



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops-Thompson)

Early Years' Annual Report

February 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ties to SD73's District Strategic Plan priorities are embedded throughout this report. The work of ensuring our children have **strong foundational skills and core competencies** begins during our first contacts with our early learners. Through the many programs explored in this report, we connect children to their **passions and interests** and engage them in the learning process. While we have partnered with our colleagues in the Aboriginal Education department for many years, a new directive from government to **honour First People's principles of learning and Aboriginal worldviews** in our StrongStart centres will extend our reach further out into the community.¹

Learning is a fluid process, particularly in young children. It is important to have **inclusive and adaptable** programs to allow every child to find success in our programs. And, in doing so, it is evident that our work does not happen in isolation. It is the result of a community coming together to support our youngest learners. Through this process, we continue to **strengthen partnerships to enrich the way we lead, learn and work**. And finally, with the ongoing support of the Early Learning Framework, project dollars, as well as the support for programs within the community, we can offer initiatives that support our children while **ensuring we have sustainable resources**.

In 2019, the Ministry of Education published an update to the British Columbia Early Learning Framework (ELF).² The update represents a collaborative process that includes members of the early childhood community such as educators, Indigenous organizations, Elders, government and other officials.

An earlier version of the Early Learning Framework (2008), introduced a plan for children from birth to five years. The 2019 ELF update delves deeper into new concepts and connections and widens the scope to children up to eight years.

In particular, the new Early Learning Framework:

- Expands the focus on children from birth to five years in the original framework to children birth to eight years. This means the vision, principles, and context articulated here are relevant to working with children (and their families) from birth to Grade 3.
- Connects with BC's New Curriculum and **Core Competencies** (BC Ministry of

¹ For more information on supporting Aboriginal education in SD73, see the *Aboriginal Education Annual Report (October, 2019)* on our District website.

² BC's Early Learning Framework can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>

Education, 2018b). Concepts in the framework can be interwoven with the BC Curriculum to inspire both **early childhood educators** and educators working with children in Kindergarten to Grade 3.

- Resists language, concepts, and pedagogies that perpetuate legacies of **colonization** and marginalization of Indigenous people. To support this effort, the new framework was developed in consultation with the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and Métis Nation BC.
- Strives to contribute to lasting **reconciliation** with Indigenous people, which is anchored by the province’s cross-government commitment to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Recognizing and acknowledging how Euro-western practices are embedded in mainstream educational **pedagogy**, this framework’s intention is to contribute to reconciliation through implicitly and explicitly honouring Indigenous authorities in education.
- Strengthens the vision of **inclusive** spaces and practices for all children, including **children with diverse abilities and needs**.
- Envisions learning and being as a **holistic** process that happens as children and adults come together in relationship with each other, ideas, materials, places, and histories.
- Introduces language that may be new to some **educators**. The use of this language is intentional as it helps in expressing new ways of thinking about the complexities of childhood care and learning. Using new language can offer different ways of seeing, which can inspire new conversations.
- Uses the term “living inquiries” (known as “areas of learning” in the 2008 Early Learning Framework) and “pathways” (known as “learning goals” in the 2008 Early Learning Framework) that will help to describe the thinking, doing, and learning that happens as children, educators, materials, and ideas interconnect.³

Throughout this report, programs and initiatives are discussed to illustrate the connection between District-level work and the direction from the Ministry of Education. For more information on specific programs, refer to the Programs and Initiatives section.

³ Early Learning Framework, 2019, p. 4 and 5

ACTION ITEMS

- Expand the number of schools participating in Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) from three to eight.
- Collaborate with principals from the CHEQ pilot to discuss their data and develop action plans to support their learners.
- Expand the Strong, Prepared and Ready for Kindergarten (SPARK) program to ensure it is represented in each family of schools.
- Develop and deliver a professional learning series focused on the principles of the Early Learning Framework (ELF).
- Participate in provincial sessions that support early learners, such as Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transitions (SEY2KT) and Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC).
- Collaborate with the early years' community partners on three "Kindergarten Readiness" presentations for families, preschools and daycare professionals.
- Collaborate with community partners on four community events to increase awareness about the importance of literacy and provide literacy support for all ages.
- Build a collaborative service-learning project with Thompson Rivers University, in which nursing students and early childhood educators establish positive relationships with families to foster children's healthy development.
- Create a working table to give feedback on the SD73 Kindergarten Survey. The working group will make recommendations on adaptations required for diverse learners and develop a tool that meets the needs of our French Immersion learners.
- Train twenty-five Kindergarten teachers who are new to the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The focus includes the process for completing the instrument as well as the purpose of the EDI.

GOALS

Each year, SD73 plans for system improvement. Several of our guiding documents relate directly to our learners throughout the kindergarten to grade twelve model. Yet increasingly, school districts have been tasked with looking outside of the K-12 model to ensure that we have met the needs of not only our current learners, but those who are about to become our students.

This report looks at the provincial Early Learning Framework as well as our SD73 programs, projects and initiatives. To better illustrate that SD73 partners both between departments and within the larger community, a section on community partnerships is included.

Without the support of our province, our community, and our committed early learning specialists, this work would not be possible. Through our connection to the Early Development Instrument, developed through the University of British Columbia, we know that good quality stimulation, support and nurturance all lead to healthy brain development in our pre-kindergarten children. UBC posits that for every dollar we spend in the early years, supporting our children, the return on investment is between four and eight dollars we do not need to spend later on for that child. This investment ensures positive outcomes later on for children who have access to quality early years' programs.

The goals for our work revolve around data, provincial framework development, and community partnerships.

1. Develop a repository of data sets that allow schools and the District to better understand the scales and indexes that represent our early learners' developmental stages.
2. Participate in provincial pilot programs that are based on proven practices that improve student connectedness to schools.
3. Build on our community partnerships as we know that schools alone cannot reach all learners before kindergarten.

Measuring our key performance indicators is a challenge as many of our programs focus on children who are not yet in our school system. Regardless, we will begin by choosing indicators to which we have access.

Our key performance indicators include the development of greater access to SD73 programs and partner programs. Through measuring incidents of attendance, we will build our trend line to illustrate our growing connectedness to early years' programs. Over the next three years, we will not only strengthen our access to data, but also disaggregate the data sets in a way that better illustrates our learners and allows us to plan for system improvement. We will continue to play a lead part in provincial as well as community partnerships.

FUNDING

The Ministry of Education supports school district early learning through several funds contained within our Transfers Under Agreement.

- Transfer Under Agreement: Capacity Building
 - Early Learning Framework (ELF)
 - Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC)
 - Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transitions (SEY2KT)

- Transfer Under Agreement: Early Learning Programs
 - StrongStart
 - Ready, Set, Learn

Other programs and projects are supported through the University of British Columbia's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP), such as the Early Development Instrument and the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire. Other projects are supported by our strong early years' community as noted in the Community Collaboration section of this report.

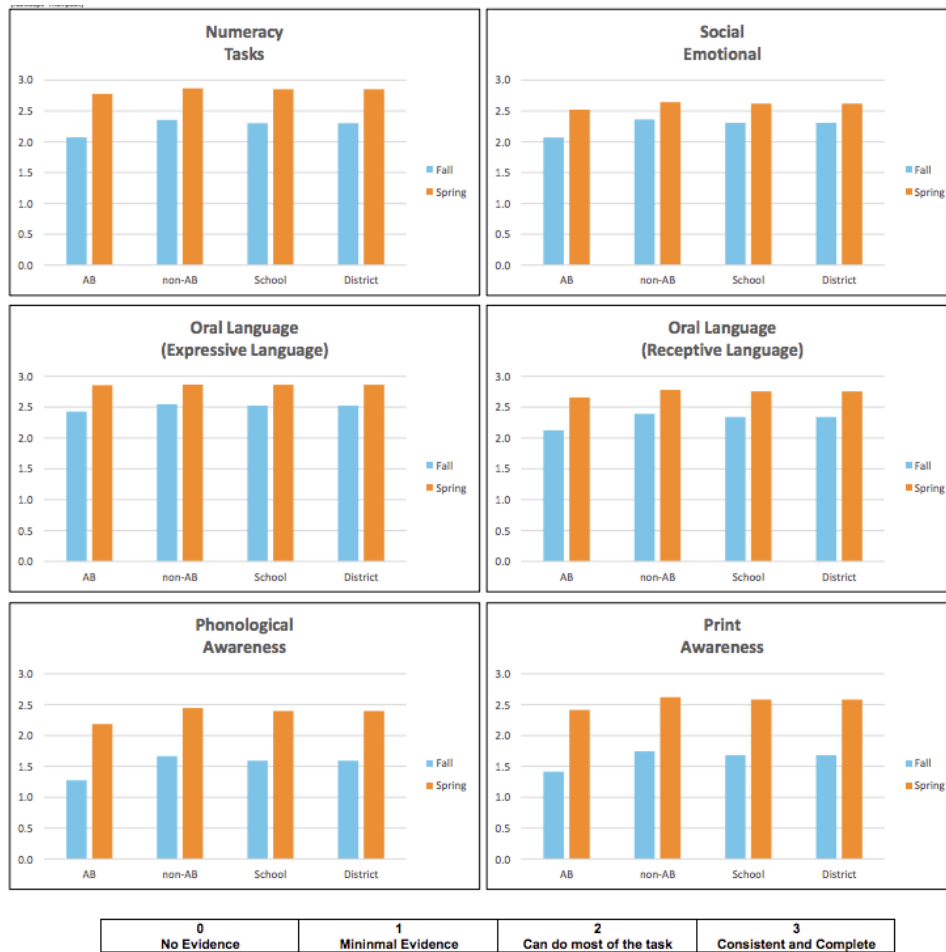
EARLY YEARS' DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

As a school district, we monitor and support early learning programs. The complexity of measuring early learners combined with the knowledge that learning is fluid in the early years requires ongoing measurement throughout the year. We collect baseline data, plan interventions and supports for each student and then continue to monitor for growth.

Kindergarten Survey

The Kindergarten Survey (or K-Survey) is administered each year. The data collected for January of 2020 has a focus on Phonological / Phonemic awareness. As schools collect the data, our District Early Years Coordinator breaks it down to determine which classrooms or students may need some next-step interventions. We know early intervention secures the best outcomes. Every school has invested in a play-based phonological intervention kit and works for thirteen weeks on literacy strategies through games.

The bottom left corner of the following chart illustrates the improvement in phonological awareness from the Fall, in blue, to the Spring assessment indicated by the orange bar. Clearly, interventions are moving students along, but we will continue to monitor and support this area as it is a foundational component of literacy. We know that students who have poor phonological skills become our struggling readers and writers if we do not address it. These data sets show good improvement in all domains.



Moving forward from this pilot, we will create a working table to give feedback on the next iteration of the K-Survey. Recommendations for adaptations will be added to the survey for our diverse learners. To better support our immersion schools, a French version of the kits and the survey will be developed.

ACTION ITEM:

- Create a working table to give feedback on the SD73 Kindergarten Survey. The working group will make recommendations on adaptations required for diverse

learners and develop a tool that meets the needs of our French Immersion learners.

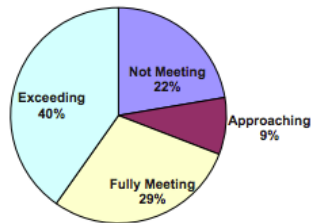
Primary Reading Assessment (PRA)

SD73 recommends the use of primary reading levels for both instructional and assessment purposes. Data from the Primary Reading Assessment is used at all levels of the organization: the classroom, the school and the District. As a formative assessment tool (assessment *for* learning), the PRA provides valuable descriptive feedback to students and informs the teacher of both individual and class reading levels. As a summative tool (assessment *of* learning), the PRA identifies students' reading levels within a school and identifies needs for additional, focused instructional support.

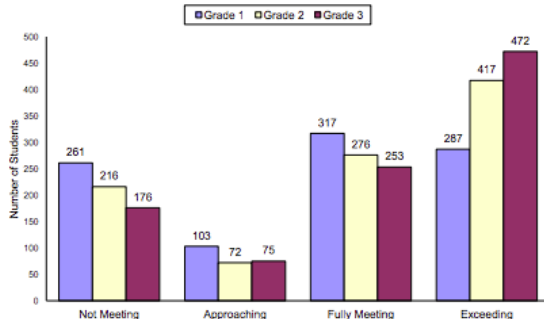
The data below indicates a good improvement in performance as captured in the data sets of “fully meeting” and “exceeding” as students move from grade to grade.

School Report Details
 Aboriginal: **Included**
 Non-Aboriginal: **Included**
 Male: **Included**
 Female: **Included**

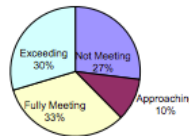
Grades 1 to 3 - Performance



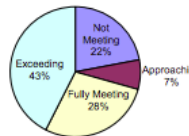
Performance By Number Of Students Per Achievement Band



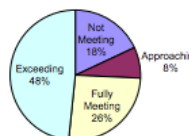
Grade 1 Performance



Grade 2 Performance



Grade 3 Performance



- 63% in grade 1 are fully meeting or exceeding
- 71% in grade 2 are fully meeting or exceeding
- 74% in grade 3 are fully meeting or exceeding

The PRA is a good example of using data to set up interventions to support our young learners and then noting improving scores as students build on their skills. Moving forward,

we will continue to work towards all students progressing in their learning.

Early Development Instrument (EDI)

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a short questionnaire completed by kindergarten teachers in the second half of the school year. This instrument is used not only across our school district, but across Canada and internationally. The purpose of the questionnaire is to measure a child's ability to meet age appropriate developmental expectations. The EDI measures five areas. The following notes the five developmental areas and offers a sample question for each.

- **Physical Health and Well-Being**
Sample EDI question: Would you say that this child is well coordinated? (moves without running into things or tripping over things)
- **Social Competence**
Sample EDI question: Would you say that this child is able to follow one-step instructions?
- **Emotional Maturity**
Sample EDI question: Would you say that this child comforts a child who is crying or upset?
- **Language and Cognitive Development**
Sample EDI question: Would you say that this child is able to read simple words?
- **Communication Skills and General Knowledge**
Sample EDI question: How would you rate this child's ability to tell a story?

School districts are invited to participate in a series of "waves" of the EDI before being rotated out to accommodate other districts. SD73 was only a part of Wave 7 for one year (2016-2017), however, we have been invited to participate in Wave 8 (2019-2022). We look forward to have updated data sets available to us throughout this wave period. While the data on the following table is outdated (2016-2017), it shows some areas of concern for SD73. In particular, the number of children vulnerable on more than one level requires awareness.

Wave 7 neighborhood results for Kamloops-Thompson (darker colour indicate increased vulnerability scores).⁴

	Total Count	Physical	Social	Emotional	Language	Communication	One or More Scales	# Vulnerable
Sahali	91	9	10	8	2	2	14	13
Valleyview – Barnhartvale	152	7	8	11	7	5	20	30
Westsyde – Rayleigh	181	12	8	13	7	8	22	39
Kamloops Downtown	71	13	20	18	12	11	25	18
Aberdeen – Dufferin	150	10	11	12	11	13	27	40
North Kamloops	152	16	18	19	10	16	37	56
Brocklehurst	94	12	16	20	20	13	38	36
North Thompson	72	26	23	20	16	13	39	28
Thompson Rural	93	18	19	27	12	11	42	39

For neighbourhood maps indicating levels of vulnerability for our early learners, see Appendix B of this document.

The purpose of HELP’s Early Development Instrument is to improve understanding of children’s development as they start school. Information from the EDI is important to educators, school districts, health professionals, early years care providers and community members in planning programs and services for children and families.

- SD73 uses EDI information (data) in our school district planning.
- Our community uses EDI information to understand how children are doing in key areas of development and to plan interventions.
- Our province uses the information from the EDI to support provincial investment, policy development, and program planning and evaluation.

⁴ For more details on the EDI and neighbourhood maps, see <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/edi/sd/73/> and choose *Wave 6 Community Profile* for a pdf of the report.

In January of 2020, teachers who are new to the EDI will participate in training on the purpose of EDI as well as how to complete the questionnaire. In February, teachers complete the questionnaire online based on their observations of each student in their class. Students are not directly involved in the completion of the questionnaire.

A short video on the EDI can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDZ8xrBeN54&feature=youtu.be>

ACTION ITEM:

- Train twenty-five Kindergarten teachers who are new to the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The focus includes the process for completing the instrument as well as the purpose of the EDI.

Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)

SD73 was invited by Dr. Alisa Almas and Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl to participate in the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) Project in April of 2019. The CHEQ program is administered through the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) out of the University of British Columbia.

The CHEQ is a questionnaire that is completed by the parents or guardians of kindergarten-aged children and focuses on early experiences in key areas of development. These developmental areas can be correlated to the well-being, health, education and social outcomes for the child. The questionnaire takes approximately thirty minutes to complete and schools receive instant individual reports that include school-level and classroom-level summaries.

In the fall of 2019, three schools in SD73 completed the CHEQ as a part of a limited pilot project. The Early Years' Coordinator will collaborate with principals from the pilot to discuss their data sets and help develop action plans to support their learners. In addition, we will expand the pilot for 2020 to ensure more of our schools have access to this important data. As the sample size from 2018 – 2019 is very small, district-level data is masked.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Expand the number of schools participating in Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ) from three to eight.
- Collaborate with principals from the CHEQ pilot to discuss their data and develop action plans to support their learners.

DISTRICT and PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS

SD73 participates in a number of partnerships, both between departments and in our communities. The school district departments of Curriculum and Instruction, Aboriginal Education, and Inclusive Education work together to ensure our students have the supports they need for success. Our partnerships into the community further enhance learning experiences for current and our soon-to-be students as well as their families.

StrongStart

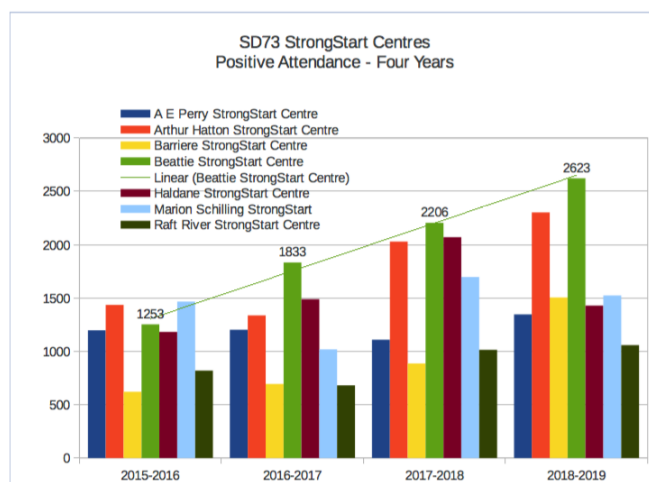
SD73 has seven StrongStart programs. StrongStart provides rich learning experiences designed to support early learning in a variety of developmental areas including: physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and language. Our programs are supported by qualified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). The ECEs work closely with other staff in the primary years, particularly the kindergarten teacher. A positive transition to kindergarten is important and allows children the opportunity to make friends and interact with children of the same age.

In February, 2020, the Ministry of Education announced an initiative to create a connection for Aboriginal families. In particular, school districts will begin professional development to plan to build capacity in developing or enhancing relationships with local Indigenous communities. Our early years' team has been working with the Aboriginal Education department for a number of years, however, this new initiative will allow us to begin to develop deeper ties with our Elders, storytellers, and language keepers.

Our programs are located at AE Perry Elementary, Arthur Hatton Elementary, Barriere Elementary, Beattie Elementary, Haldane Elementary, Marion Schilling Elementary and Raft River Elementary. As the green trend line below indicates, we have seen steady, significant growth in attendance in our StrongStart centres.

We will continue to grow programs in all areas of our communities to ensure that early learners have an opportunity to participate in our StrongStart

SCHOOL YR	AE Perry StrongStart Centre	Arthur Hatton StrongStart Centre	Barriere StrongStart Centre	Beattie StrongStart Centre	Haldane StrongStart Centre	Marion Schilling StrongStart	Raft River StrongStart Centre	TOTAL ATT
2015-2016	1198	1436	621	1253	1183	1467	820	7978
2016-2017	1203	1337	694	1833	1490	1018	681	8256
2017-2018	1110	2030	887	2206	2071	1698	1015	11017
2018-2019	1346	2304	1505	2623	1430	1524	1059	11791



centres.

Ready, Set, Learn

Ready, Set, Learn is a Ministry of Education program that supports family-oriented events for children between the ages of three and five. The intent of the program is to begin supporting the transition of students to kindergarten. Specifically, Ready, Set, Learn helps our youngest learners:

- confidence
- relationships with friends
- language development
- the ability to communicate needs, wants and thoughts to adults and children
- the ability to follow instructions and routines, and
- a setting that encourages creativity, motivation, cooperation and persistence⁵

A child learns to prepare for school through play. Families who attend will participate in play-based activities while learning about early years' programs and services. Many of our schools offer a Mother Goose program during their Ready, Set, Learn time. Mother Goose is a program that engages our early learners through storytelling, rhymes, and songs. The program, including a healthy snack, is provided free of charge.

An informative parent booklet is available in a variety of languages to ensure our parents can access this important information. The parent booklet can be found at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/support/programs/ready-set-learn>

Early Learning Framework (ELF)

In the fall of 2019, the Ministry of Education set up a new early learning guide to set up young learners for success. In November of 2019, Minister of Education, Rob Fleming, stated, "We are focusing on providing accessible high-quality early learning opportunities to all British Columbian children and making sure education professionals, parents and caregivers have the knowledge required to support kids to move forward positively through their K-12 studies to reach their full potential."

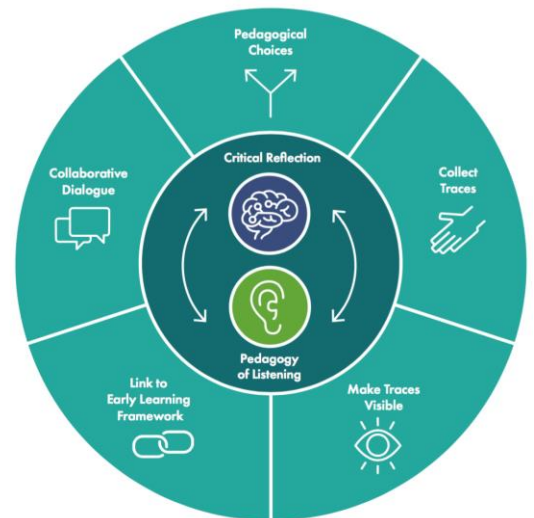
The Early Learning Framework principles set forth ways of thinking about childhood, learning, and practicing that underpin the vision of respectfully living and learning

⁵ Ministry of Education, Ready, Set, Learn parent brochure, p. 1

together.

The principles are:

- Children are strong, capable in their uniqueness, and full of potential.
- Families have the most important role in contributing to children’s well-being and learning.
- Educators are researchers and collaborators.
- Early years spaces are inclusive.
- People build connection and reconnection to land, culture, community and place.
- Environments are integral to well-being and learning.
- Play is integral to well-being and learning.
- Relationships are the context for well-being and learning.
- Learning is holistic.⁶



Each month, the Early Years Coordinator releases StrongStart facilitators to participate in professional development focused on the ELF principles. Through the SPARK program, curriculum outcomes, core competencies, First Peoples’ Principles of Learning and the Early Learning Framework are all highlighted. In February of 2020, sixteen schools will explore these new documents. The new ELF can be found online at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning/teach/early-learning-framework>

ACTION ITEM:

- Develop and deliver a professional learning series focused on the principles of the Early Learning Framework (ELF).

Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC)

In the 2019 – 2020 school year, SD73 was invited to participate in a small provincial team focused on Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC). The purpose of the project, as outlined by CR4YC is:

⁶ Early Learning Framework, 2019, p.15
Graphic, Early Learning Framework, 2019, p.53

- To increase the social and emotional well-being of young children
- To improve the quality of practices associated with teaching social and emotional well-being
- To increase collaboration and strengthen relationships between early childhood educators and primary teachers
- To use the science and research of social and emotional well-being to improve both educators' practice and social and emotional outcomes for children
- To provide young children with opportunities and specific skills that foster their social and emotional competence through positive human qualities: happiness, self-regulation, kindness, empathy, sense of belonging, altruism, sense of agency, compassion, sense of identity, and building relationships

(Changing Results for Young Children report, p. 3)

The report can be found at <https://cr4yr.com/2019/09/02/changing-results-for-young-children-research-findings-2018-19/>

In SD73, CR4YC is a collaborative inquiry project that brings together community-based Early Childhood Educators, StrongStart facilitators, and Kindergarten teachers who are released to work collaboratively in six joint professional learning sessions.

CR4YC focuses on social and emotional well-being to improve outcomes for young children. One of the CR4YC goals is to identify and apply a strengthened understanding of quality practices associated with improving the social and emotional well-being of young children. Another goal is to increase the coherence in pedagogy between Early Childhood Educators and Primary Educators.

SD73 will continue to participate in provincial sessions that support early learning. A final report will be created at the end of the 2019 -2020 school year. Findings of the report will be shared and a series of action items will be developed.

Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transition (SEY2KT)

Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transition is a Ministry of Education supported program. Each year, the Ministry selects districts to be a part of a provincial pilot aimed at improving the social, emotional and learning outcomes for early learners. If selected for the pilot, districts receive a small grant to promote effective transitions for all pre-Kindergarten children and their families.

In the 2019 – 2020 school year, SD73 will participate in the SEY2KT project for the second year. A key aspect of SEY2KT is the growth of a collaborative project started

between our StrongStart educators and our kindergarten teachers. These early years' educators co-plan their time together to improve the transition between pre-k and kindergarten. Pre-k children spend time, along with their familiar StrongStart educator, in the kindergarten classroom. This transition time occurs in September of each year and the positive response to the program has encouraged SD73 to increase the amount of time for the transition in each of the years we have tried the project. Now in our third year of this aspect of transition improvement, we are now participating for the full month of September. Our experience shows us that giving our kindergarten children time to learn and adjust leads to greater gains in all areas of learning.

Another SD73 program, our very successful Strong, Prepared and Ready for Kindergarten (SPARK) program is being expanded to more schools throughout the district. We continue to ensure that our rural and remote areas of our school district continue to benefit from SPARK.

ACTION ITEM:

- Participate in provincial sessions that support early learners, such as Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transitions (SEY2KT) and Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC).

Strong, Prepared and Ready for Kindergarten (SPARK)

Throughout the Spring of 2020, district staff, school staff, StrongStart Early Childhood Educators and community agencies will collaborate and join together to support incoming kindergarten families with a seamless transition into their local schools. SPARK is implemented through four 1-hour orientation sessions based on literacy, numeracy, physical literacy, and healthy choices.

In the 2019 – 2020 school year, SD73 has 16 Schools participating the SPARK project. Each school consists of team members including kindergarten teachers, learning assistance resource teachers, principals / vice-principals, certified education workers and Aboriginal education workers. We are monitoring participation to ensure that a SPARK program is included in every family of schools in the District.

To support our schools, bins of materials to support SPARK are created and distributed. As educators attend the training program, they receive a bin. The training day is scheduled each February and includes community representatives who take the lead on components of the professional development over the four sessions.

ACTION ITEM

- Expand the Strong, Prepared and Ready for Kindergarten (SPARK) program to ensure it is represented in each family of schools.

Supported Transitions

Early Years Kindergarten planning for students with diverse learning abilities takes place each spring. The purpose of this planning is to effectively transition children into Kindergarten by collaboratively sharing information between families, community agencies and District employees.

During 2018–2019, the following Kindergarten planning meetings occurred to support incoming learners:

	Males	Females	Children with Aboriginal Ancestry	Children in Care	Children with Special Education Designations	Rural Children	Urban Children
Number of Incoming Learners	50	34	10	0	28	12	72

We know that transitions can be a difficult time for families and one of the first transitions for young learners is attending kindergarten. By connecting with families who have a child with exceptionalities, we not only ensure a better transition, but we can also reassure families that we can support their child. Prior to the beginning of Kindergarten, District employees attend daycares to observe students and determine what support will be helpful.

To prepare for Kindergarten, the parents of children entering Kindergarten are invited to attend District engagement sessions. In addition, a Kindergarten transition night is planned with community agencies for the parents of children with diverse learning needs.

Once students enrol in school, Inclusive Education Services (IES) staff members provide direct service and consultation, together with school-based teams, on an as-needed basis to meet individual student's needs.⁷

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

SD73's community partnerships are a key component of our ongoing success with early years' programs. Working with our community not only benefits our early learners and their families, but also supports the SD73 Strategic Plan Priority 5: Strengthen partnerships to enrich the way we lead, learn, and work. Throughout the year, SD73 will collaborate with the early years' community on three (3) "Kindergarten Readiness" presentations for families, preschools and daycare providers. Further, we will collaborate on four (4) community events to increase awareness about the importance of literacy and provide literacy support for all ages.

We work collaboratively with many community partners including:

Interior Community Services (ICS) and Early Years' Centre (EYC)

Interior Community Services and the Early Years' Centre host Kindergarten Transition nights. These sessions happen in late fall (generally November), and again during the winter (generally February). These information sessions have community information tables and booths for parents and guardians. As a direct partner, SD73 teams from Inclusive Education, Aboriginal Education, Transportation, and the Early Years Coordinator are invited to participate in this community event.

Kamloops Early Language and Literacy Initiative (KELLI)

Kamloops Early Language and Literacy Initiative provides free early literacy programming for children 0 – 5 years and their families. They are a key partner with the SD73's SPARK (Strong, Prepared and Ready for Kindergarten) program. KELLI is the host agency for the very popular Mother Goose program that runs in many of our schools funded through the Ready, Set, Learn grant from the Ministry of Education.

Another popular community event is the ABC Family Literacy Day. ABC Literacy Day attracts 1,000 families to attend a day-long open house each January at the Henry Grube Education Centre.

⁷ For more information on supporting students in SD73, see the *Annual Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Report (September 2019)* on our District website.

Literacy in Kamloops (Link)

Literacy in Kamloops works to increase awareness about the importance of literacy. Link provides literacy support for all ages, including early learners. Examples of Link in the community includes Unplug and Play, Raise a Reader, Bright Red Book Bus, Bright Red Book Shelf, and One-to-One Reading.

PLAYKamloops / Pacific Sport

PLAYKamloops brings together leaders from key community sectors including education, recreation, sport, health and the media to raise awareness of what physical literacy is and why it is important to integrate physical literacy programs into the community. Play Kamloops and Pacific Sport are direct partners with SD73's SPARK project as well as the Kindergarten Transition events.

Thompson Rivers University Nursing Students

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a screening tool that promotes parental and caregiver awareness of their child's development from birth to age six. Access to families is acquired through the StrongStart programs in SD73. Additionally, completion of the ASQ increases family understanding of developmental milestones. It further teaches families activities to assist if milestones are delayed.

Another TRU initiative, the Healthy Start program, involves the third-year nursing students. Healthy Start supports readiness skills and positive health habits for our early learners and works collaboratively with our Early Childhood Educators (ECE) in the StrongStart programs. The TRU nursing students act as a conduit to services and community support. To support the healthy development of children, the early learning community has identified six areas of wellness: emotional health, nutrition, sleep, activity and exercise, safety, and disease prevention. Supporting these areas of wellness directly contribute to a healthy start to school.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Collaborate with the early years' community partners on three "Kindergarten Readiness" presentations for families, preschools and daycare professionals.
- Collaborate with community partners on four community events to increase awareness about the importance of literacy and provide literacy support for all ages.

- Build a collaborative service-learning project with Thompson Rivers University, in which nursing students and early childhood educators establish positive relationships with families to foster children's healthy development.

SUMMARY

As a school district, we are continually moving toward our next steps. As a system, we learn and grow to better support our learners.

In early learning, our next steps include the expansion of pilot projects to include more schools. Pilots allow us to try new out new ideas, collect data and receive feedback before we begin to include more participants. Our strong community connections mean that we have critical friends who not only give us information on what needs to improve, but also are prepared to help support the improvements.

Collecting information and data is integral to moving forward. We will add more schools to the Childhood Experiences Questionnaire. We will train teachers new to the Early Development Instrument in the survey as well as to the benefits of the tool.

At a local level, we will move forward with a redevelopment of our kindergarten survey, with the help of some of our colleagues in the community, we can ensure that we are receiving the data sets that best inform supporting our learners. As we better develop the survey, we can include supports for diverse learners as well as our French Immersion students.

We will ensure that our SPARK program reaches all communities and is represented in each of our families of schools. We are pleased to note that our outlying communities including Barriere, Chase, Clearwater, and Logan Lake are all participating in SPARK.

Continuing to support our adults with learning is key to our success. The development of a series of professional learning workshops that focus on the principles of the Early Learning Framework will ensure that we all have access to this important work.

To remain informed of new developments in early learning, we will continue to attend provincial meetings as well as participate in provincial pilots. Our early learners are best supported when we stay informed and participate in new work.

None of this work would be as successful without our community partners. A continued focus will be the collaboration with the early years' community on kindergarten readiness, literacy, and supports for all early learners. When we work together, our children get the best of all our work.

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY and ACRONYMS

ASQ

Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Thompson Rivers University nursing students

CHEQ

Childhood Experiences Questionnaire. For more information on CHEQ, see <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/cheq/cheq-parent-information/>

Early Learning

The knowledge, skills and dispositions that preschool children acquire in the years before school entry in key developmental domains: cognitive, physical, language and communication, social and emotional. Defined in section 1 of the School Act.

ECE

Early Childhood Educator

EDI

Early Development Instrument. For more information on EDI, see <https://edi.offordcentre.com/>

HELP

Human Early Learning Partnership, University of British Columbia <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/>

KELLI

Kamloops Early Language and Literacy Initiative

LinK

Literacy in Kamloops

Phoneme

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound within a word. It may be represented by one or more letters.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability to discern sounds and sound sequences, including an awareness that words are made up of sounds in sequences.

SEY2KT

Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transition

StrongStart Centre

A free early learning program located in schools, for preschool children accompanied by parent, other adult family member or caregiver, created through an agreement between school districts and the Ministry of Education.

SPARK

Strong, Prepared and Ready for Kindergarten

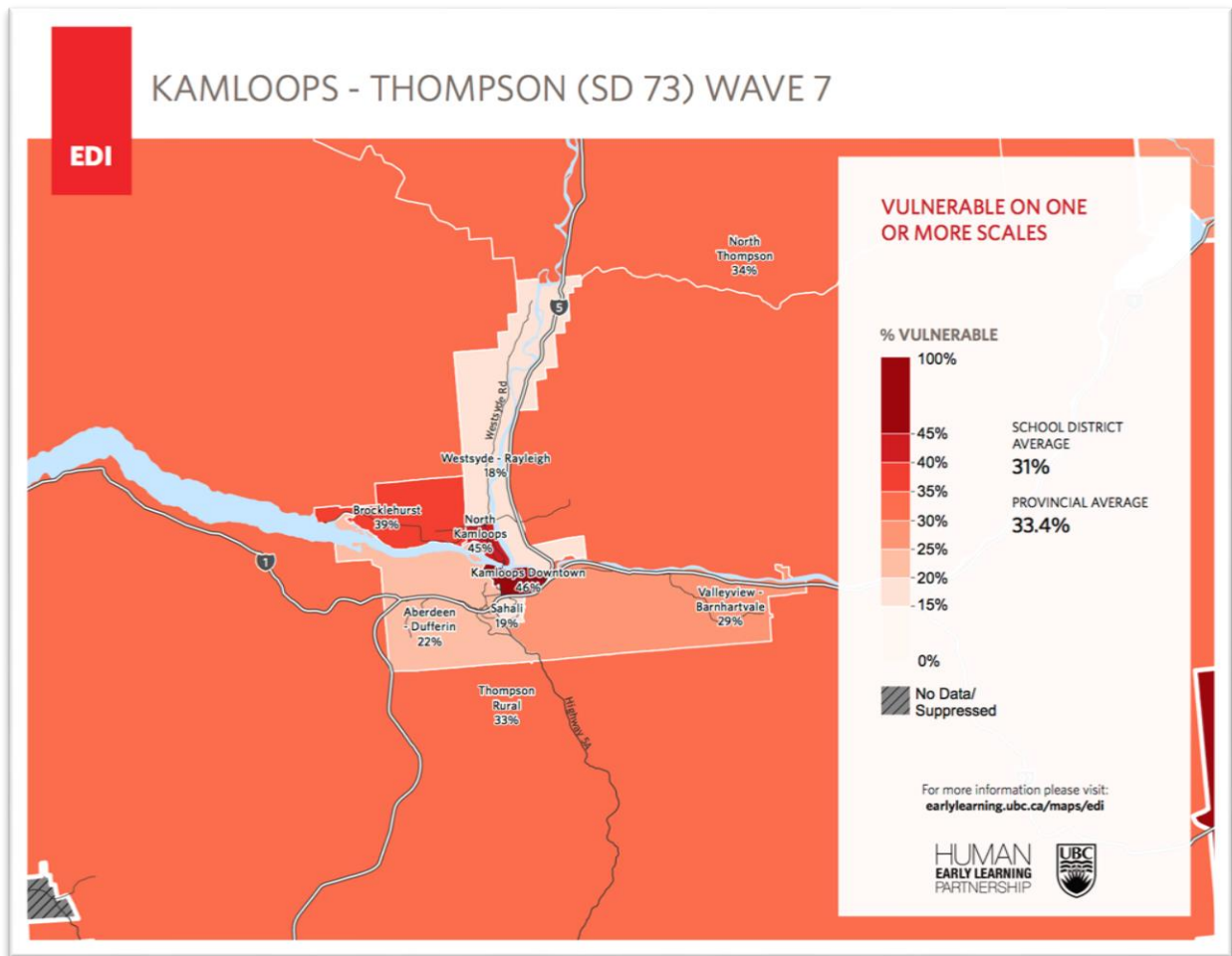
TRC

Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

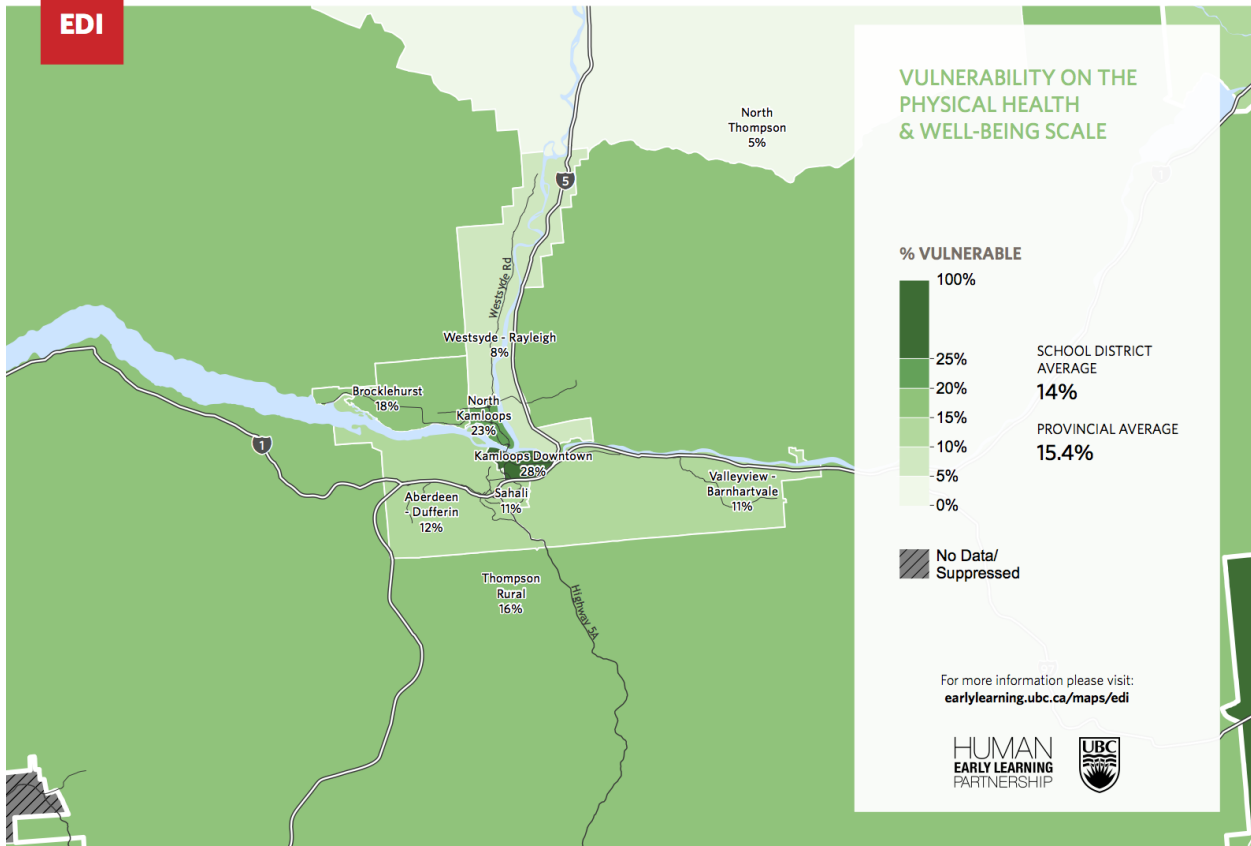
UNDRIP

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

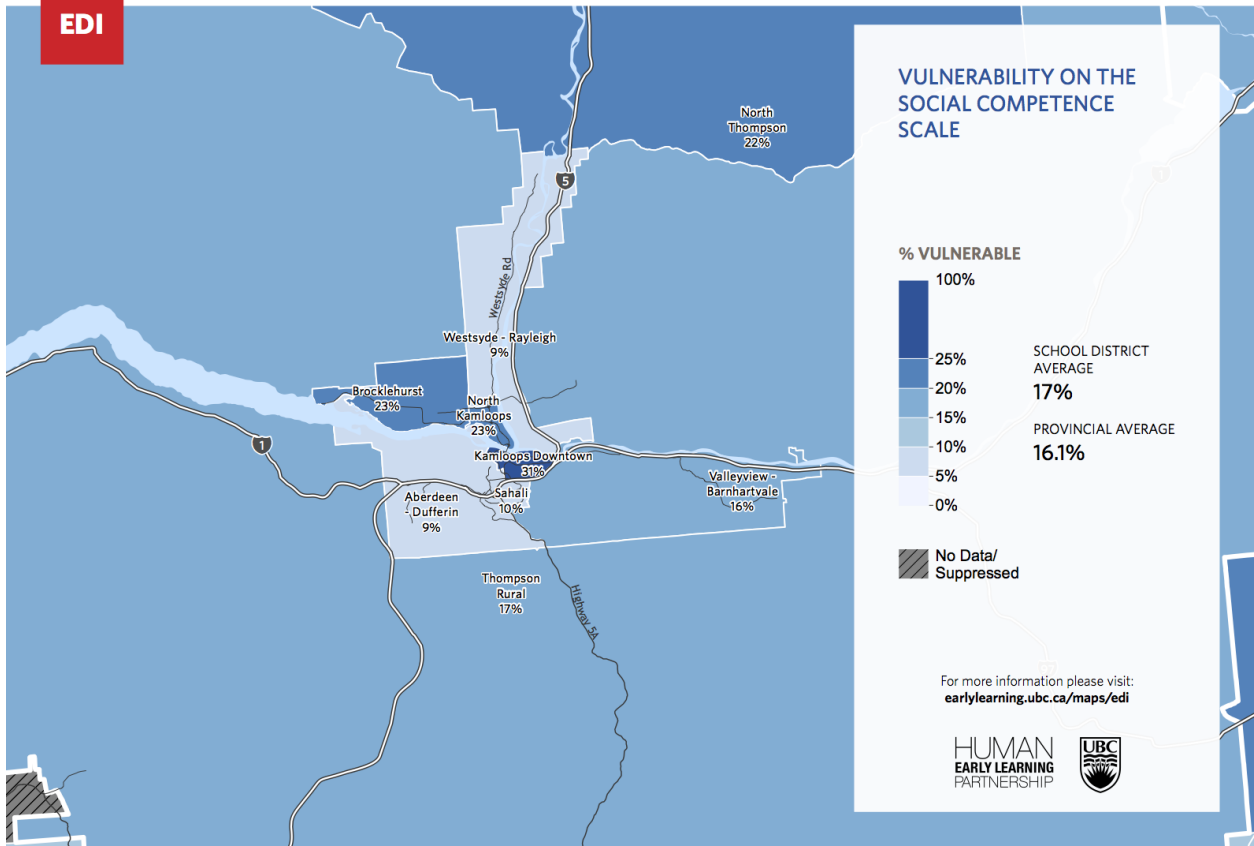
APPENDIX II: EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT NEIGHBOURHOOD MAPS



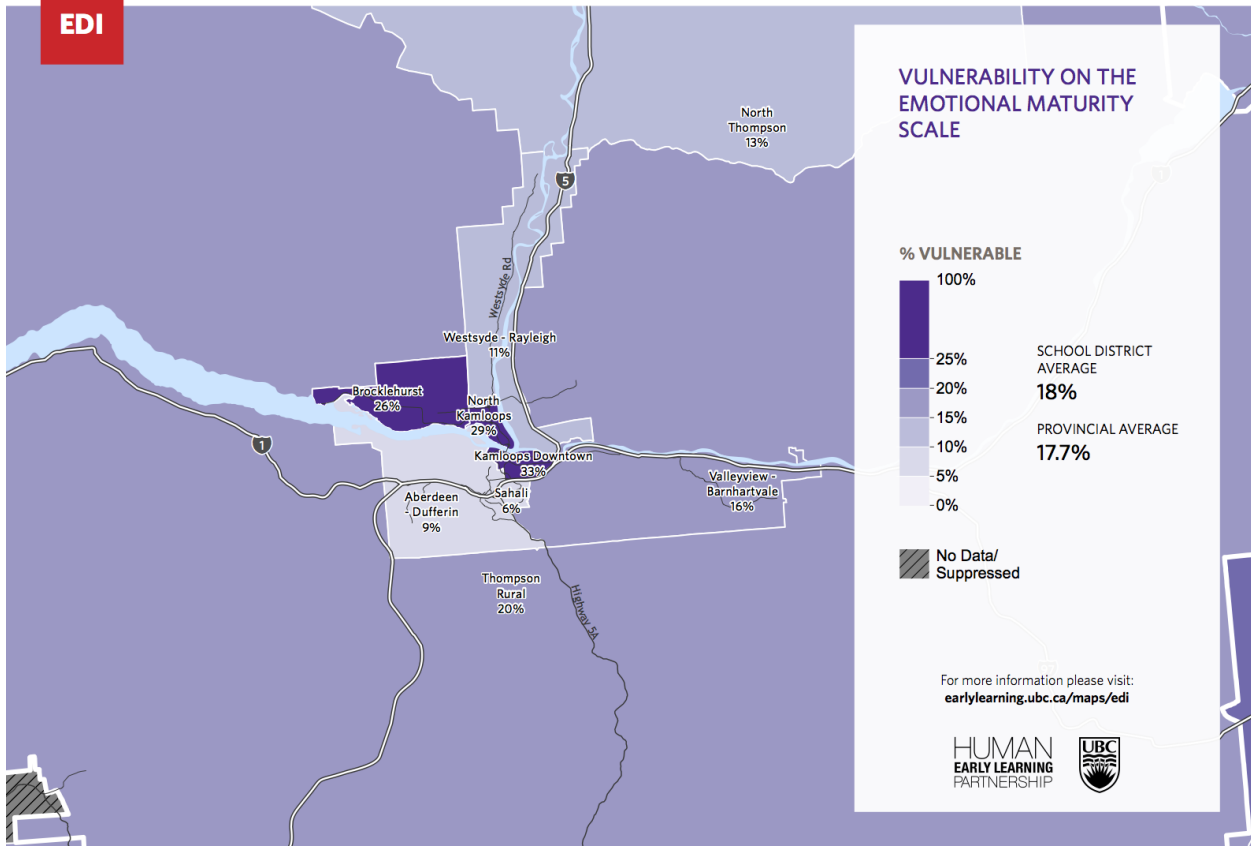
KAMLOOPS - THOMPSON (SD 73) WAVE 7



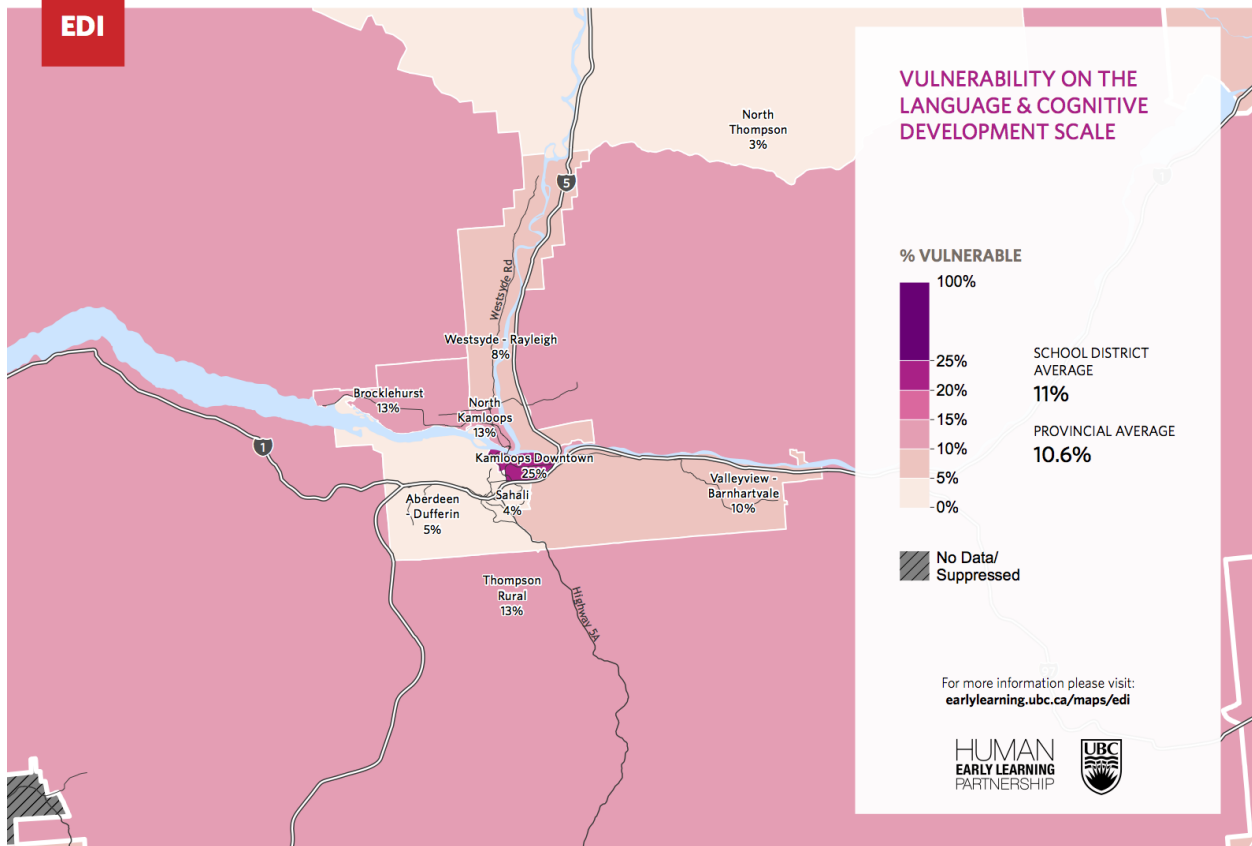
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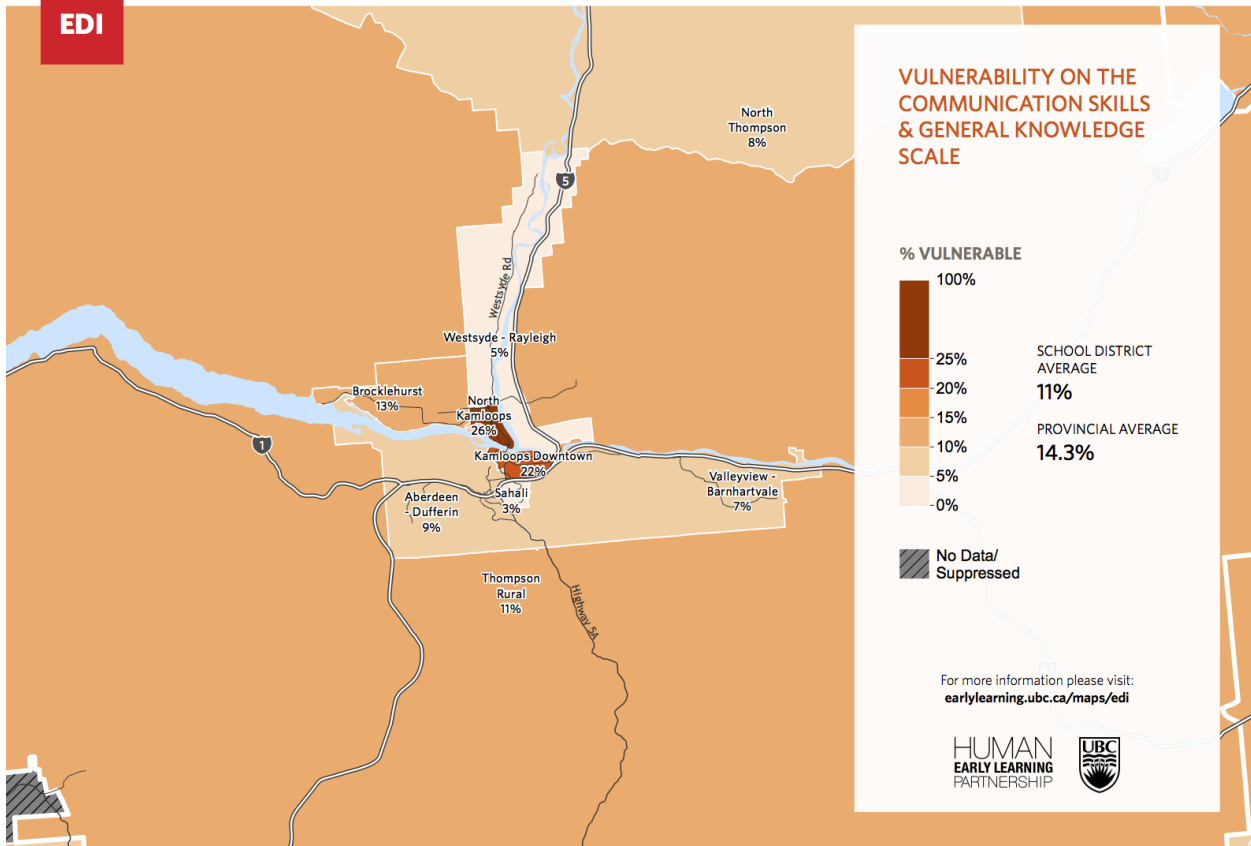
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KAMLOOPS - THOMPSON (SD 73) WAVE 7



KAMLOOPS - THOMPSON (SD 73) WAVE 7





CHANGES IN NEIGHBOURHOOD TRENDS OVER TIME

Collecting EDI data over multiple waves allows us to explore trends in children's development and to answer the broader question: "Are our Kindergarten-aged children doing better, worse or about the same as in the past?" With each new wave of EDI data, vulnerability rates change across the province. While some neighbourhoods see improvements over time, others see declines. When looking at all of these changes it is important to identify the amount of change that is meaningful - i.e. change that is worthy of further exploration and discussion.

WHAT IS MEANINGFUL CHANGE?

HELP's definition of meaningful change is a combination of statistical significance and practical significance, and in all cases should be interpreted as a change that is "worthy of attention." We use a method called Critical Difference which is the amount of change over two time points in an area's EDI vulnerability rate that is large enough to be considered meaningful in the statistical sense. A meaningful change means that we are reasonably confident that the change in the vulnerability rate is meaningful, rather than a result of uncertainty due to measurement issues.

Figure 17 provides a summary of the number of neighbourhoods that have experienced each type of trend over the short-term and long-term time periods. The following maps illustrate the long-term (Wave 2 to 7) and short-term (Wave 6 to 7) trends in neighbourhood-level change in Kamloops - Thompson School District, highlighting neighbourhoods that have experienced:

- ▲ - A **meaningful increase** in vulnerability
- - **Stable** (no meaningful change in vulnerability)
- ▼ - A **meaningful decrease** in vulnerability

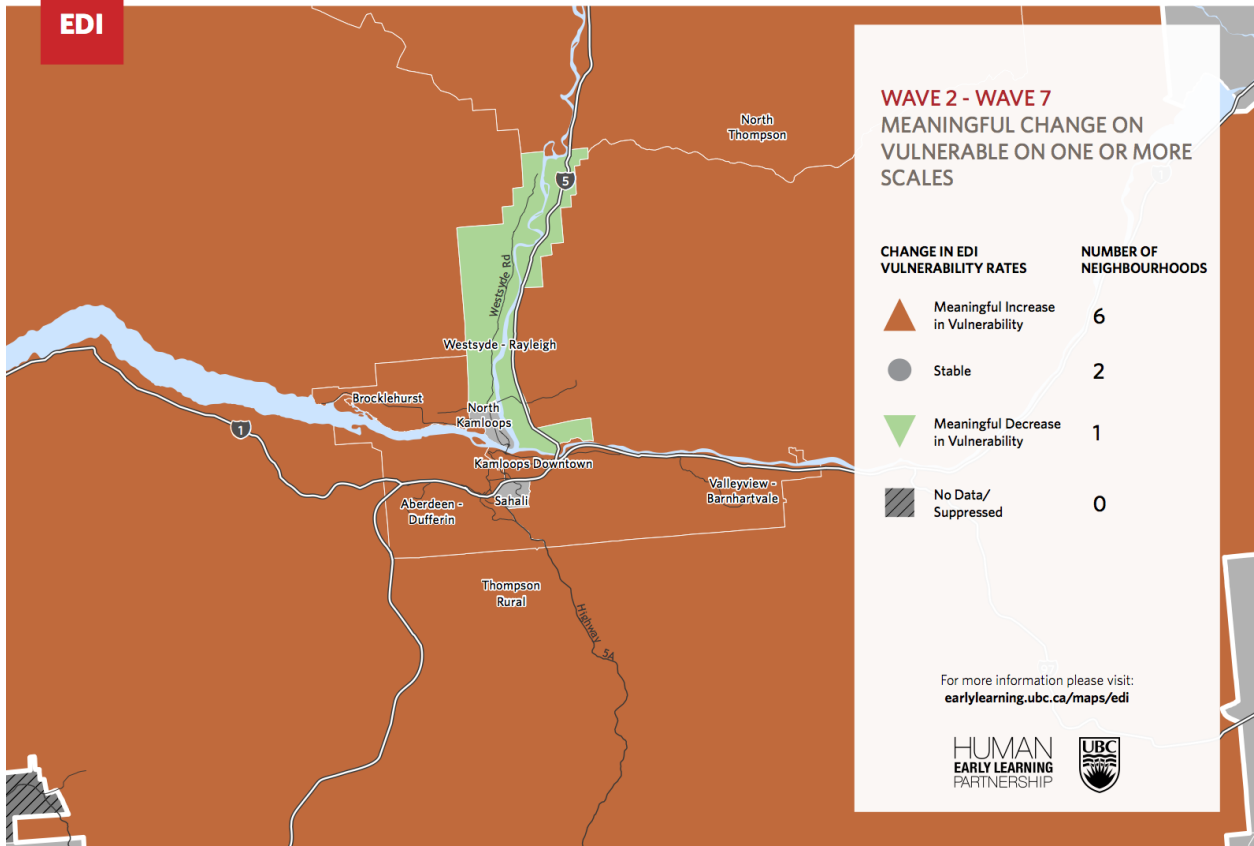
FIGURE 17. NUMBER OF NEIGHBOURHOODS IN KAMLOOPS - THOMPSON WITH MEANINGFUL CHANGES IN VULNERABILITY

	NUMBER OF NEIGHBOURHOODS			
	▲ MEANINGFUL INCREASE	● STABLE	▼ MEANINGFUL DECREASE	NA
LONG-TERM TREND WAVE 2-7	6	2	1	0
SHORT-TERM TREND WAVE 6-7	3	5	1	0

Please note: Neighbourhood trends are not available (NA) if there are fewer than 35 Kindergarten children in one or both waves.

For more information on Critical Difference calculations visit: earlylearning.ubc.ca/supporting-research/critical-difference

KAMLOOPS - THOMPSON (SD 73) WAVE 2 - 7



KAMLOOPS - THOMPSON (SD 73) WAVE 6 - 7

