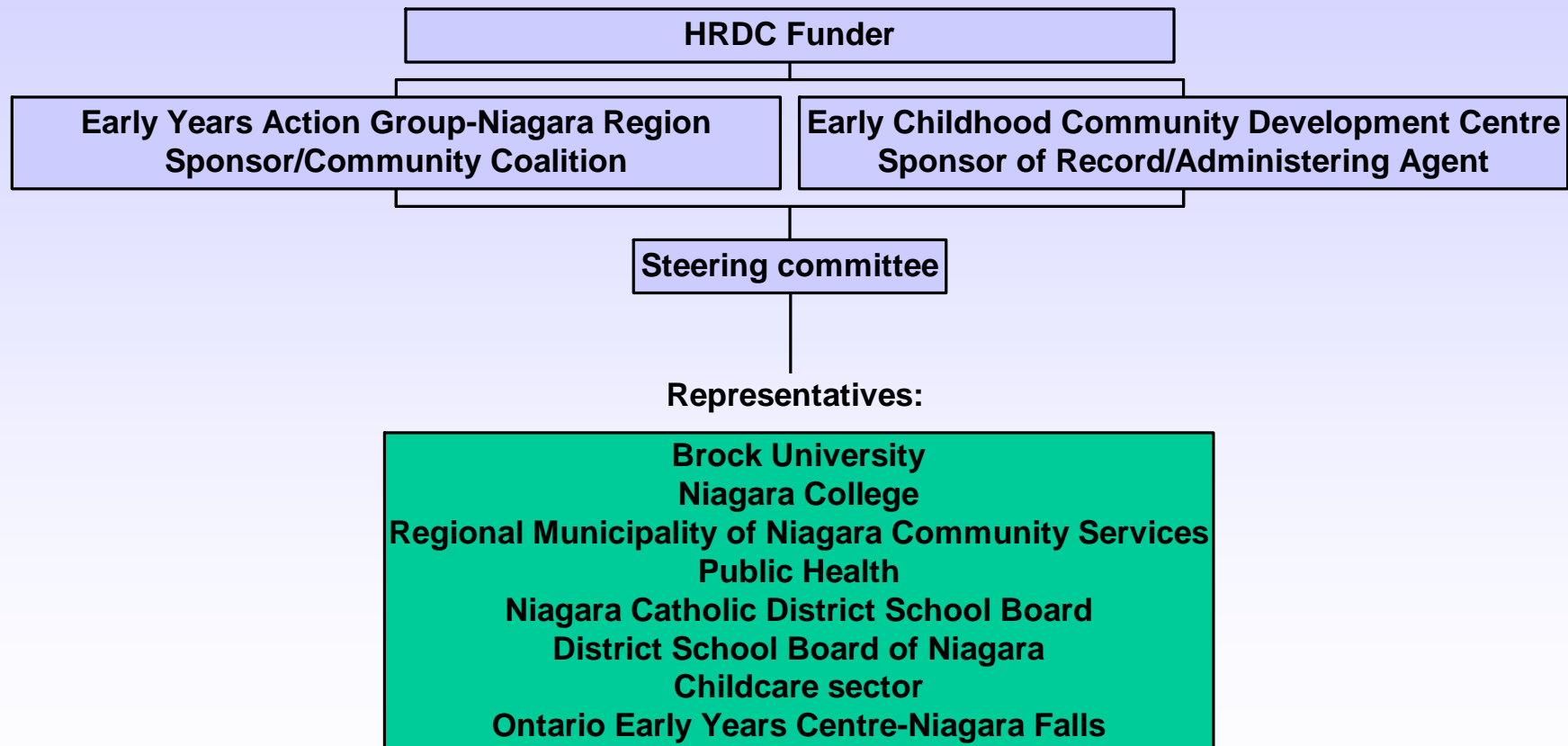
Current UEY Communities

- **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

HRDC Funder

Early Years Action Group-Niagara Region Sponsor/Community Coalition	Early Childhood Community Development Centre Sponsor of Record/Administering Agent

Steering committee

Representatives:

Brock University
Niagara College
Regional Municipality of Niagara Community Services
Public Health
Niagara Catholic District School Board
District School Board of Niagara
Childcare sector
Ontario Early Years Centre-Niagara Falls

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

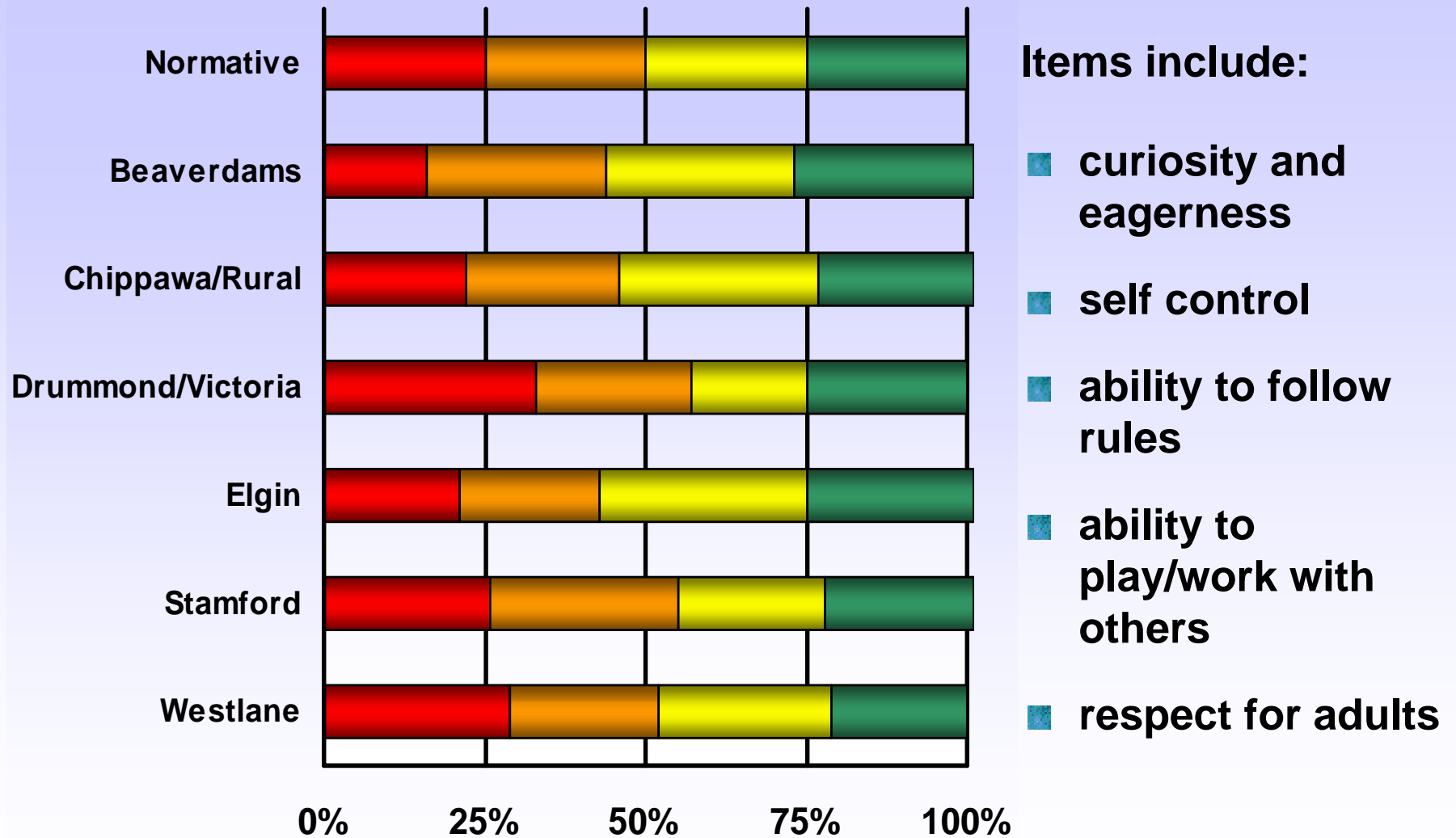*   Significantly lower; $p < 0.05$
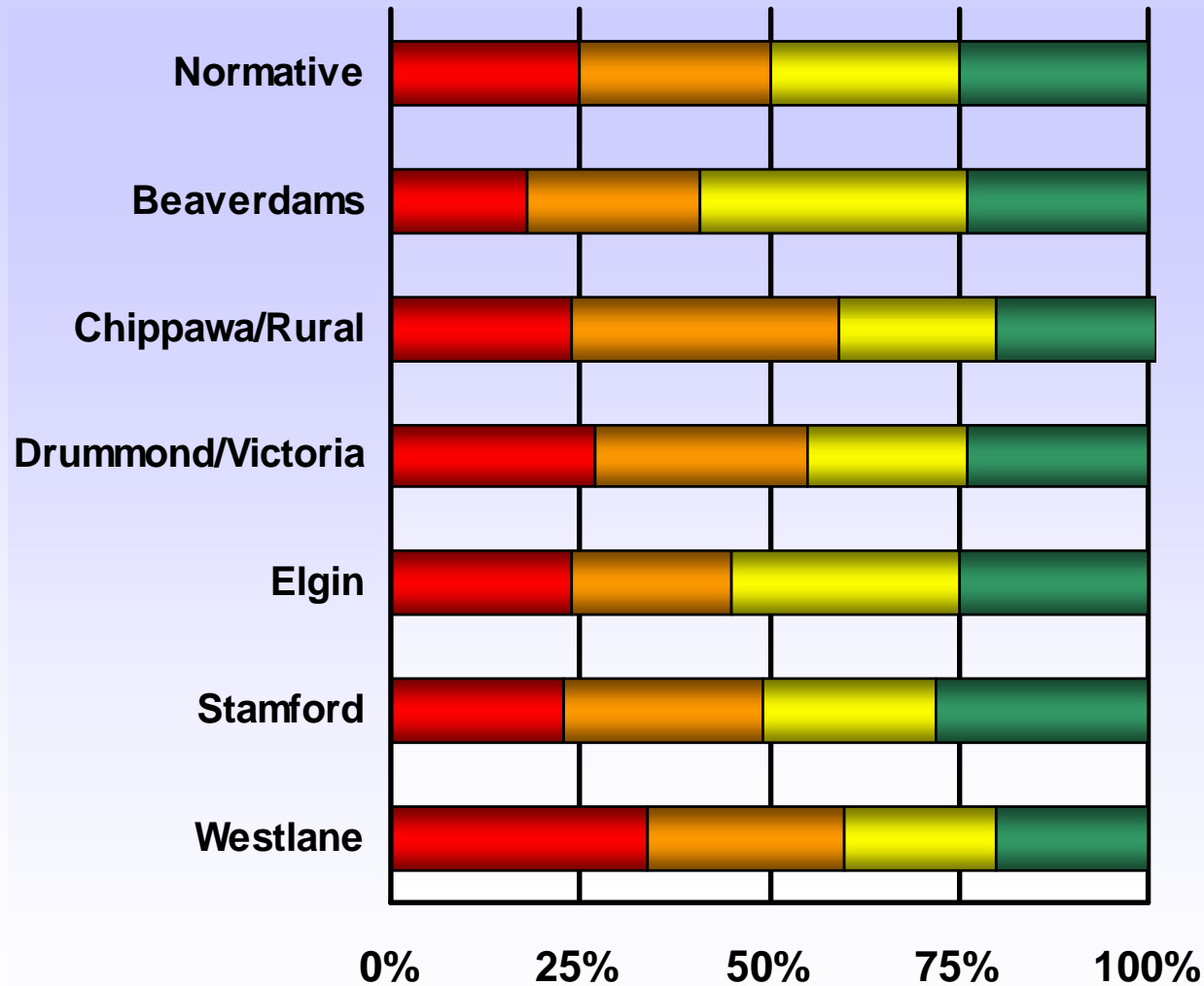
Physical Health and Well-Being
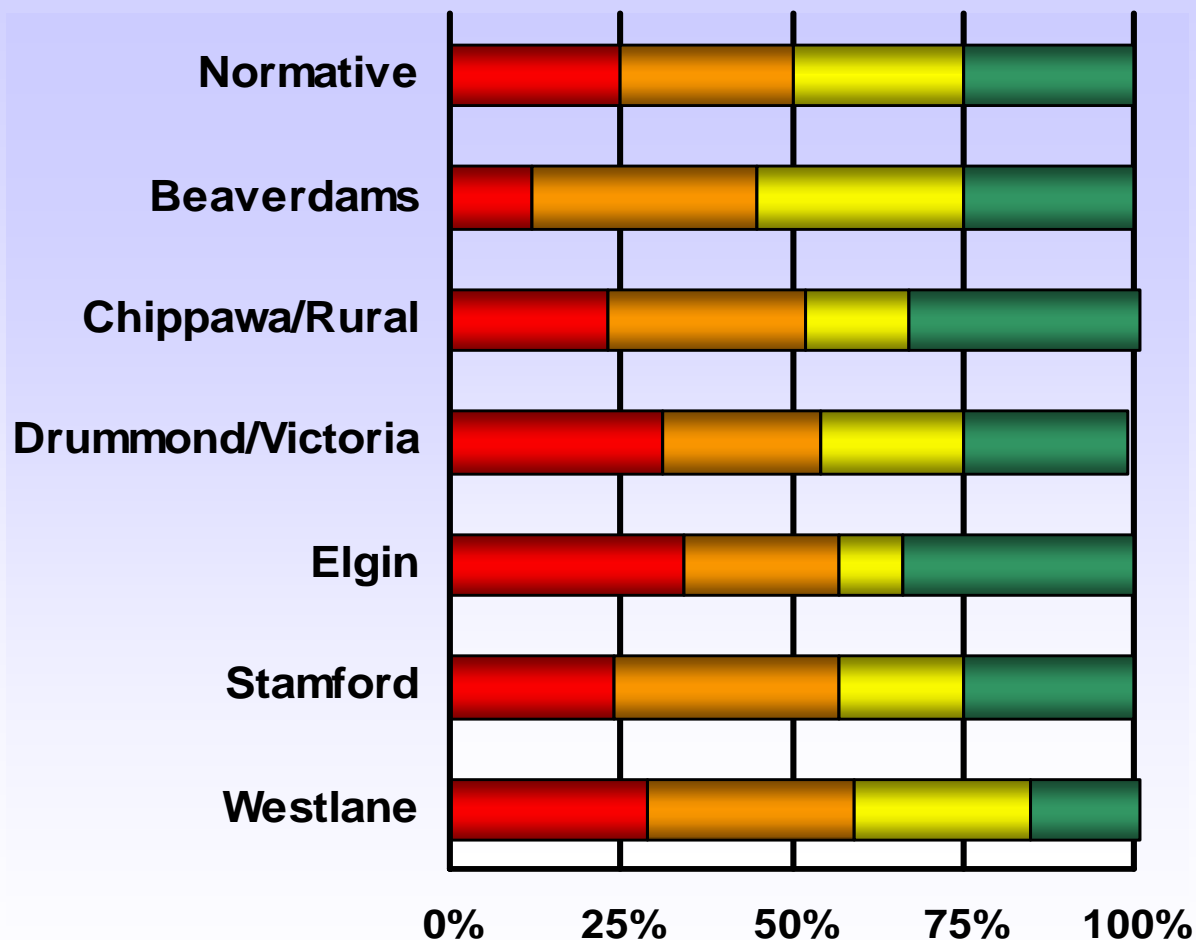
Items include:

- fine & gross motor skills

- daily living skills

- adequate energy levels

- preparedness for school (tired, late, hungry)

Social Competence

Items include:

- curiosity and eagerness
- self control
- ability to follow rules
- ability to play/work with others
- respect for adults

Emotional Maturity

Items include:

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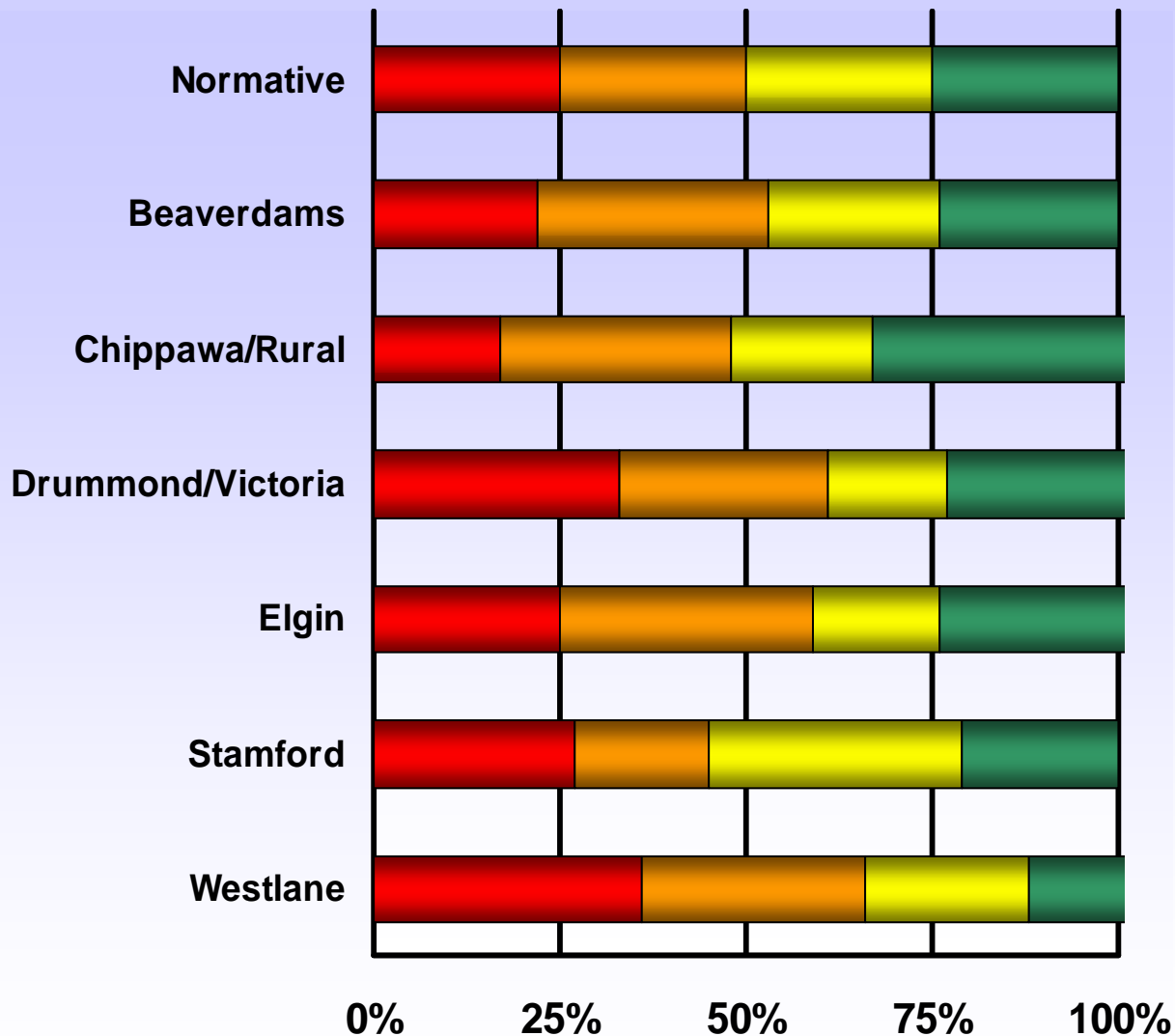- **hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsiveness**

Language and Cognitive Development
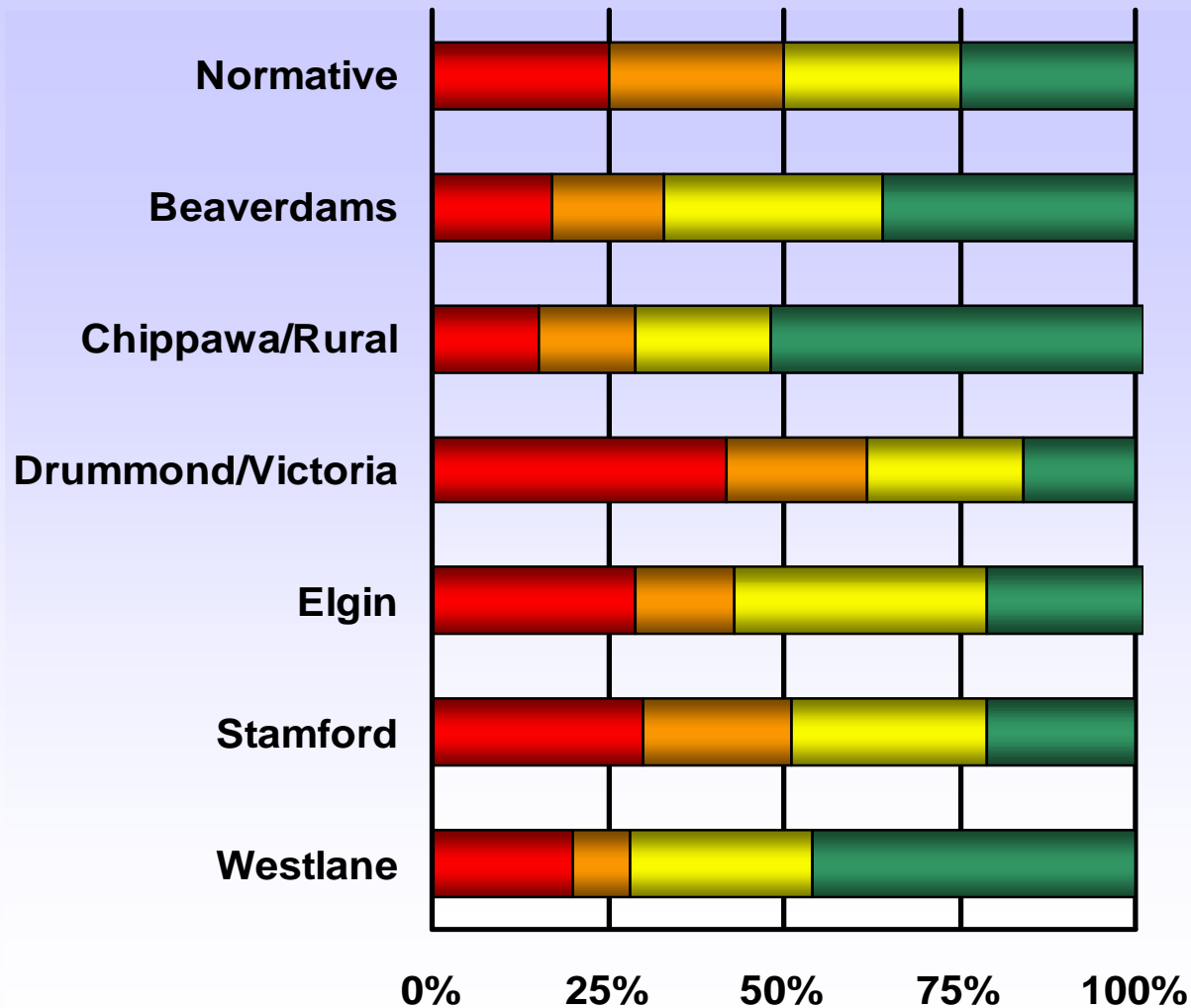
Items include:

- 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**
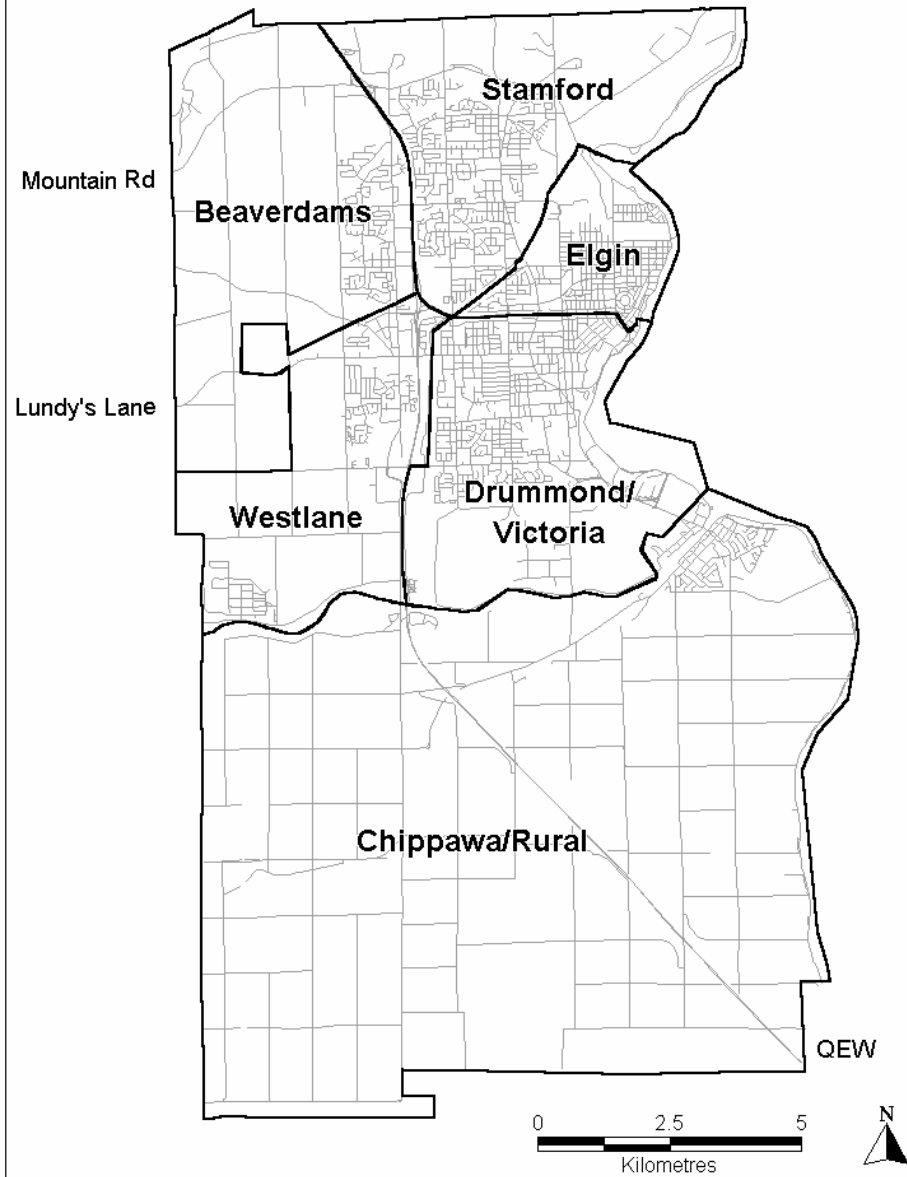
Determining Risk

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

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

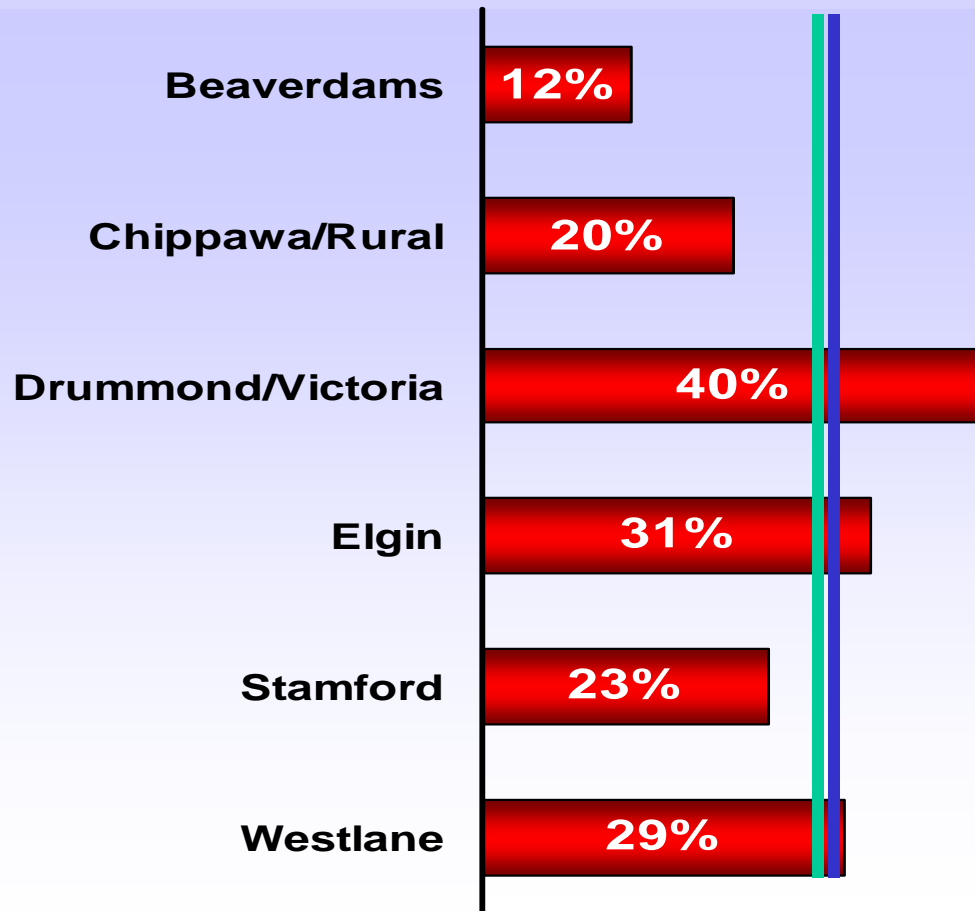17% scored in the lowest 10th percentile on two or more domains

Neighbourhood Study Areas (NSA)

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

Distribution of Risk by NSA

NSA	Percent
Beaverdams	12%
Chippawa/Rural	20%
Drummond/Victoria	40%
Elgin	31%
Stamford	23%
Westlane	29%

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

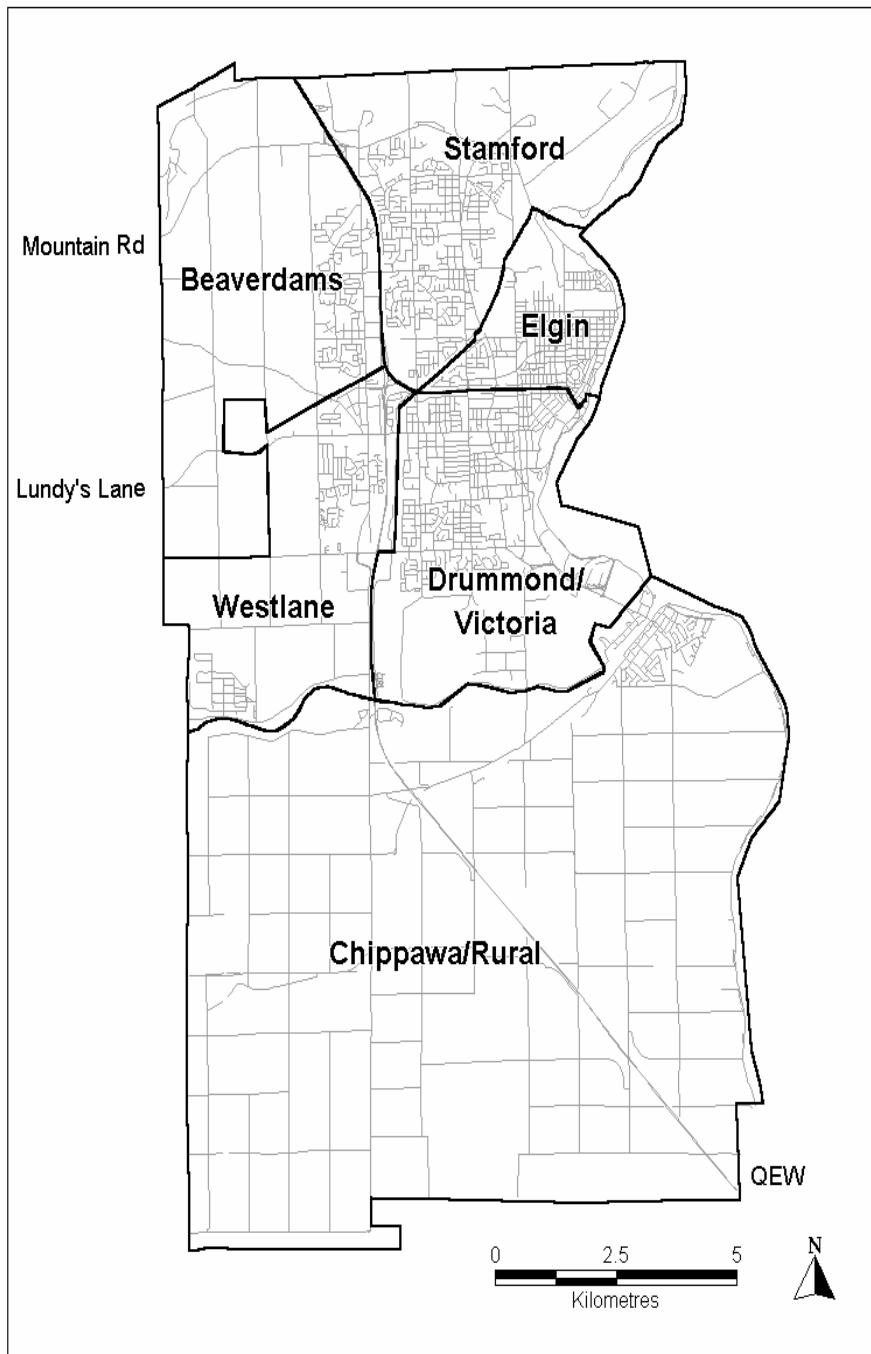- **Percentile divisions are relative and based on local distribution**

— **2001 Cohort (26%)**
— **Niagara Falls (28%)**

Mountain Rd

Stamford

Beaverdams

Elgin

Lundy's Lane

Westlane

Drummond/
Victoria

Chippawa/Rural

QEW

0   2.5   5
Kilometres

N

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

Mountain Road

Lundy's Lane

* Potential Social
  Risk Factors

7 or Greater	(19)
5 or 6	(26)
3 or 4	(18)
Less than 3	(25)
No Data	(14)

Queen Elizabeth Way

* Data Source: 1996 Census, Canada

0   2.5   5
Kilometres

N
W   E
S

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

Mountain Road

Lundy's Lane

* Potential Social
   Risk Factors

- 7 or Greater (19)
- 5 or 6 (26)
- 3 or 4 (18)
- Less than 3 (25)
- No Data (14)

Queen Elizabeth Way

0   2.5   5
Kilometres

N
W   E
S
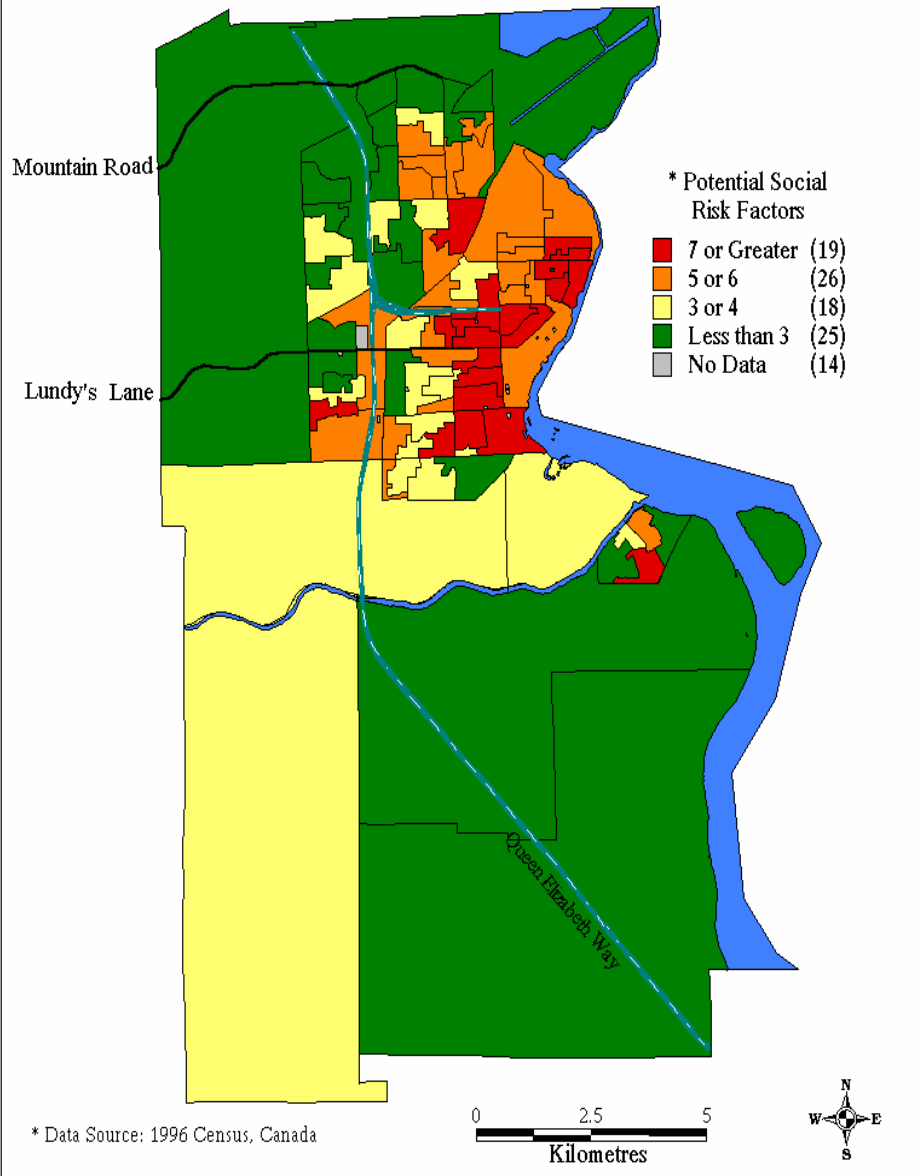
* Data Source: 1996 Census, Canada
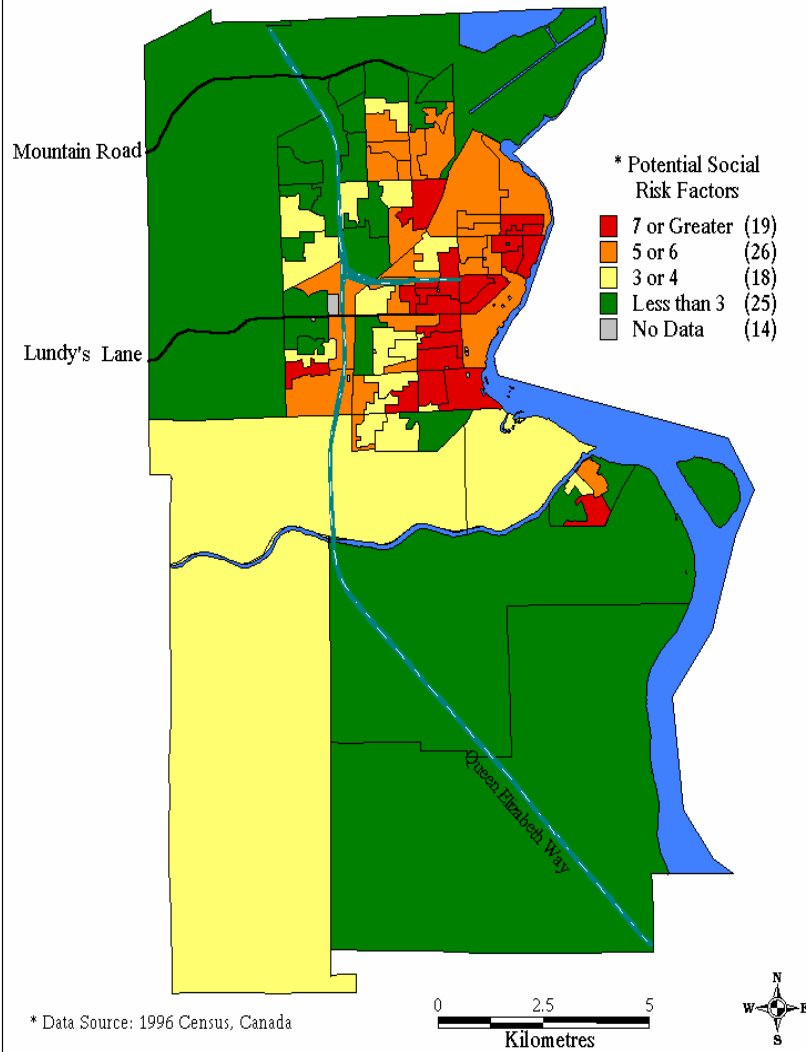
Map 14: Physical Environment Index Relative to Location of Children Aged 0-6

Mountain Road

Lundy's Lane

** Physical Environment Scale

- 20 to 23 (5)
- 16 to 19 (26)
- 12 to 15 (58)
- 8 to 11 (13)

*1 Dot = 4 children aged 0-6

Queen Elizabeth Way

0   2.5   5
Kilometres

N
W   E
S

* Data Source: 1996 Census, Canada
** Data Source: 2001 Neighbourhood Observation Instrument
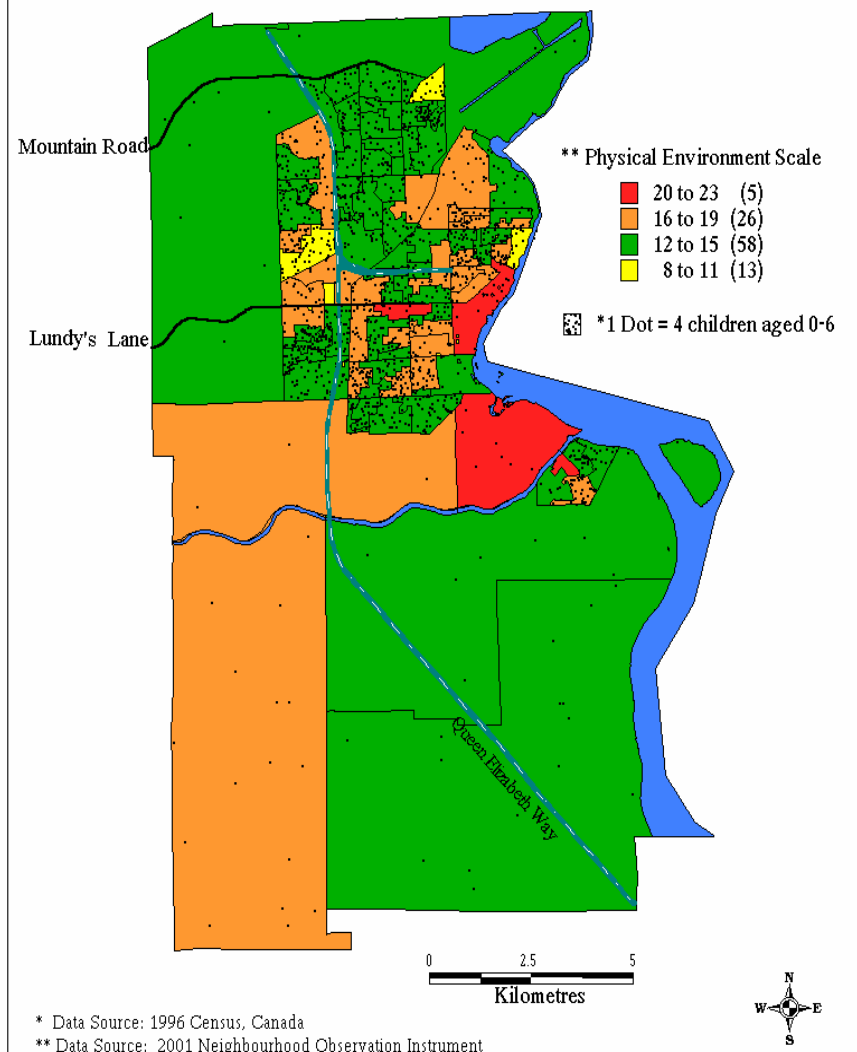
Map 7: Proportion of Households Below the Low Income Cut-Off

* Low Income Households

- ■ 46% or greater (3)
- ■ 31% to 45% (11)
- ■ 16% to 30% (37)
- ■ 15% or less (37)
- ■ No Data (14)

Mountain Road

Lundy's Lane

Queen Elizabeth Way

0 2.5 5
Kilometres

N W E S

* Data Source: 1996 Census, Canada
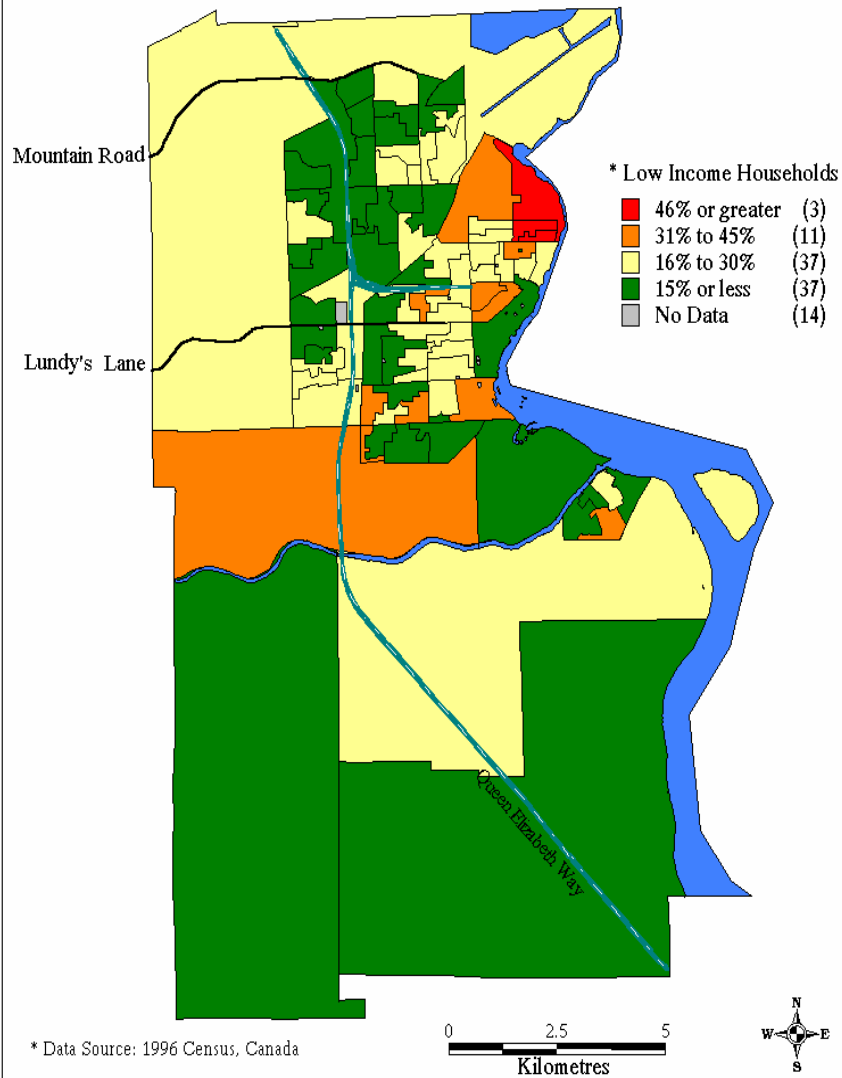
Map 23: Children Aged 0-6 and Location of Breakfast Programs

Stamford

Mountain Road

Beaverdams

Elgin

Lundy's Lane

⊞ *1 Dot = 4 children aged 0-6

⊡ ** Breakfast Programs

Westlane

Drummond/
Victoria

Chippawa/Rural

QUEEN ELIZABETH WAY

0 2.5 5
Kilometres

N W E S

* Data Source: 1996 Census, Canada
** Data Source: 2001 Resource Inventory
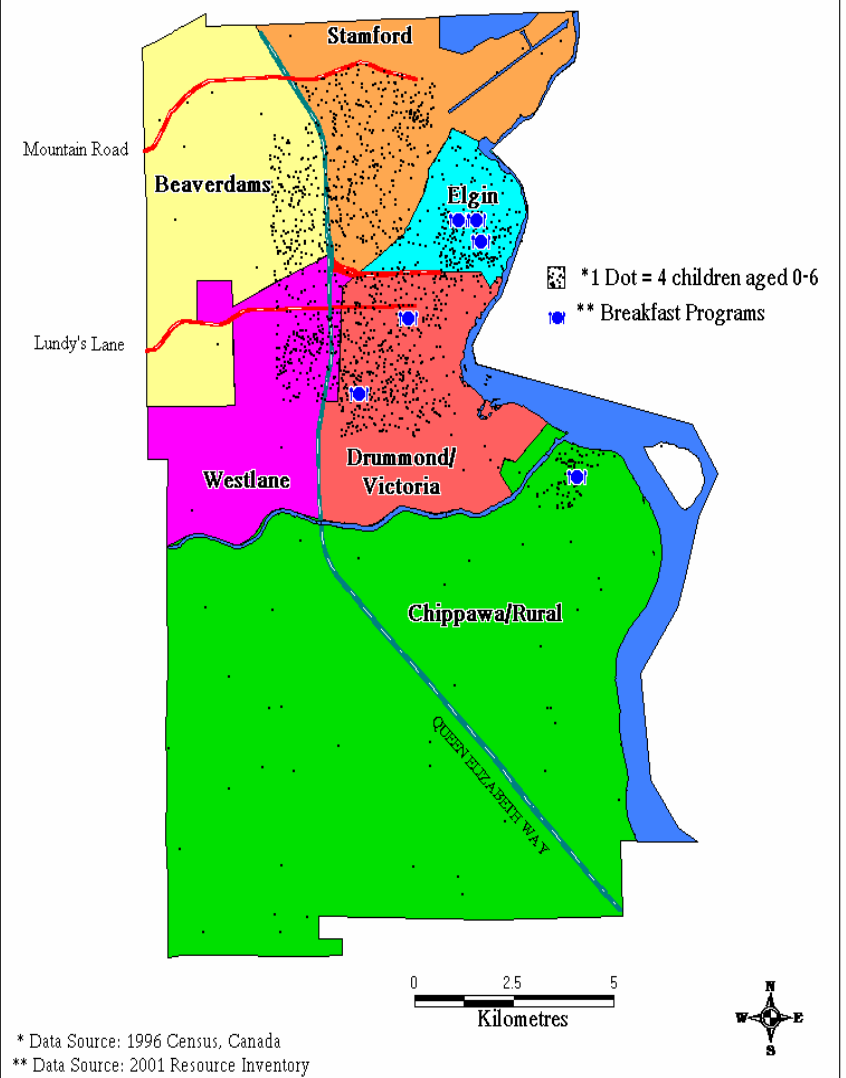
Emerging Patterns

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