



eccdc
early childhood community development centre
Understanding the Early Years

PARENTING BRIEF – NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

Excerpts from:
Communities Survey (2002, 2005) - Statistics Canada

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a Government of Canada national Initiative aimed at helping communities better understand how their young children are doing physically, socially, and cognitively and how families and the community are supporting their children. The Initiative involves the participation of parents, teachers, schools, school boards, community organizations, and others interested in the well-being of children. Niagara Falls, Ontario is one of seven communities that have participated, since 2001, in the second pilot phase (UEY-II Communities). The other six communities are Hampton, New Brunswick; Montreal, Quebec; Dixie-Bloor of Mississauga, Ontario; South Eastman, Manitoba; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and Abbotsford, British Columbia.

As part of the UEY Initiative, Statistics Canada conducted two rounds of the Communities Survey in Niagara Falls, which was adapted from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY). The first cycle of data was collected in 2001-2002 and the second in 2004-2005, using the same instruments and data collection procedures. Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) is producing a report that provides an update for the Niagara Falls Community, based on the analysis of these two cycles of data. This report will provide a portrait of kindergarteners in the Niagara Falls Community, in major domains of child development including physical health and well-being, cognitive skills, and behaviours. The report will also explore factors that may be related to children's developmental outcomes, by looking at changes in demographics, family processes, and community factors between 2002 and 2005.

This brief is based on preliminary analysis of the data collected in the Communities Survey, the early childhood developmental outcomes in Niagara Falls, and changes between 2001 and 2005 that are related to parenting practices.

Positive parenting practices are related to how often parents praise their children, how often they talk and play with their children, and how often they laugh together. A number of studies have shown that children have better developmental outcomes when their parents monitor their children's behaviour, are responsive to their needs, and encourage independence with a democratic approach (Chao & Willms, 2000).

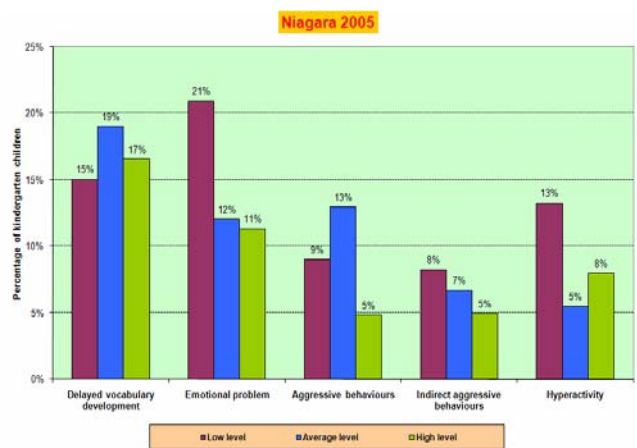
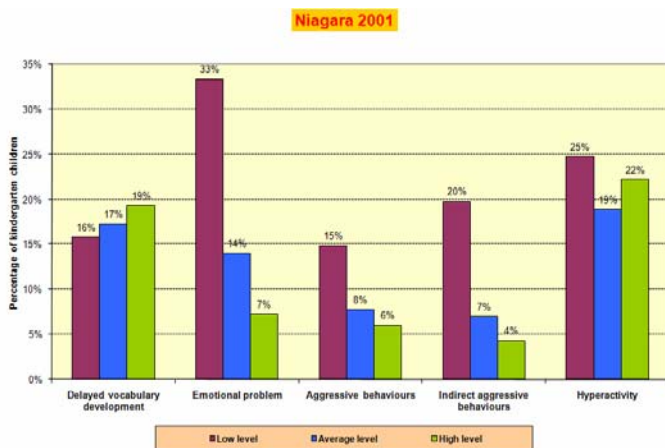
Mean scores of four measures of parent-child interactions, Niagara Falls and UEY-II Communities (rescaled on a 100-point scale, 2001 and 2005)

Parent-child Interactions	Niagara Falls		UEY-II Communities	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Positive parent	77.6	77.4	72.1	74.1
Effective parent	67.7	69.7	60.6	66.4
Consistency in parent	68.1	70.6	67.3	68.7
Rational parent	58.6	59.9	58.2	59.1

The data in the table at left indicates that Niagara Falls parents, on average, had high rates of positive parenting, effective parenting, and consistency in their parent-child interactions that were slightly higher rates than the other UEY-II communities. Rational parenting measures were close to the UEY-II

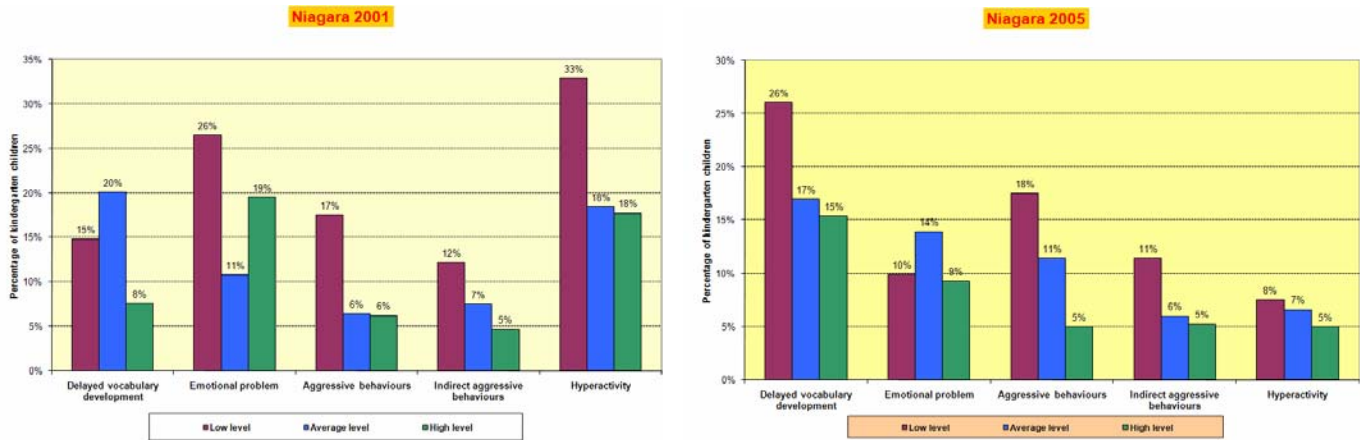
community rates. For identifying children possibly at risk due to poor parenting practices, the parenting scores are classified into three levels: high, average, and low, based on means scores and standard deviations of UEY-II communities data.

Positive parenting and developmental outcomes of kindergarten children, Niagara Falls



As shown in the graphs above, in 2001 positive parenting appeared to be strongly associated with children's emotional and behavioural development: considerably higher percentages of children in families with low-level positive parenting showed signs of emotional problems, aggressive as well as indirect aggressive behaviours. The results from the 2005 survey further confirmed the role of positive parenting in children's emotional development and provided some evidence on the importance of positive parenting in reducing children's attention deficit problems.

Consistent parenting and developmental outcomes of kindergarten children, Niagara Falls



The data in the graphs from both 2001 and 2005 both indicate that consistent parenting – parents who set clear and consistent rules for their children – was strongly related to better children’s behavioural outcomes, including physical and indirect aggressive behaviours.

Summary

The function of UEY projects is to provide community-specific information on:

- the development of kindergarten children;
- family and community factors that influence children’s development;
- local programs and services for young children and their families; and
- local socioeconomic characteristics.

With this information, community organizations and individuals can identify gaps in services and programs for young children and their families and foster partnerships among community groups and individuals to make informed decisions about the best programs and services for young children to thrive.

For information on the availability of the full HRSDC community study for Niagara Falls, and other inquiries concerning the Understanding the Early Years, Niagara Falls project, please contact Glory Ressler, Understanding the Early Years Coordinator, by calling 905.646.7311 ext. 319, email gressler@eccdc.org, or visit the website at www.uey.eccdc.org.