

The Early Development Instrument (EDI)

Did you know that almost every child in the Shuswap participates in the Early Development Instrument (EDI) in Kindergarten? The EDI is a Canadian made research tool which is used to measure developmental change in populations of children – it is a bit like a child development census.

The EDI has 104 questions about a child's normal development and measures five areas of early child development. It is completed by kindergarten teachers for all children in their classes. The North Okanagan – Shuswap School District #83 has participated in the EDI for 10 years in 19 schools.

The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) is the research institute that uses the EDI in BC to understand populations of children. HELP produces maps and graphics that illustrate the results of the EDI. Maps and summary reports reveal important differences in child development. Data is expressed as vulnerabilities in child population based on scales of development. Some of the measurement scales are: Physical health and well being, Social competence, Emotional maturity, Language and Cognitive Development and Communication skills and General Knowledge.

The EDI allows us to understand trends in child vulnerability and let's us know how children are actually faring in their communities. It also helps local planning committees provide better supports and services for children.

Overall, North Okanagan Shuswap had a child population vulnerability rate of 31% in the latest results, which is an increase from the previous "wave" of measurement; at 23%. In simple terms, this means that 31% of children in this district are vulnerable in at least one aspect of their development in Kindergarten. These vulnerabilities can have longer term effects on the child's future development

Locally, our Early Childhood Development Committee uses these results for increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood supports and services, providing direction to our strategic plan and assists us in engaging new partnerships. The EDI results are also widely used by government partners to inform their program and policy decisions.

For more information on the EDI – visit www.earlylearning.ubc.ca or contact Sue Rossi; Shuswap Early Childhood Development Coordinator at ecd@shuswapchildrens.ca

This article has been partially excerpted from information from the Human Early Learning Partnership.