

Investing in the future

Niagara Nurtures



The Early Years Action Group-Niagara Region

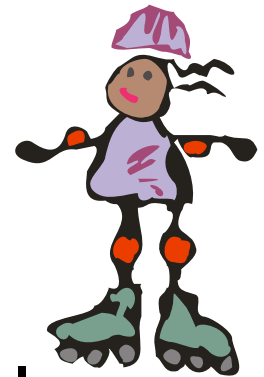
Early Years Research in the Niagara Region

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Our Vision for Niagara

- A society that values children as our future
- A society that supports parents in their role as their child's first teacher
- A Smarter Niagara Community that includes an investment in human capital



Our Vision for Children

Optimal child development; children who are:

- healthy, safe and secure
- ready to enter the school system and eager to learn
- socially engaged and responsible citizens of the future

Early Years Research in Niagara

- Niagara Falls is one of 12 communities across Canada participating in the Understanding the Early Years Project (UEY)
- The Ontario Early Years Initiative, is supporting the regional extension of components of the UEY research



Research Components

- Early Development Instrument (EDI)
- Community Mapping Study (CMS)
- National Longitudinal Study (NLSCY)
Community Study - *specific to UEY*



The Early Development Instrument

EDI 2000/2001 Niagara Falls

- approximately 900 SK children
- 2 School Boards



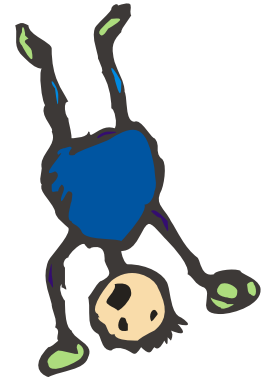
EDI 2001/2002 Niagara Region

- approximately 4000 SK children
- 4 School Boards

The NLSCY Community Study

NLSYC Community Study - Longitudinal research (HRDC and Statistics Canada) collects detailed information from families about:

- use of community resources and their impact on early child development.
- children's interactions, development and socialization



The Community Mapping Study

The CMS geographically maps information on:

- physical and socio-economic characteristics of neighbourhoods
- kinds of programs and services
- location of programs and services



The result is a visual representation of the city's socio-economic & physical environment

Initial Results in Niagara Falls

- 28% of children showed problems in one or more readiness to learn domains (Compared to 26% of children in the cohort)
- 11% showed problems in one domain while 17% showed problems in two or more domains. (Comparable averages for last year's cohort were 13% and 13% respectively)

Putting It All Together

- Summarize EDI results by postal code
- Take results out of school context and place them in neighbourhoods where children live
- Provide a detailed picture of the geographic area and information for the mobilization of resources

Putting It All Together

- Examine patterns of results from the EDI against neighbourhood characteristic data
- Use data on existing services, programs & neighbourhood demographics to assist in interpreting readiness to learn findings

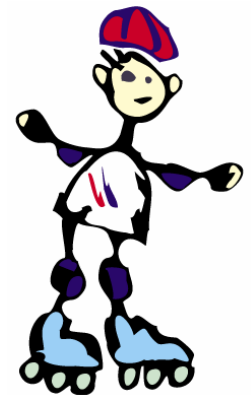


Putting It All Together

- Combined EDI, NLSCY & CMS data provides insight into how children's family, friends, and community influence development in terms of readiness to learn at school.
- Information will be provided to communities and governments so that they can develop programs, services and policies that best promote the well-being of children.

Anticipated Outcomes

- Identify strengths and needs in specific neighbourhoods
- Develop a Knowledge Action Plan to share results and put research into practice
- Show how government and communities can help children become ready to learn



Expected Results

- Improved decision making process allowing community to effectively plan, prioritize & allocate resources for families and children
- Increased knowledge, co-operation, collaboration and communication
- Baseline measure established for ongoing monitoring to track the well-being of families and young children

Who's Involved?

- Early Years Action Group - Niagara Region
- Early Childhood Community Development Centre
- School Boards
- Community Service Providers
- Government - Municipal, Regional, Provincial, Federal - (*Elected Officials and Staff*)
- Citizens of Niagara

Next Steps

- UEY results in autumn 2002
- Regional results in spring 2003
- Knowledge Action Plan for Niagara developed in 2003
- Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of children's progress – second EDI in Niagara Falls (2003)
- Local Council - continued opportunities to shape future services for citizens