



Understanding the Early Years

UEY

COMMUNITY RESEARCH IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

UEY Niagara is a project of the Social Development Canada



Overview

■ Background

■ Results

■ Next Steps



Understanding the Early Years

- ✚ **Project of the Social Development Canada**
- ✚ **National study focusing on community impacts on early child development**
- ✚ **Provides provincial and territorial estimates on a variety of outcome measures**
- ✚ **Allows measuring and reporting on the readiness of Canadian children to learn**

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair, wearing a blue denim shirt. She is holding a bright red apple in her hands and looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

The Benefits of Involvement in UEY

Build community capacity

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

Inform policy & programs

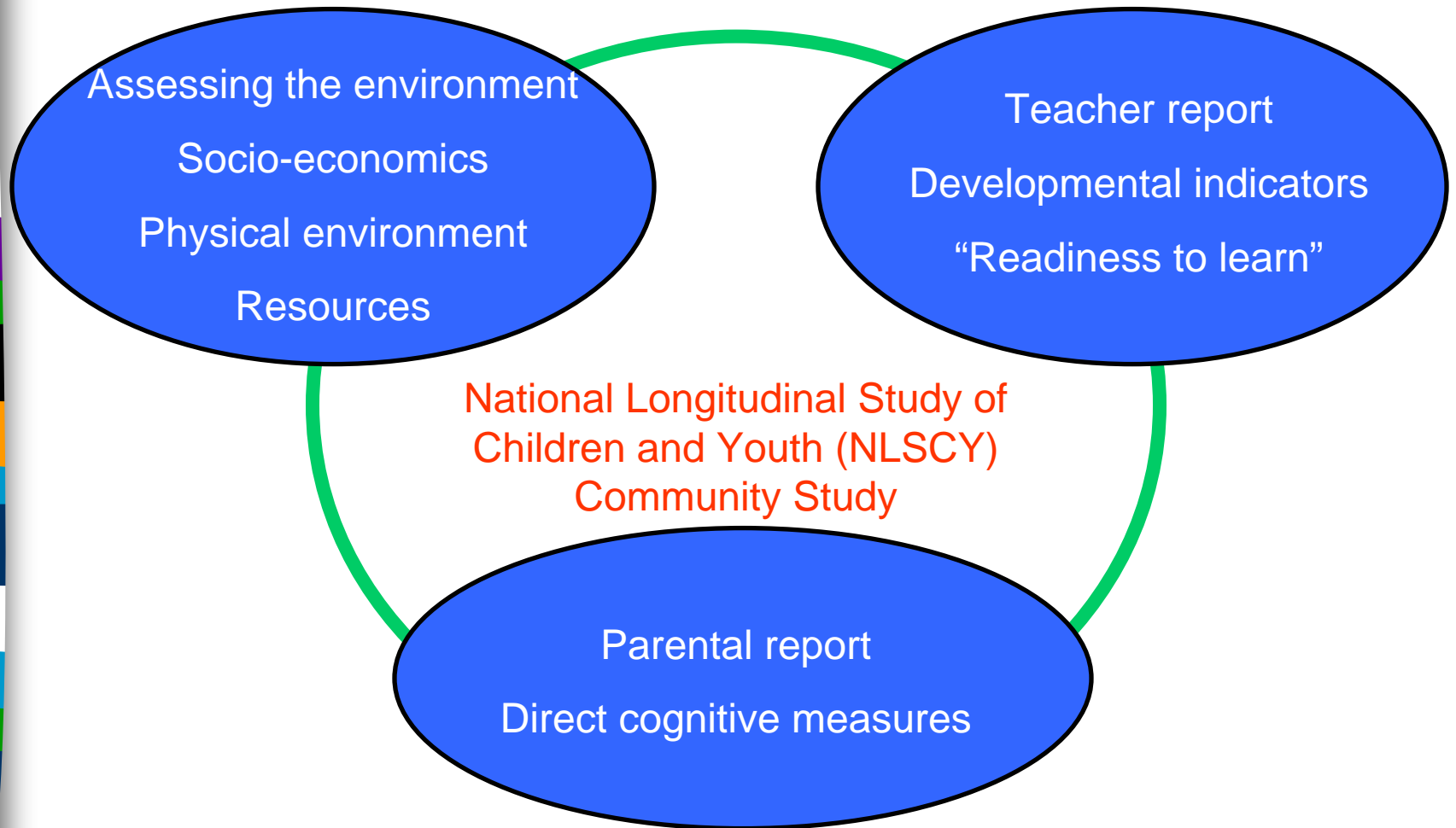
Enhance data based decision making

Help our children succeed

Measuring and Reporting Tools

Community Mapping Study (CMS)

Early Development Instrument (EDI)





Early Development Instrument (EDI)

- ✚ **The EDI was developed by Dr. Dan Offord & Dr. Magdalena Janus at the Offord Centre, McMaster University**
- ✚ **Profiles early child development outcomes, or “readiness to learn”, in terms of children’s preparedness for school.**



Readiness to learn

- ✚ Refers to the child's ability to meet the task demands of school, such as:
 - Being comfortable exploring and asking questions,
 - Listening to the teacher
 - Playing and working with other children,
 - Remembering and following rules



School readiness to learn

- ✚ It is the ability to benefit from the educational and social activities that are provided by the school



Domains of school readiness

- ✚ **Physical Health and Well-being**
- ✚ **Social Competence**
- ✚ **Emotional Maturity**
- ✚ **Language and Cognitive Development**
- ✚ **Communication Skills and General Knowledge**



Early Development Instrument (EDI)

- ✚ Population measure
- ✚ Teachers complete a checklist with students in mind
- ✚ All items are characteristic of children's observable behaviour in kindergarten
- ✚ There is no direct assessment
- ✚ Results are interpreted on a group level

**The EDI is not a diagnostic tool,
nor does measure school or teacher performance.**



Percentile Thresholds

- ✚ **The Offord Centre is working towards a national standard or benchmark**
- ✚ **For now, population scores for each domain, from each site, are divided into percentiles to facilitate interpretation**
- ✚ **Percentile thresholds are relative and based on the distribution of scores within each site – profiling the development of children relative to their peers in the community**

A photograph of a young child wearing goggles and crying in a swimming pool. The child is in the foreground, looking towards the camera with a distressed expression. In the background, a man with a beard and sunglasses is on the left, and a woman with a white swim cap is on the right. The pool water is blue, and the background shows a wooden fence and some greenery.

Children at Risk in Terms of Readiness Skills

Children who score below the 10th percentile on any developmental domain of the EDI are considered to be at risk in terms of readiness to learn skills



A low score on one domain does not necessarily indicate that a child will have difficulty at school

Low scores on two or more domains increases the risk of later difficulty at school



Community Mapping Study

A visual representation of:

- ✚ Socio-economic environment –
Social Index**
- ✚ Physical environment; and**
- ✚ Community resources**



The Community Mapping Study (CMS)

Socio-economic factors (Census data)

Income

Unemployment

Education

Family status

Language

Home ownership

Mobility

Immigration

Social transfer payment

Physical environment (NOI)

Condition of housing, streets, perception of safety

Community resources (Inventory)

Location in relation to families



The National Longitudinal Study of Children & Youth (NLSCY) Community Study

Parental interviews

How family, friends, schools and community influence children's physical, behavioural and learning development

Direct cognitive assessments of children

(PPVT-R), Who Am I?, Number Knowledge Assessment



Results





Highlights from the CMS

Protective Factors

- ✚ Residential stability
- ✚ Low unemployment
- ✚ Favourable physical environment
- ✚ Well located resources

Risk Factors

- ✚ Below national average income
- ✚ High % of lone parent families



NLSCY and CMS Findings

Protective Factors in Niagara Falls

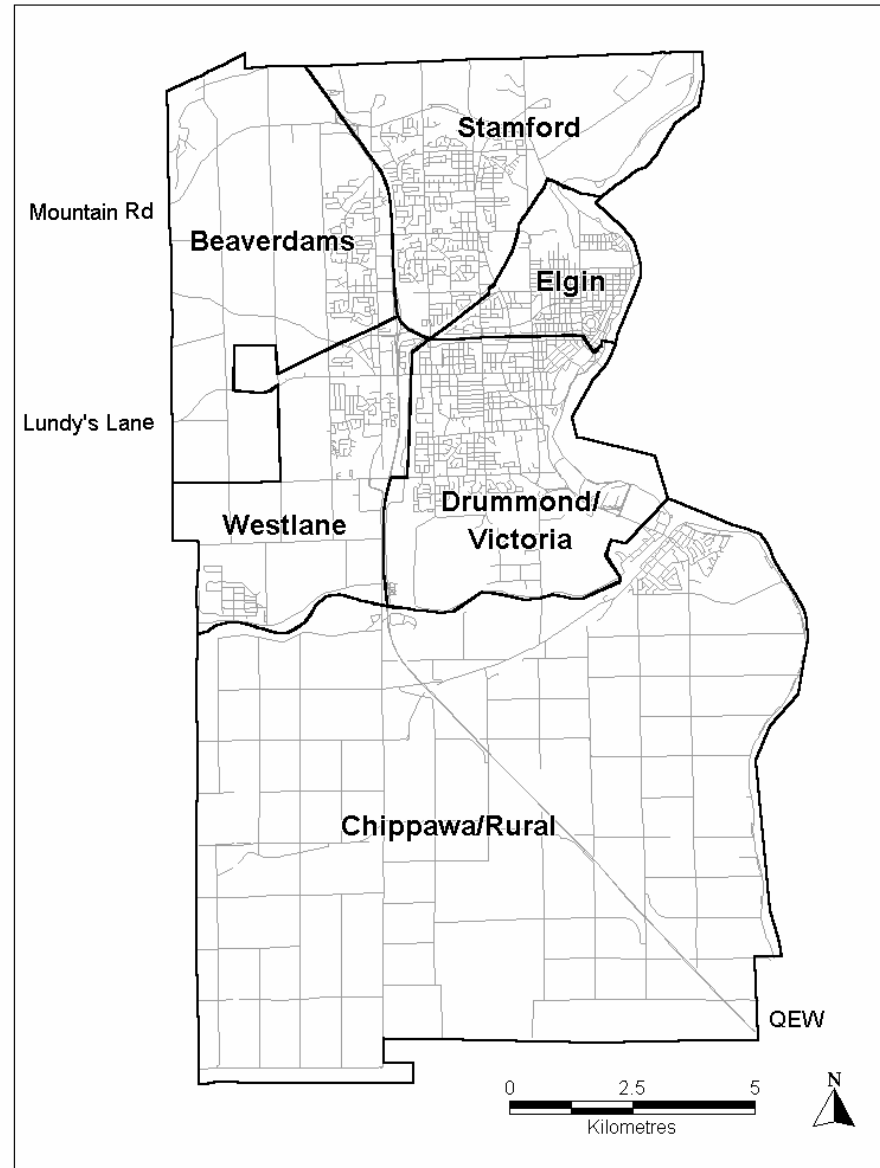
Parenting	Positive parenting style and high parental engagement
Physical Environment	Generally favourable – safe, clean, well maintained
Residential Stability	Majority of families owned their home & mobility rate was below national average
Employment	Low (7.6%, compared to national average of 10%)
Use of Resources	Higher than national average. Concentrated in areas of need.



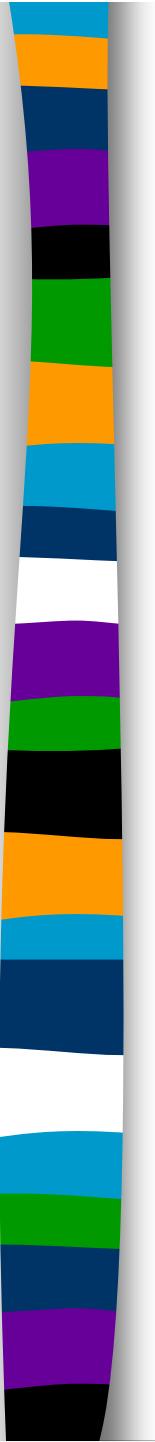
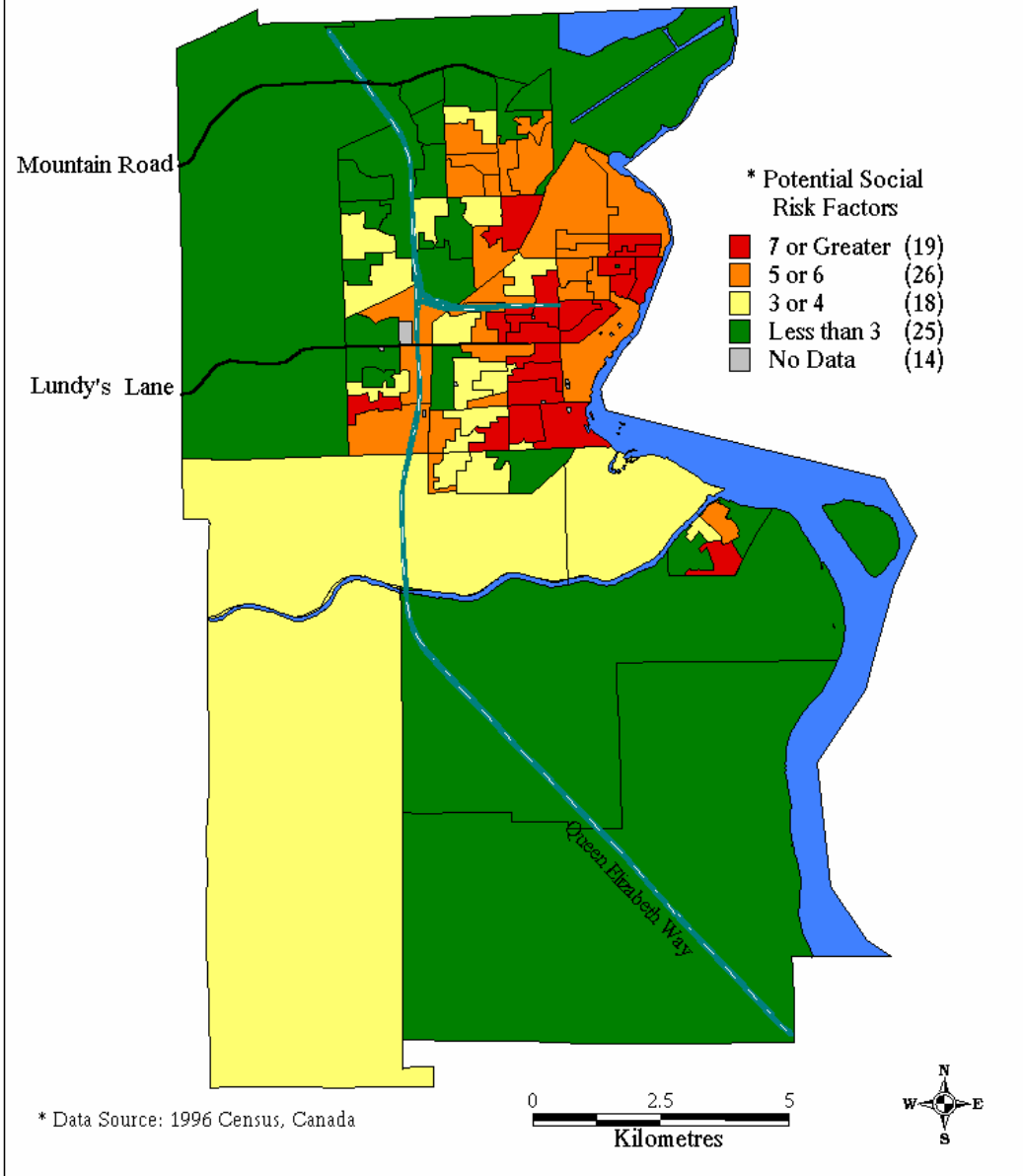
Risk Factors in Niagara Falls

Income	Average household income \$5,700 below national average. 55% of children lived in areas where the average income was below LICO
Family Status	28% of families lone parent (1996 Census data: national average 22%)
Hyperactivity	Approximately 1 ½ times national norm (NLSCY parental report)

Neighbourhood Study Areas



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





Emerging Patterns

- ✚ **51% of EAs were considered to be at “high risk” (i.e.: 5> risk factors)**
- ✚ **78% of Niagara Falls’ “high risk” EAs were located in the 3 neighbourhoods identified as having increased needs in terms of children’s readiness to learn, namely:**
 - Westlane, Drummond/Victoria and Elgin**
- ✚ **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”**

EDI Findings





Children at Risk in Niagara Falls

2001

11.2% at risk in one readiness to learn domain.

17.3% at risk in two or more domains.

2001 cohort 13.3% and 13.1% respectively

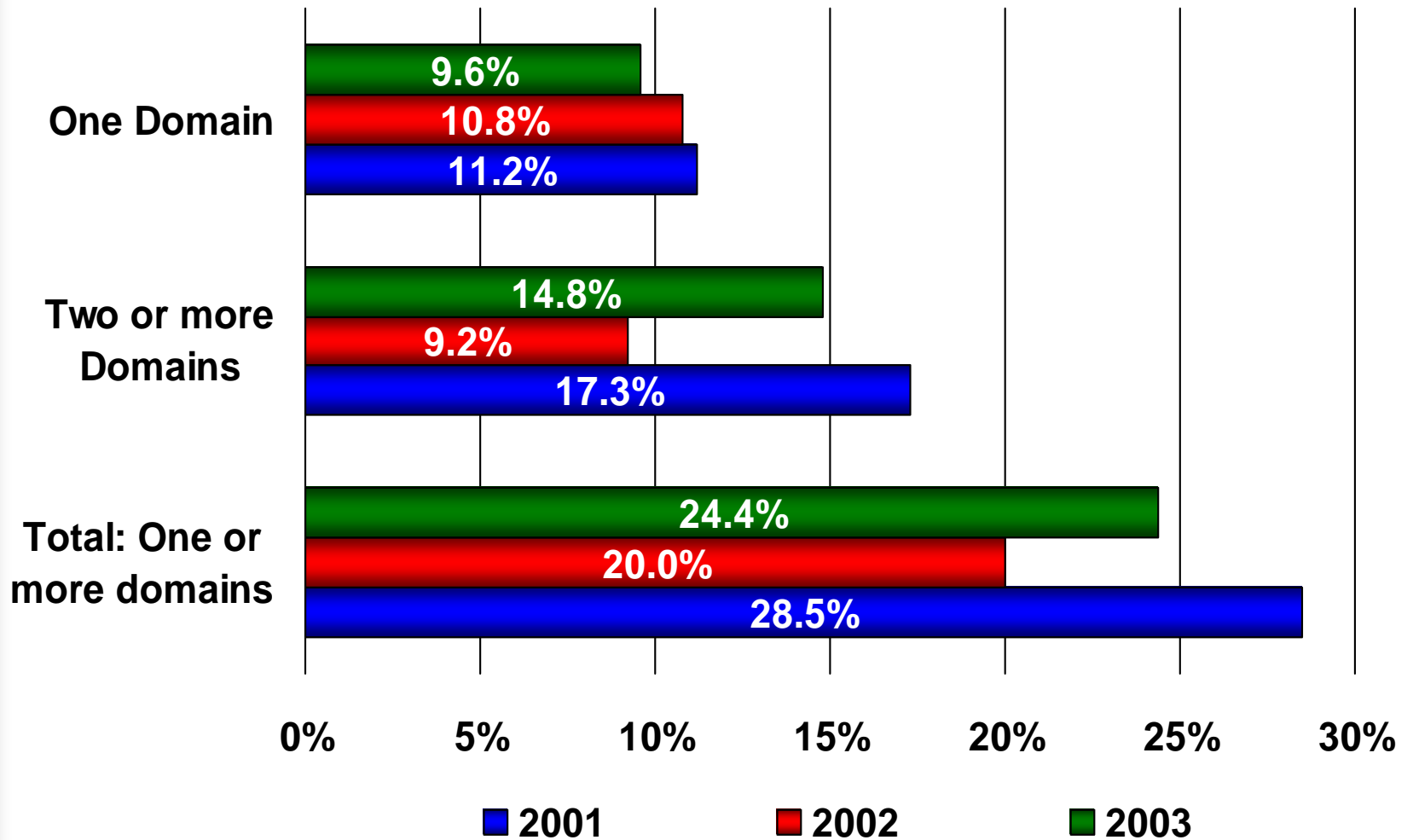
2003

9.6% at risk in one domain

14.8% at risk in two or more domains

2002 12.2% and 13.2% respectively

Proportion of Niagara Falls Children Scoring below the 10th Percentile





2001 – 2003 Mean Scores

On average children in Niagara Falls scored as well as or better than children in their respective Canadian Cohorts.

Emerging Patterns

Scores in Niagara Falls, all three years, fell in basically the same order –highest in Physical Health and Well-being and lowest in Communication and General Knowledge and Emotional Maturity

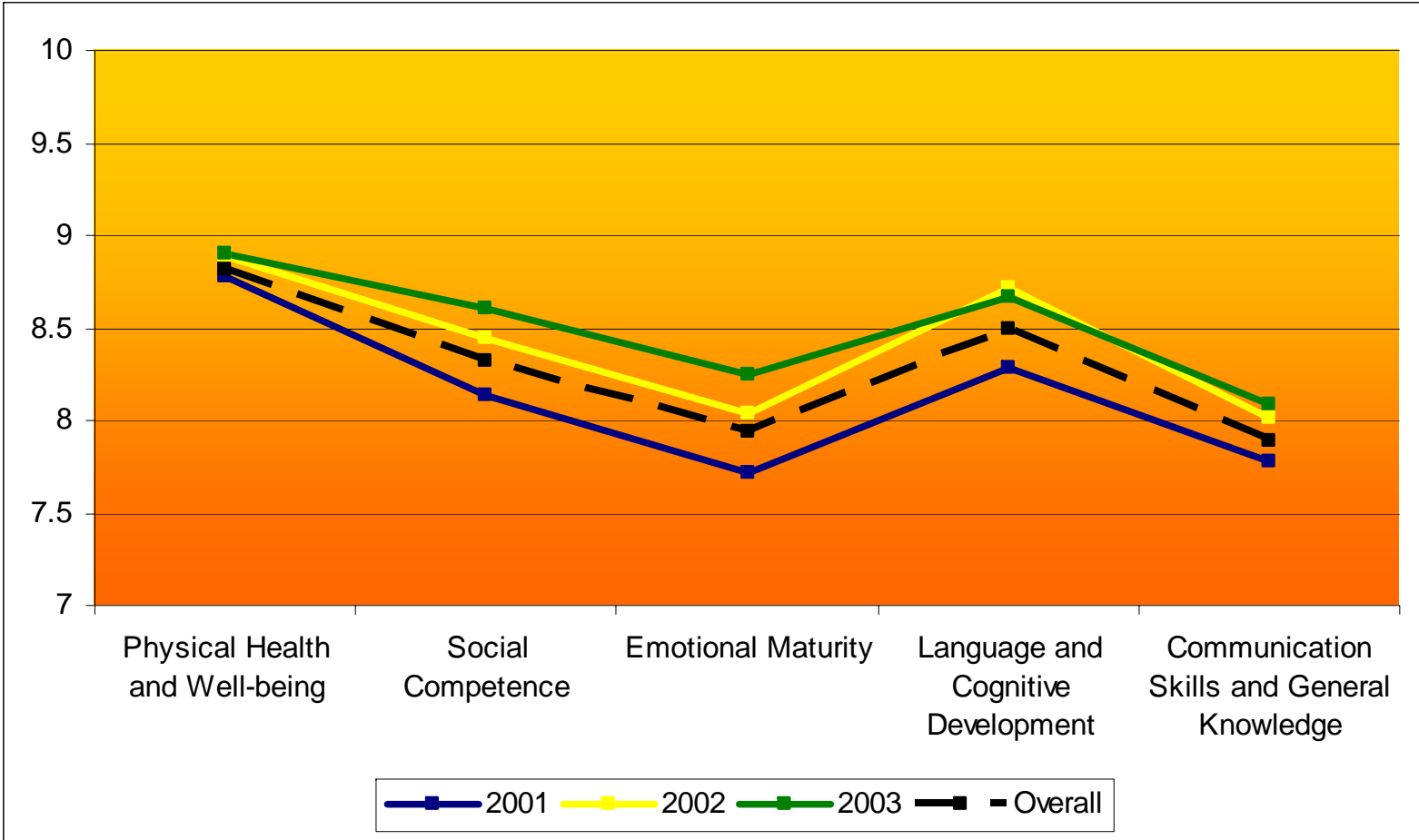


EDI Mean Scores for Niagara Falls 2001-2003

EDI scales	Mean score		
	2001	2002	2003
Physical Health & Well-being	8.78	8.89	8.90
Language & Cognitive Development	8.29	8.71	8.67
Social Competence	8.14	8.44	8.60
Communication & General Knowledge	7.78	8.01	8.09
Emotional Maturity	7.72*	8.04	8.25

* Statistically significant (lower) when compared to same year Cohort

Niagara Falls EDI Mean Scores by Domain for Senior Kindergarten, 2001-2003



Emotional Maturity

Sub-scale	23% <u>not</u> ready	Description
Pro-social and helping behaviour	17%	never or almost never show helping behaviour, do not help someone hurt sick or upset, offer to help or invite bystanders to join in
Anxious and fearful behaviour	<2%	
Aggressive behaviour	6%	
Hyperactivity and inattention	13%	Show most hyperactive behaviours: have difficulty settling at activities, are restless, distractible, impulsive, fidget



Communication Skills and General Knowledge

Sub-scale	25% <u>not</u> ready	Description
Communication skills and general knowledge	25% <u>not</u> ready	average to very poor in effective communication, may have difficulty in participating in games involving the use of language, may be difficult to understand and may have difficulty to understand others; may show little general knowledge and may have difficulty with the native language



Language vs. Communication

Language and Cognitive Development

- ✚ Basic numeracy and literacy skills
- ✚ Interest in numeracy/literacy and memory
- ✚ Advanced literacy

Communication Skills and General Knowledge

- ✚ Storytelling
- ✚ Imaginative play
- ✚ Articulates clearly; understands and can be understood
- ✚ Proficient in native language
- ✚ General knowledge base



“Not ready” to learn at school

CHILD CHARACTERISTICS

- + Fair or poor health
- + Boy
- + Did not attend preschool



“Not ready” to learn at school

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

- + Mother's health poor
- + Father's health poor
- + Mother's smoking
- + Father's smoking
- + Not intact family
- + Low family income



“Not ready” to learn at school

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

- + Parent-reported low neighbourhood quality (includes playground, safety, health, transport, presence of families with children, etc.)
- + Parent-reported low frequency of contacts with neighbours (talking, visiting)



Next Steps





EDI in Niagara

- ✚ Niagara Falls – 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005
- ✚ Niagara Region – 2002
- ✚ Anticipated EDI measure for Niagara Region, including Niagara Falls - 2005











Next Steps

- ✚ **Final EDI measure - 2005**
- ✚ **2nd and Final NLSCY Community Study measure - 2005**
- ✚ **Update Community Mapping Study with 2001 Census data**
- ✚ **Communicate findings to community**
- ✚ **Update action plans to improve community supports for early child development**



Primary Partners in UHEY

-  **Early Years Action Group –Niagara Region**
-  **Early Childhood Community Development Centre**
-  **Regional Municipality of Niagara Community Services**
-  **Regional Municipality of Niagara Public Health**
-  **Niagara Catholic District School Board**
-  **District School Board of Niagara**
-  **Brock University**
-  **Niagara College**
-  **Social Development Canada**



Current UEY Communities

- ✚ **Abbotsford, 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**