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and child care
services help
children thrive
after five.

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services close
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The Understanding the Early Years initiative is funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. For further information, visit www.hrsdc.gc.ca



To find out more,
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Understanding the Early Years

Research Overview



From the Niagara Region 2006 EDI Results (N=2921)

Generally the majority of children in the Niagara Region are experiencing average to excellent developmental outcomes; however, their healthy outcomes overshadow and may further exacerbate the vulnerability of the minority of children who are experiencing poor developmental outcomes. 21.86% of SK children participating scored 'At Risk or Vulnerable' in overall readiness to learn:

- All of the children classified as at risk and vulnerable had difficulty in participating in games that involved the use of language. They also were difficult to understand and others had a hard time understanding them. They showed very little general knowledge and difficulty with native language.
- 91% of children were classified as vulnerable because they had poor Gross and Fine Motor Skills
- Over two-thirds of children classified as vulnerable had difficulty working neatly, independently, solving problems, following class routines and transitioning during changes in their schedules.
- Over two-thirds of children who were classified as at risk and over three-quarters of children who were classified as vulnerable did not show helping behaviours, did not help someone that was hurt, sick, or upset, and did not invite others to join in.
- Almost half of children who were classified as vulnerable were identified as being unprepared for their school day because they were dressed inappropriately, arrived late, were hungry, or tired.
- Almost half of the children classified as vulnerable exhibited high rates of aggression because they would get into physical fights, kick or bite others, take other people's things and were disobedient or had temper tantrums.
- Three-quarters of the children classified as vulnerable and over a quarter of the children classified as at risk and often showed hyperactive behaviours such as impulsivity, fidgeting and difficulty settling into activities.
- Almost two-thirds of children who were classified as vulnerable had poor overall social skills, low self-confidence, and rarely played with various children or interacted cooperatively.
- Almost two-thirds of children classified as vulnerable had problems identifying letters or attaching sounds to them, problems rhyming, problems with directionality of writing and difficulty writing their own name.

From the 2005 Early Years Community Resource Inventory (Region) and preliminary findings from the 2006 UEY Community Resource Inventory:

Supports to parents/caregivers

- Only 4% surveyed offered services to parents/caregivers
- A low percentage rate for utilizing the services were found
- Of 22 programs that offered services to parents/caregivers, 91% did not offer on-site child care
- Demand exceeded capacity among those with services for special needs, parenting/family supports, and counselling

Diversity and inclusion

- Only 14% reported offering services in other languages
- Many of the associations or centres that support diverse cultures are located in Niagara Falls and St. Catharines with few, if any, in the smaller communities.
- Only over a ¼ of the services reported physical accessibility and less than half had services for children with special needs

Specialized programs and services

An overwhelming amount of health and wellness programs/ services are located in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland. Niagara-on-the-Lake, Wainfleet and Port Colborne reported a lack of educational and literacy programs.