



Community Forum Update

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 Understanding the Early Years (UEY)

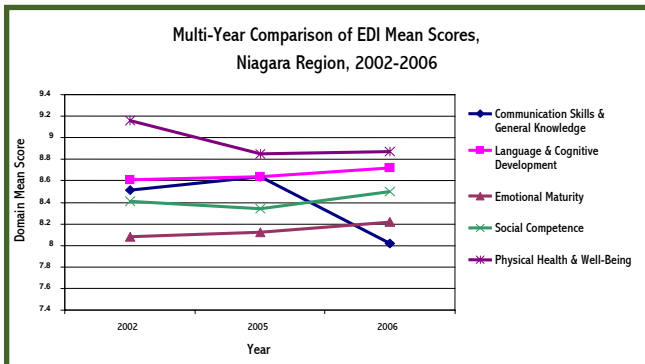
In November 2007, at two Community Forums, Niagara's early learning and care community came together to present its latest research information and plans concerning children 0-6, as well as examples of related local community and business initiatives.

Sponsored by the ECCDC and its UEY project, event partners included: Early Years Niagara and its Planning Council and Research Advisory Group, Ontario Early Years Niagara Region and the Regional Municipality of Niagara, the Niagara Falls Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee, Free the Children – Niagara Branch, and Canadian Tire Financial Services.

The events were very well attended with 88 elected officials, senior planners and administrators, and other community leaders at the morning event; and 119 ECEs, teachers, parents, and early years service providers at the evening session. The overwhelming majority of all evaluations and comments received indicated that it was a success!

Highlights of the information shared included:

- overtime EDI results for the region as a whole, which show declining average scores in Physical Health & Well-being and Communication Skills & General Knowledge; and



- municipal and neighbourhood socioeconomic information (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census) such as average

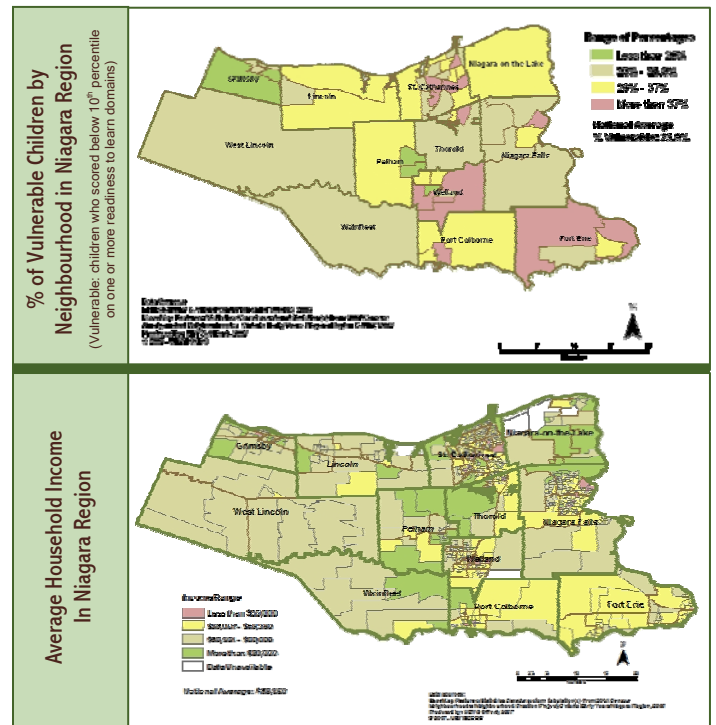
"The quality and capacity of our future population depends on what we do now to support early child development."

~ Fraser Mustard, Founder & Chair Emeritus,
 Council for Early Child Development

income, level of education, and family structure compared to the 2006 Early Development results which reveal areas of surprising resilience, as well as some indication of needs and challenges in our community.

As a result, several presentations and custom reports have already been provided. Work continues around examining the results in more

detail and gathering additional knowledge in order to make plans and take action that improves outcomes for Niagara children 0-6 and their parents/caregivers!



To access the Forum Handout, please click on the "Readiness to Learn in Niagara" report at www.uey.eccdc.org/reports.php.

For more information on local results or to discuss how the information might help you in your service delivery and/or planning, please contact Glory Ressler at gressler@eccdc.org or call 905.646.7311 x.319.

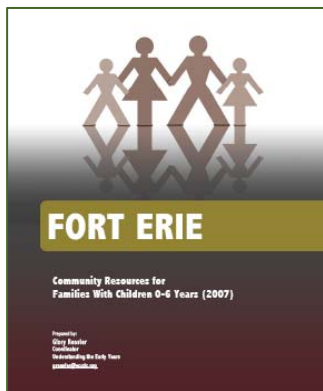
RESEARCH COMMUNIQUÉ

for Early Learning & Care Providers



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Community Resources Mapped for All Niagara Municipalities!

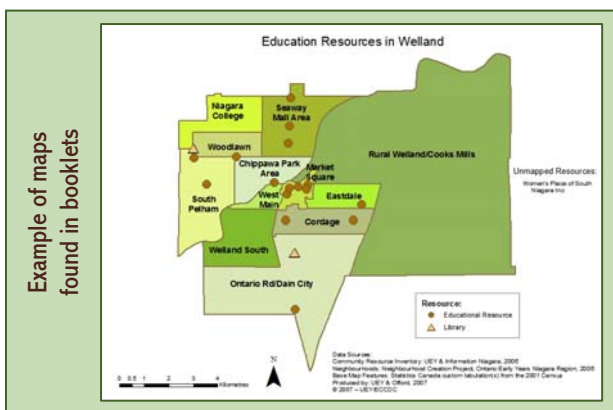


- Fort Erie
- Grimsby
- Lincoln
- Niagara Falls
- Niagara-On-The-Lake
- Pelham
- Port Colborne
- St. Catharines
- Thorold
- Wainfleet
- Welland
- West Lincoln

In 2006, Understanding the Early Years (UEY) and Information Niagara partnered in order to undertake a community resource inventory survey of **programs and services for children 0-6 and their parents/caregivers**. In 2007, UEY was fortunate to have a Brock University student update the information as part of a service learning placement.

As a result, Community Resource booklets have been produced for each municipality in Niagara. The reports map resources and list providers in the following six categories:

- 1) Arts, Entertainment and Multicultural
- 2) Education
- 3) Health & Wellness
- 4) Social
- 5) Special Interest (faith-based)
- 6) Sports & Recreation



These can now be found under the Community Reports tab on the UEY website. Simply go to: www.uey.eccdc.org/reports.php and click on either the link to Niagara Falls reports or the one for all other municipalities. We hope you find them helpful.

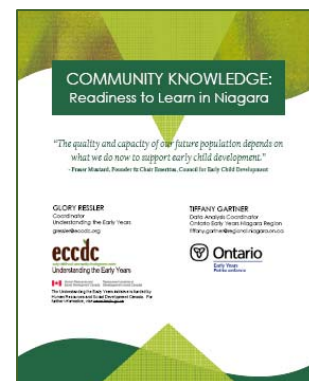
Your comments and questions are welcome. Please email Glory Ressler at gressler@eccdc.org or call 905.646.7311 x.319

New Information & Resources Available OnLine

The UEY website has been updated and now includes all communiqués, reports, and presentations produced to-date. To access these, please visit: www.uey.eccdc.org.

Under the **Resources & Links** tab, you'll find pages containing communiqués, presentation materials, and links to important websites and research reports, such as:

- “Community Knowledge: Readiness to Learn in Niagara” and New ECCDC Resources Communiqué
- November 2007 Community Forums PowerPoints, as well as other recent presentations
- Links to the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, Offord Centre for Child Studies, and Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action



Under the **Community Reports** tab, you'll find pages containing:

- EDI and Community Resource Booklets for each municipality
- EDI and Socioeconomic Brief and EDI Sub-domain Results Charts
- Niagara Falls Mapping Study and Action Plan

Under the **Community Development** tab, you'll see that regional and municipal level activities UEY has undertaken or assisted with have been outlined.

Finally, we are happy to be able to provide you with the following link to the **2008 Healthy Development Family Activities Calendar**. Developed by our friends at the Understanding the Early Years Halifax project, this unique resource provides daily suggested activities for nurturing young children's healthy early development.



You are free to save, view, print, or download each month as needed, simply by visiting: www.ueyhalifax.com/calendar.htm. UEY Halifax has also generously agreed to permit you to share this resource with any and all interested parties!



Emergent Literacy & Language Program Evaluation Results Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) Niagara Region, 2007

In 2006-07, OEYC in the region were visited by nearly 40% of Niagara's children from birth to age six. The Ontario Early Years sites offer programs and services to support the growth and development of these children. OEYC are also a place where parents and caregivers can get answers to questions regarding their child's development.



Through the implementation of a wide variety of programs and services, trained early years professionals provide support and education tailored to the needs of children and their families. Central to this work are emergent literacy activities, programs, and resources that children and their parents/caregivers participate in together. Emergent literacy involves the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are the developmental stepping stones to reading and writing.

In January 2007, the OEYC in Niagara implemented a three-tiered program evaluation that focused on emergent literacy and language services. The three-tier approach included surveying:

- 1) **parents/caregivers** – those who directly utilize their language and literacy services and resources;
- 2) **staff** – those who directly provide OEYC services; and
- 3) **community** – other professionals from organizations within the Niagara region who see the programs and services in action.

The research questions that guided the evaluation were:

- What were the Ontario Early Years Centres doing well?
- What could the Ontario Early Years Centres be doing better?
- Are program priority goals being achieved?
- Is the program benefiting parents/caregivers?
- Is there progress towards attaining the objectives of the program?

In total, 497 survey responses comprised the program evaluation: 425 from parents/caregivers; 42 from OEYC staff; and 30 from community partners.

Results showed consistently positive responses from all three survey tiers and across seven categories!

The following outlines parent/caregiver participation rates in OEYC activities which promote emergent literacy skills, as reported by the parents/caregivers themselves:

- Play with their children = 97.2%
- Read stories = 96.5%
- Encourage or engage in conversation = 91.8%
- Ask open-ended questions = 75.3%
- Attend literacy workshops = 20.5%
- Attend annual family literacy events = 20.0%

The above information is a sample of specific results which are part of a larger report. For the full report or more information, please contact: **Tiffany Gartner**, Data Analysis Coordinator Ontario Early Years, Niagara Region at 905.688.8248 x.7287 or tiffany.gartner@regional.niagara.on.ca

Excerpts from: Campaign 2000's "It Takes a Nation to Raise a Generation: 2007 Report Card on Child & Family Poverty in Canada"

At 11.7% the child poverty rate is exactly the same as it was in 1989. This is despite a 50% increase in the size of our economy and federal/provincial budget surpluses.

1 in 8 children in Canada - 788,000 - live in poverty when income is measured after income taxes. Before income taxes, 1 in 6 or 1.13 million children live in poverty.

41% of children living in poverty live in families with at least one income earner working full-time all year.

In families that face systemic discrimination, before-tax child poverty rates are as high as 1 in 2 children.

Lone mothers & their children continue to be one of the most economically vulnerable groups with almost 1 in 2 female lone parent families (47% before tax) living in poverty.

Be A Great Parent Campaign Promotes Positive Parenting



Research tells us that effective parenting styles lead to positive child outcomes. Public Health has launched the **Be A Great Parent** positive parenting

campaign, which features a series of posters illustrating common issues many parents face. Developed to help educate parents about positive parenting practices and resources, beagreatparent.ca is a site with age-specific recommendations.

For more information or to order resources please contact Tara Wincott at tara.wincott@regional.niagara.on.ca or call 905.688.8248 x.7502.