

PIDACS COMMUNITY SUPPORTS BRIEF (June 2008)

As part of the Understanding the Early Years (UEY) Niagara Region project, information was collected from parents, kindergarten children, and their teachers on the development of children in the community, using the Parent Interviews and Direct Assessments of Children Survey (PIDACS) and the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The Understanding the Early Years initiative is funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. For further information, visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca.

PIDACS was designed to collect information about children's developmental outcomes and their family and neighbourhood environments and experiences.

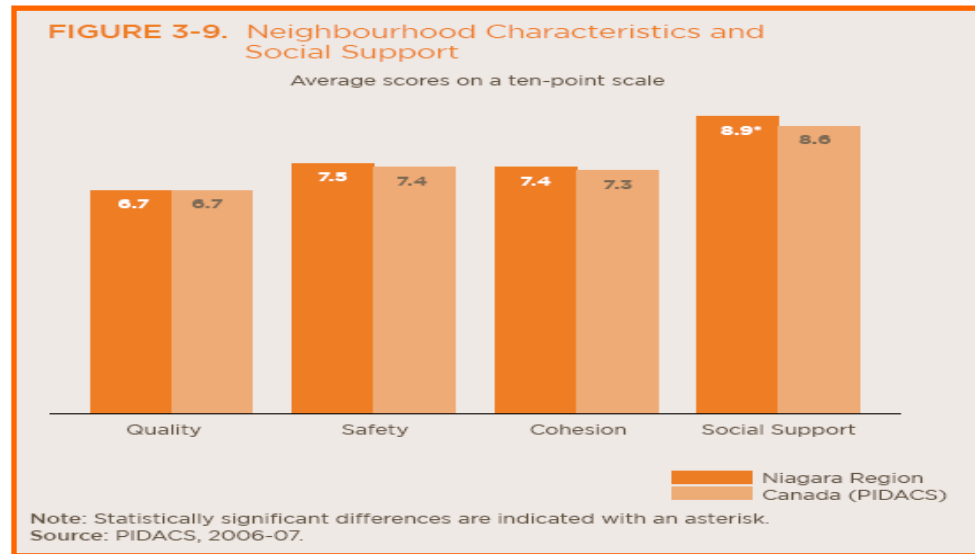
The information presented in this brief is based on a sample of 836 children enrolled in kindergarten in 2006-07 in the Niagara Region (DSBN, NCDSB). Of this sample, 683 parents or guardians were interviewed, and 755 children completed the direct assessments. The PIDACS sample size is large enough to provide accurate estimates of the mean scores for the measures of children's outcomes and for various aspects of family and community context.

Results from the preliminary analysis of this data are outlined in the pages that follow. Additional analysis, at the municipal and neighbourhood levels, is currently underway and will be available in the summer/fall of 2008.

The quality of a neighbourhood and the local community can have positive effects on children's developmental outcomes. For example, the availability of local playgrounds and pools can directly affect children's physical development. When the neighbourhood is a safe place for children to play, it is easier for parents to be engaged with their children in positive ways.

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Figure 3-9 shows that the parents' assessments of their local neighbourhoods were generally positive and consistent with the Canadian average. Parents also indicated that there was a high level of social support in the community.



Parents (or Persons Most Knowledgeable) were also asked a number of questions about their child's use of educational, entertainment, cultural, and recreational resources.

Figure 3-6 shows that children in Niagara tended to be actively engaged in sports and other community activities, and families generally made good use of local educational and recreational resources.

However, the children in our community tended to visit plays and musical performances, and museums and art galleries less frequently than other Canadian children this age.

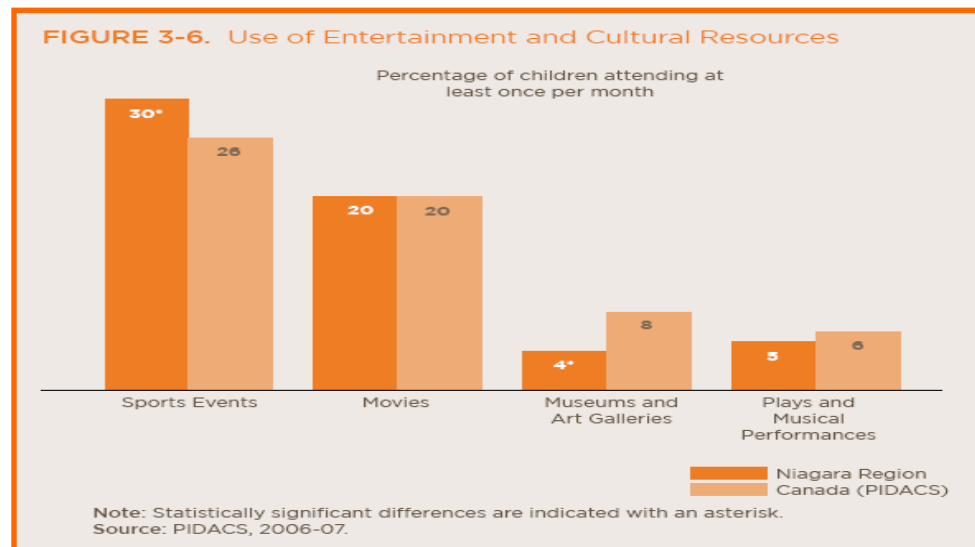


Figure 3-8 (page 3) shows that the prominent barriers to participation in programs and resources were similar to those of other UEY PIDACS communities in 2006-07, including:

- not being able to find programs available at a convenient time (49%),
- not having the time to participate (45%),
- the unavailability of programs for children this age (38%),
- Programs were too costly (36%), and
- Parents were unaware that the resource existed (35%).

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Community resources for children 0-6 years of age and their parents/ caregivers have also been mapped and listed for each Niagara Municipality (UEY, 2007). These can be found online at: www.uey.eccdc.org/niagara-region.php.

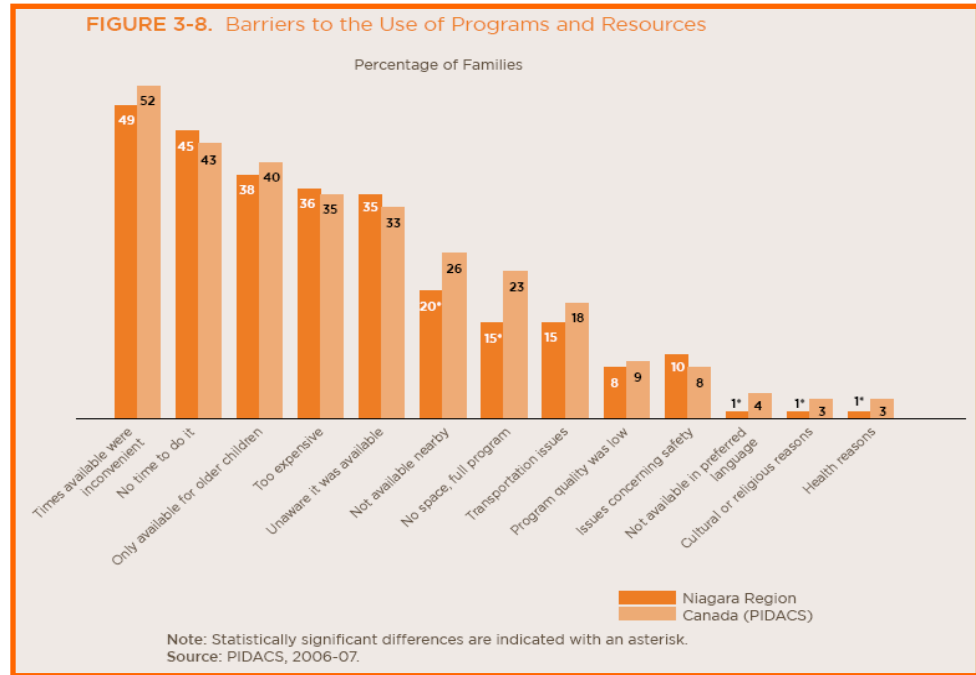


TABLE 3-1. Use of Child-Care Arrangements

| | NIAGARA REGION | CANADA (PIDACS) |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| PERCENT | | |
| Percent not using a child-care arrangement | 40 | 42 |
| Most frequently used type of care arrangement | | |
| In own home by a relative (excluding siblings) | 11 | 8 |
| In own home by a sibling | 1 | 1 |
| Someone else's home by a relative | 16 | 10 |
| In own home by a non-relative | 3 | 5 |
| Someone else's home by a non-relative | 13 | 15 |
| Daycare centre | 12 | 10 |
| Before- or after-school program | 4 | 9 |
| Other child care arrangement | 1 | 1 |
| Percent using at least one type of care arrangement | 60 | 58 |
| Among those using a care arrangement: | | |
| PERCENT | | |
| Use of multiple types of care arrangements | | |
| One only | 55 | 59 |
| Two types | 33 | 30 |
| Three or more types | 12 | 11 |
| HOURS | | |
| Total time using some form of care arrangement per week | 19.7 | 18.4 |

Source: PIDACS, 2006-07.

Figure 3-1 shows that in the Niagara Region, 40% of the families in the PIDACS sample cared for their children at home without any other type of arrangement. For another 28% of families, care was provided by a relative or an older sibling at home, or by a relative in someone else's home.

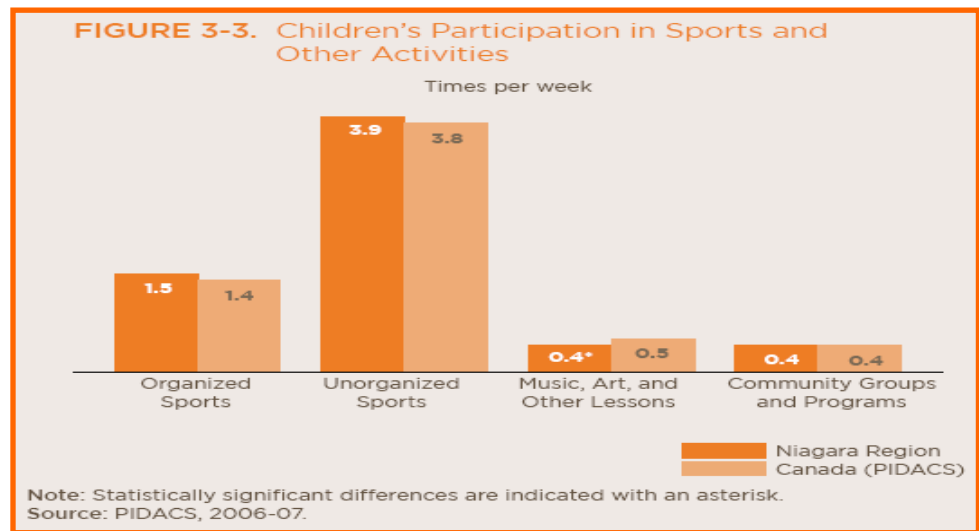
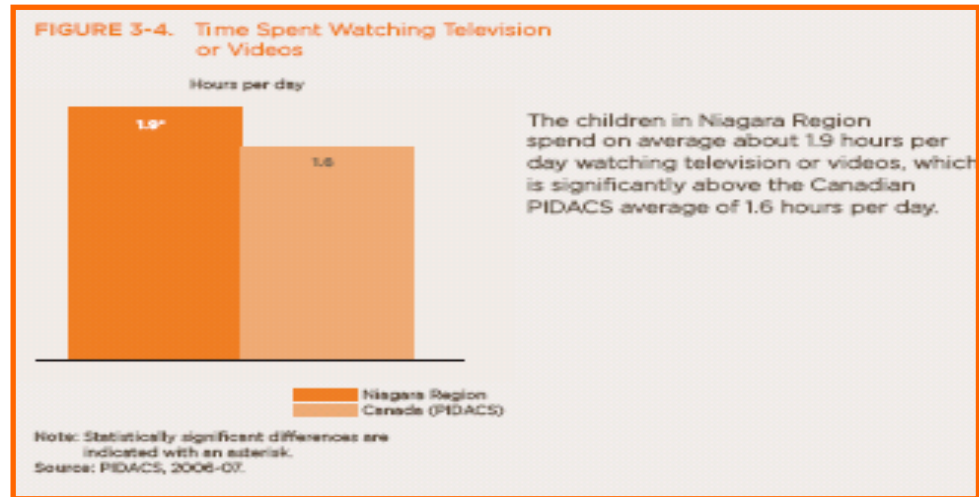
The results also suggested that among those using a child-care

arrangement, about 45% used two or more different types of arrangements. On average, children were cared for in child-care arrangements for about 20 hours per week.

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Figure 3-4 shows that results for the Niagara Region indicate that our children spend statistically significantly more time watching TV or Video than found in the national sample.

Although children in the Niagara Region spend on average about 1.9 hours per day watching television or videos, they also do spend more time playing organized and unorganized sports than the national PIDACS cohort. At the same time, these participation percentages are relatively low among both groups.



As the community works towards further developing and implementing its Integrated Action Plan, it can consider strengths and weaknesses uncovered by this PIDACS brief, along with any additional local information available.

The findings of this report may vary among regions within this UEY community. The UEY initiative stresses the importance of a coordinated approach that involves families, teachers/schools, and the wider community to determine the best programs and services to meet children's needs during their formative years.

This brief, along with others generated by UEY Niagara Region can also be found online at: www.uey.eccdc.org/reports.php.