

THE EDI (EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT)

IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Janet Mort, EDI Communications Officer; Joanne Schroeder, EDI Community Liason

ABSTRACT

A major aim of the EDI mapping work in BC is to understand the relationships between early child development and community characteristics. The EDI maps demonstrate that communities throughout BC have children who are vulnerable in some aspect of their development. By thus accumulating knowledge of community characteristics that promote healthy development, we increase the possibility of developing effective responses to reduce vulnerability throughout the province.

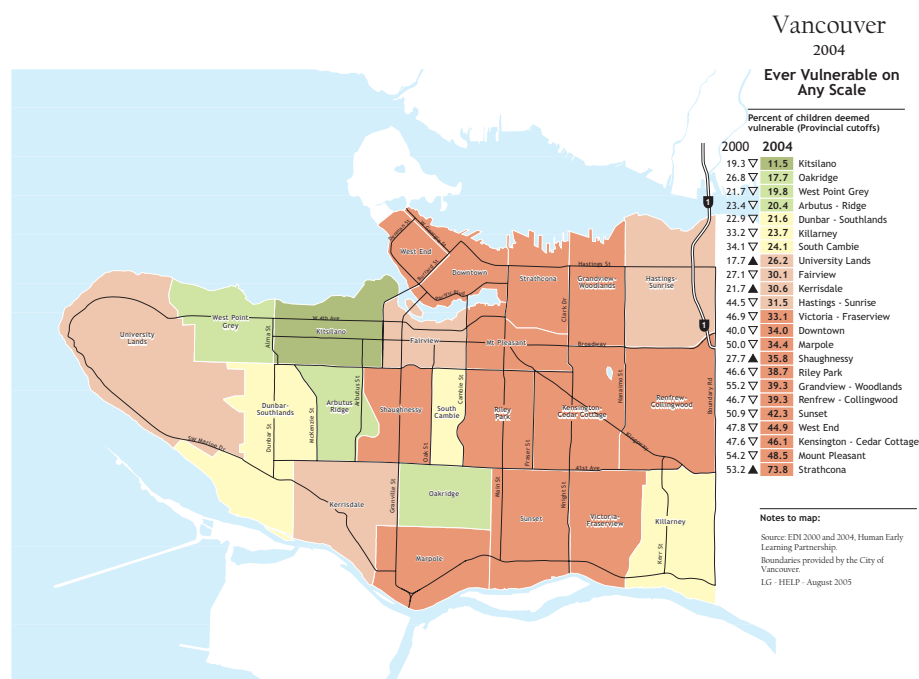
What are the implications for communities and policy makers? This poster shows how EDI results are being consistently used by both community coalitions and provincial policy makers to guide their decisions on early child development priorities. Illustrations of examples from around the province show that a reorganization of services based on increasing community integration and decreasing barriers of access are having positive impacts on the healthy development of children in BC.

BACKGROUND

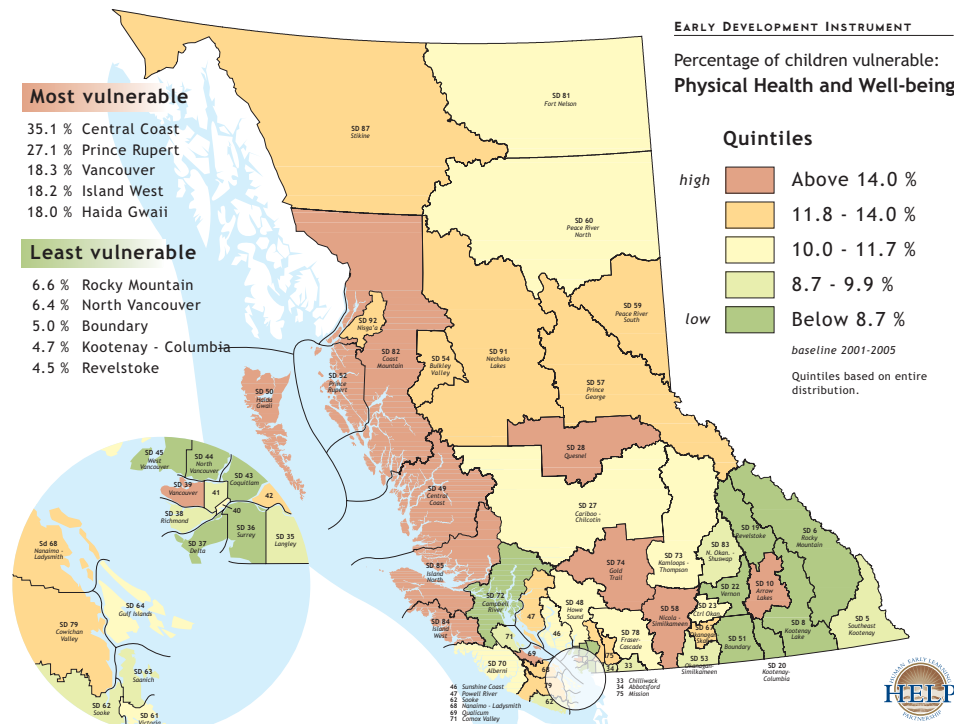
The EDI instrument assesses outcomes of early development in five key areas for all kindergarten children in British Columbia:

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

Results are mapped provincially and neighbourhood by neighbourhood to show the numbers of children who are vulnerable on one or more of these five domains.



EDI maps show that communities throughout the province have children who are vulnerable in some aspect of their development



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The EDI Impact Study (2004) examined 41 communities in British Columbia for the purpose of identifying:

- whether the EDI process was valued, and by whom.
- how the EDI results were being used.
- what impact they were having on local planning.
- what projects had resulted to support the development of young children

METHODS

School superintendents of the forty-nine districts that had participated in the EDI were asked to identify a District Contact to be interviewed.

- Interviews were conducted by telephone.
- The interview responses were collated and summarized.
- Stories and quotes about individual districts were returned to the district for approval prior to the completion of the report.

How are EDI results being used in B.C.?



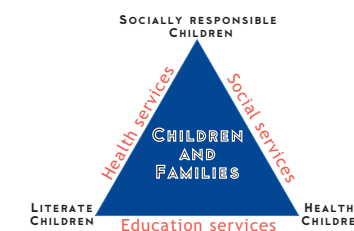
Helping children thrive!

FINDINGS

Community coalitions are an agent for change

Finding 1: The most significant change agent for enhancing early childhood programs is the intersectoral coalition in each community. Coalitions analyze the EDI data and related research, advocate to policy makers for resources, and collaboratively implement new programs in vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Thriving Intersectoral Coalitions



School districts play a pivotal role

Finding 2: All BC school districts are playing a pivotal role in conducting the Kindergarten assessments as well as assuming some responsibility for early learning (birth to 6) in collaboration with other agencies, especially in neighbourhoods where children have higher EDI vulnerabilities. Some examples are:

Creating Neighbourhood Places in schools as family drop-in centres and centralizing all social agencies and health services in regional school settings.

- Refitting school busses to provide traveling literacy centres for young families
- Implementing the Roots of Empathy program for social skill development using a baby with school children
- Hiring coordinators within school districts to help schools reach preschool children earlier to engage them in literacy activities
- Moving child care and preschools into school sites for integration of programs at earlier ages

Service reorganization increases community integration and decreases barriers

Finding 3: The provincial government, in collaboration with other funding agencies such as the United Way, has implemented innovative programs such as Success by Six and Make Children First in neighbourhoods where children have higher EDI vulnerabilities. Some examples:

- Hosting a series of Community ECD Arts Festivals using arts, drama, storytelling and music to engage and inform families
- Surveying parents and local child care providers to develop an improved grassroots child care plan
- Creating a Family Resource and Literacy hub with services designed around the Language and Cognitive development domain
- Implementing a community social marketing plan to heighten awareness of ECD needs
- Hosting a series of parenting classes