



early childhood community development centre

Understanding the Early Years



# Understanding the Early Years Niagara Falls Community Stories

*March 2007*

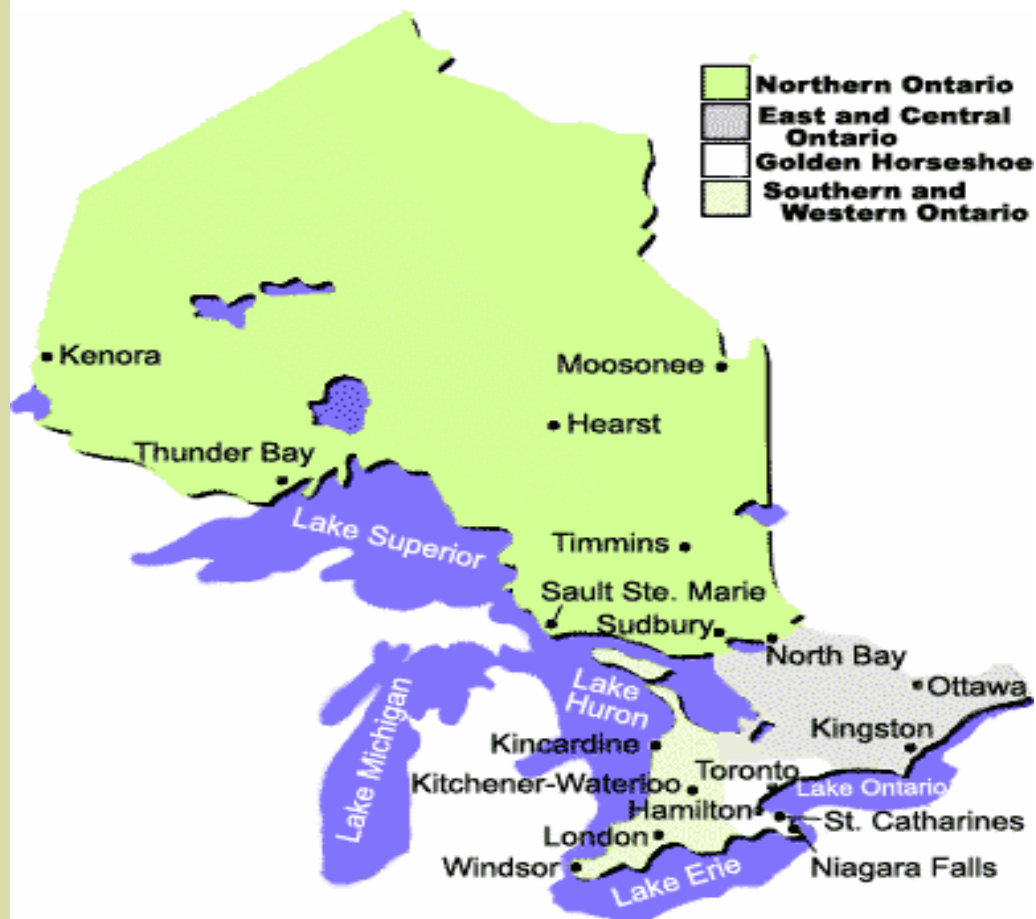
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Glory Ressler, UEY Coordinator – ECCDC

HRSDC, Ottawa - March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007

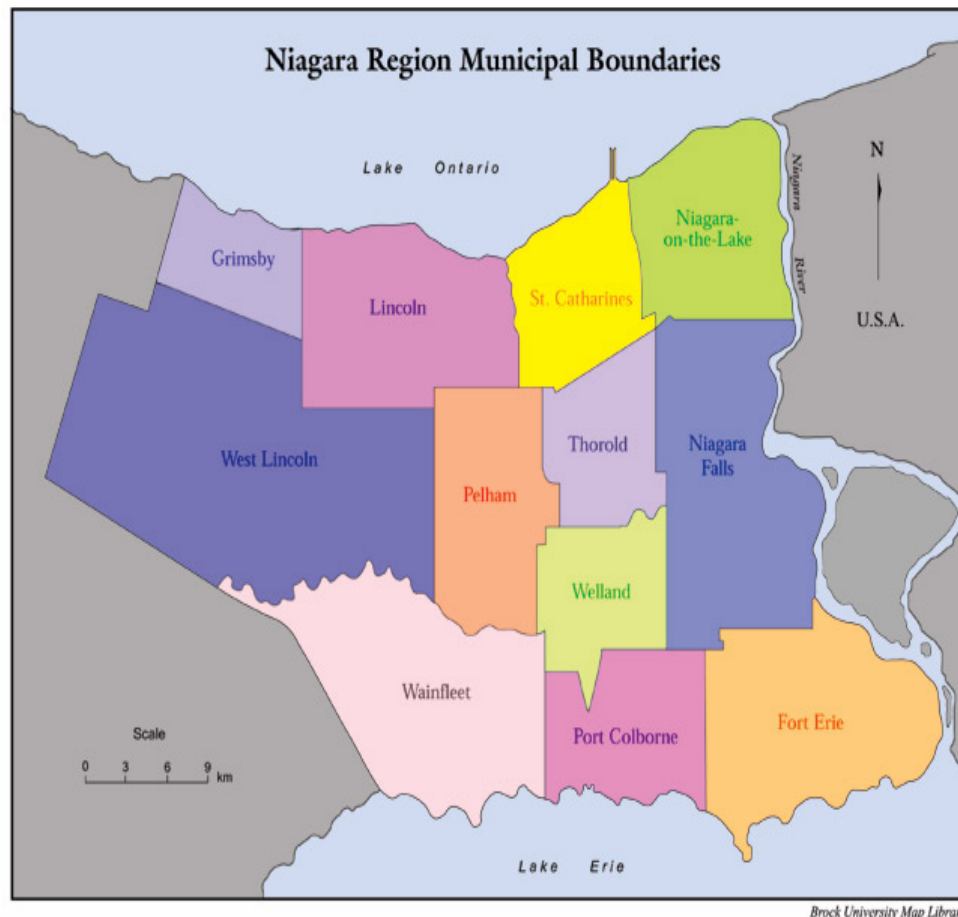
The Understanding the Early Years initiative is funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. For further information, visit [www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca)

# Where is Niagara Falls?



- southeastern Ontario
- along Niagara River
- bordering USA
- part of *Golden Horseshoe*
- in Niagara Region

# One of Niagara's 12 Municipalities...



- *212 sq. kms / 81.9 sq. mi*
- *Population in 2001: 78,815*
- *Falls ~ 12,000 yrs old*
- *Melting glaciers formed massive fresh-water lakes*
- *Water wears back ~ 1 ft/yr*
- *Settled and active early*
- *Economic growth (Casino, construction, service sector, etc..)*
- *Labour shortages and gaps*
- *Still growing gap, working poor,*
- *Vulnerable families, children, neighbourhoods*

# Children in Niagara Falls

- Good overall response and sampling distribution

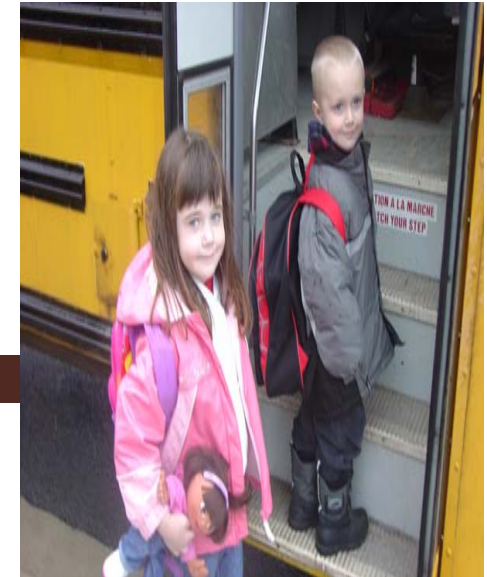
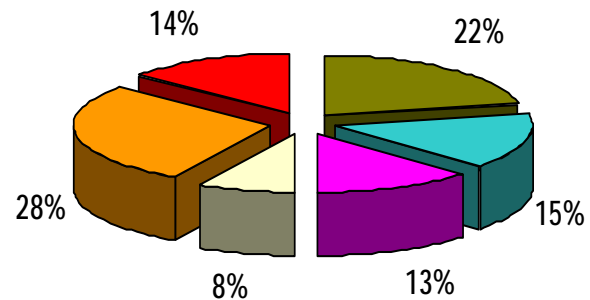
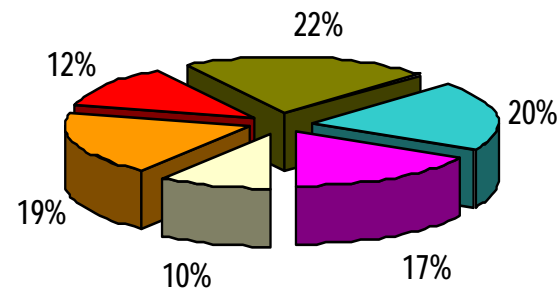


Chart 1. Proportions of Total Population of Children 0-5 Years-of-Age in Niagara Falls' Neighbourhoods



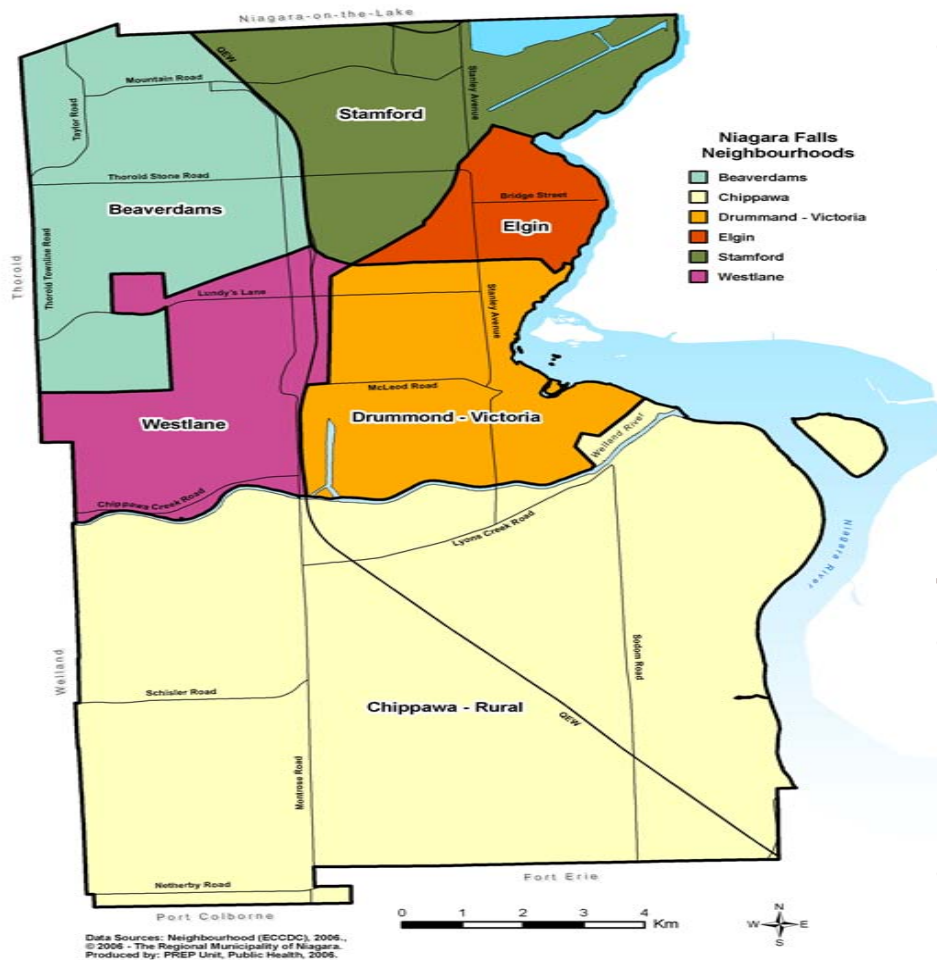
■ Chippawa-Rural  
■ Elgin  
■ Beaverdams  
■ Drummond-Victoria  
■ Stamford  
■ Westlane

Chart 2. Proportions of Samples of Children 0-5 Years-of-Age in Niagara Falls' Neighbourhoods



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

# 6 Neighbourhoods



- Challenges in neighbourhoods that have multiple risk factors - higher %'s of children considered vulnerable with multiple challenges, despite well-placed community resources
- Lone parents head a disproportionate percentage of families
- Large percentage of the residents over 20 years-of-age do not have high school diplomas
- Both urban and rural areas

# Additional Context



- Reputation for tourism, tender fruit, wine
- Demonstrated community leadership *ex. Child Care Plan, Best Start Integrated Community Plan, Niagara Children's Charter, Kiwanis Young Children Priority First, Quality Child Care Niagara, Child Care Choices)*
- Generally, safe, stable neighbourhoods
- Engaged parents who make use of community resources
- Since 2003, consistently scoring above national EDI means in all 5 domains
- 75% (3/4) SK children consistently 'on track' to ready to learn in school
- Efforts towards supporting parents, and improving community-wide strategies
- Collaboration / communication / integrated planning activities *involving families, teachers / early learning and care professionals / students, parents / community members, gov't officials / departments, programs, community non-profits / groups, schools...*



# Structure & Key Partners

Sponsor:



Staffing 2 projects, therefore: Coordinator, Researcher, ¼ time executive assistant, contract consultants (evaluation, communication, desktop publishing)

Coalition / Advisory Group:

- Early Years Niagara / Niagara Children's Planning Council
- Early Years Niagara Research Advisory Group



Key Community Partners:



The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the eccdc or any associate or partner thereof.

# Vision and Mandate:

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**HRSDC Mandate:** *Enable communities to better understand the needs of their young children and families so they can determine the best programs and services to meet them. UEY initiatives identify community factors that may influence children's development, readiness to learn in school, and family welfare*

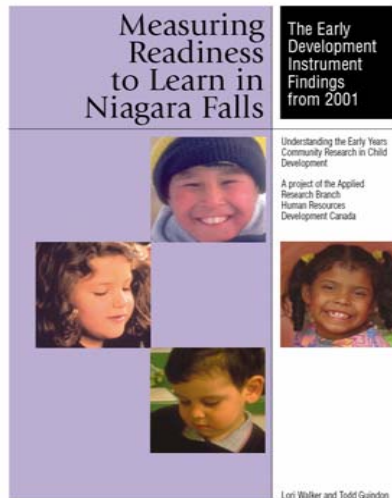
**Community Coalition / Niagara Children's Planning Council Vision:** *Children in Niagara region will experience a safe, healthy and nurturing childhood preparing them for an adulthood in which they are responsible and contributing members of their community*

**Early Years Niagara Research Advisory Group Role:** *Provide guidance to Early Years Niagara/Niagara Children's Planning Council with respect to research related to the enhancement of positive developmental outcomes for children in Niagara*

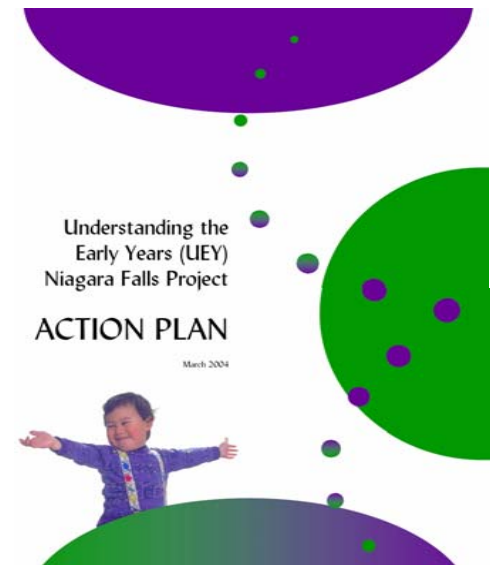
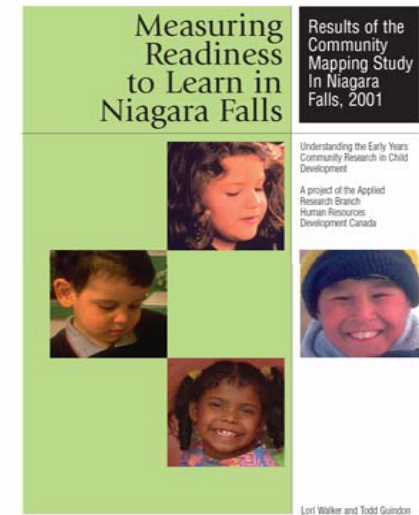
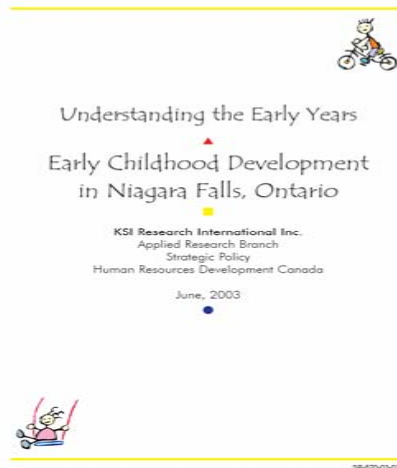
**ECCDC Sponsoring Agency Mandate:** *Enhance the quality, range and affordability of child care services in Niagara, and strengthen the area's child care and early learning industry*



# 2003 Action Plan Learning



*"We can't improve the health of young children, families, and the communities where they live until we take an honest and thorough look at the current situation".*



# People and events...



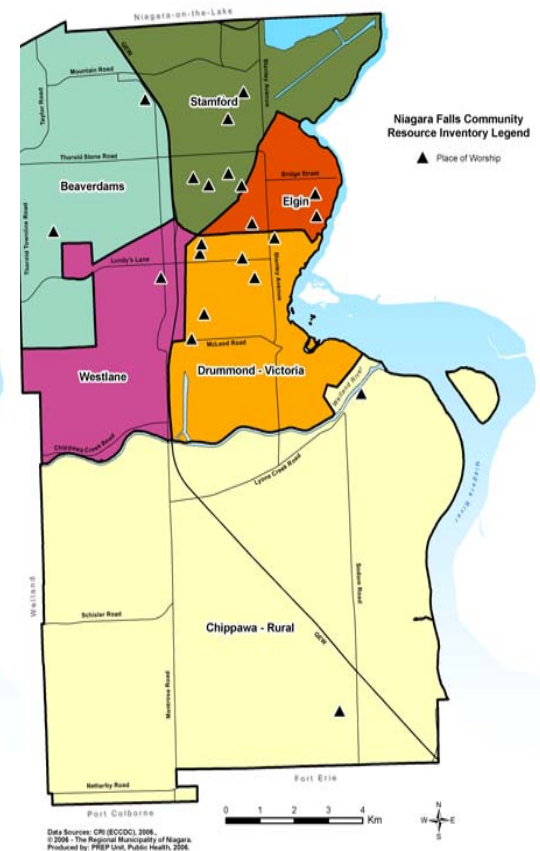
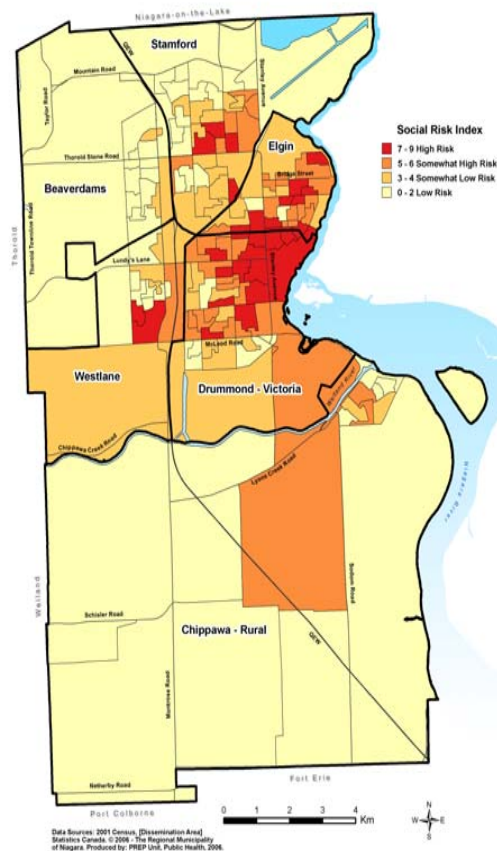
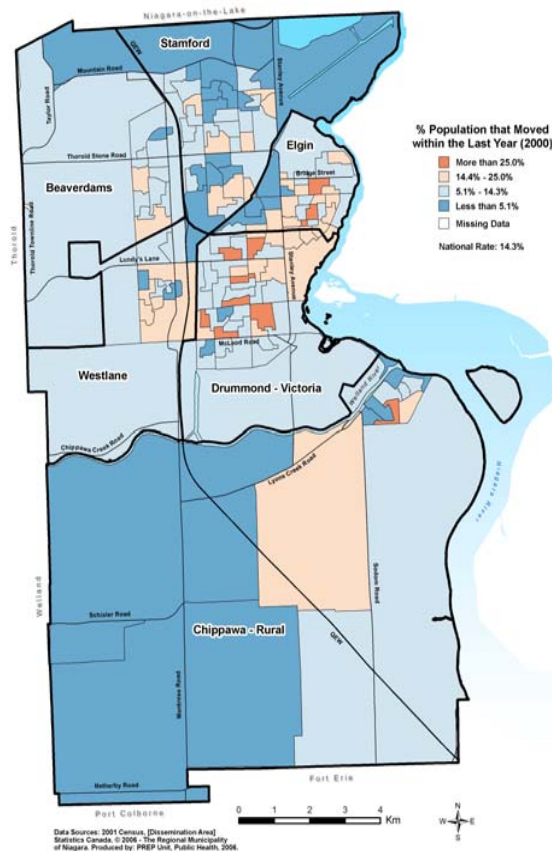
# Accomplishments



- EDI implementation, reports, presentations (*2001, 2002, 2003, 2005*)
- Community Study (*NLSCY 2002, 2005*)
- Community Resource Inventory Survey (*2003, updated 2006*)
- Disseminated over 1,000 community specific reports, presentations, training, sessions, event speakers / workshops
- Disseminated over 5,000 reports, brochures, communiqués, and/or articles
- Disseminated over 5,000 Parent letters, consents brochures, consultations and displays
- EDI training to school boards, SK teachers, thank you letters and EDI update
- Plan teacher and ECE training / PD, UEY partnered / developed / sponsored variety of workshops and/or conferences
- Action Planning Meetings, formal and informal data-driven planning feedback
- Met with variety of citizens and community leaders (*i.e. service providers, systems administrators, frontline staff, students, parents, teachers, service clubs, MPPs, etc...*)
- Knowledge used to make programming decisions, win funding bids
- Generate community action (*YCPF, Social Justice Committee*)



# Sample Maps...

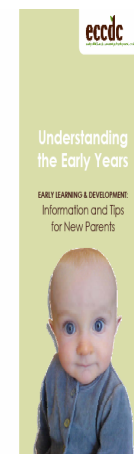
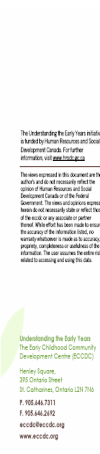
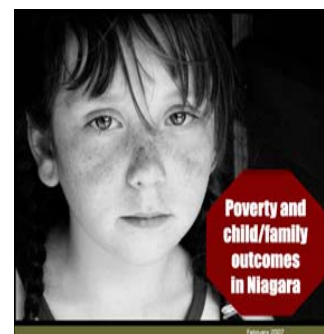
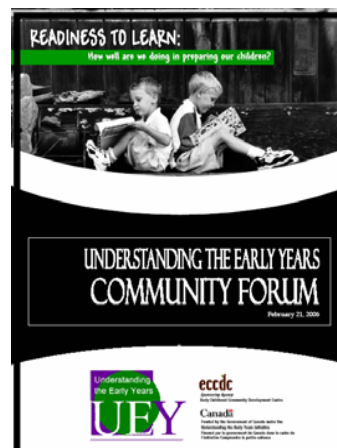
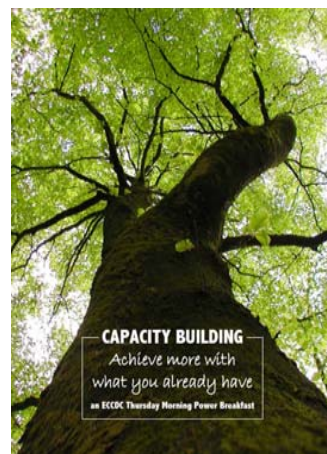
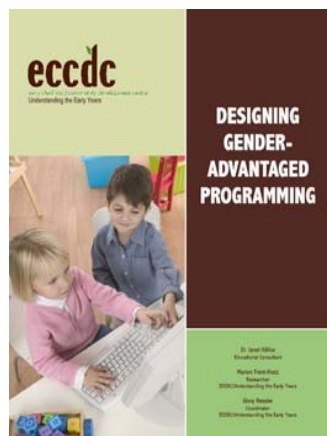


# Accomplishments cont'd



- Local, regional, provincial and national knowledge sharing
- Planning support provided via reports, presentations, meeting facilitation, data-driven dialogue
- Increased community awareness and skill building through professional development, training, event partnering and conference participation (presentations, displays)
- Improved service provision through alignment with community efforts
- Programs used evidence to develop, adjust and resource programming
- Identified gaps, and gathered community input on programming / resource needs and ideas for strategic collaboration
- Community plans already using UEY knowledge, additional uses anticipated
- Resources made available to community through ECCDC Library / Resource Room
- Successful partnering on communication projects, knowledge gathering, events trainings
- Successful bid for UEY Niagara Region Project

# Communications Products...





# Sustainability Strategies



- UEY Niagara Region knowledge gathering, sharing and planning activities include another data set for Niagara Falls
- UEY integrated website with links to Regional Municipality of Niagara, Early Years Niagara, HRSDC, Offord, Libraries, ECCDC, school boards. OEYC, OEYC DAC website
- Alignment with Regional and Best Start Community Plans
- Share CMS, CS, Action Plan and Final Report with community
- Cataloguing UEY and other related knowledge reports and resources for access through ECCDC
- Distribution of Action Plan and Final Evaluation reports
- Additional knowledge gathering and dissemination through UEY Niagara Region

# Discussion



- Please feel free to review samples of UEY Niagara Falls communication products....
- Do you have any questions or comments?
- Do you have any suggestions, ideas or recommendations for UEY Niagara Falls?

Thank  
You!



With appreciation,  
~ Tammy and Glory

**eccdc**

early childhood community development centre

**Early Years**  
NIAGARA



NIAGARA CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



District School Board  
of Niagara

**Niagara**  **Region**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES