

EDI: From Data to Action in Manitoba

The EDI (Early Development Instrument) measures what matters most to Manitobans: the well-being of our children. It guides our investments in early childhood development to promote the best possible outcomes for Manitoba's children. That's why the EDI is used by school divisions, parent-child coalitions and early learning and child care providers. Aided by their local-level EDI results, these key community stakeholders collaborate to support early childhood development innovations that reflect their community's diversity and meet the unique needs of their children and families.

Tracy Bamford, Tom Chan, Lesley Massey, Brenda Wild

School Division Innovations

Manitoba's school divisions use EDI data to assist them in planning and implementing initiatives that prepare preschool children for successful school entry, through the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) supported by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. One example of how school divisions use the EDI comes from the Winnipeg School Division.

The Elmwood Home Learning Assistance Program

Several years of school and division-level EDI data, collected by the division since 1999/00, helped the Winnipeg School Division identify several at-risk schools with high needs within all developmental areas. Of particular concern was the significant number of vulnerable children in the five schools in the Elmwood community.

In collaboration with the five school administrators, the division's school board, the division's early years curriculum specialists and the division's superintendents, a decision was made to implement a program that provides an enriched educational environment for children in the nursery and kindergarten programs, and supports the children's parents in their involvement with their child's school program.

The Elmwood Home Learning Assistance Program was piloted in 2003. Each of the five schools was assigned a home learning assistant to work with families to provide:

- resources and strategies for enhancing development
- encourage family involvement in a child's learning
- establish a supportive, link between home and school

"The home visits have been very beneficial, not only in assisting and preparing young children for Grade 1, but in strengthening the relationship between families and their school community," reports Debbie Korne, home learning assistant.

Parent-Child Coalition Innovations

It takes a village to raise a child, and Manitoba's 26 parent-child coalitions connect parents and children to their community, schools, neighbours and support services. An example of how coalitions support parents and children comes from the central region's parent-child coalition – a community of villages.

The Kit & Kaboodle Program

At a local forum, stakeholders from across Manitoba's central region came together to examine the strengths and needs of their region through a review of their mapped EDI data reports. Opportunities were then identified to address their region's needs in language and literacy.

"Having so many of our community stakeholders together around one common table, helped plant the seeds for cultivating future partnerships and programming in early childhood development," reports Tracy Bamford, coalition co-ordinator.

They used the results from their community EDI data and consulted with the parent-child program facilitators in their region. A clear vision of a literacy program emerged – one that would serve the economically and culturally diverse rural population of the central region. A partnership with the coalition, Manitoba Family Services and Housing, regional child care centres, and local libraries was established, and the Kit & Kaboodle program was born.

Kit & Kaboodle empowers communities and parent groups in setting up and running simple, fun-filled programs for preschool children and their parents/caregivers. The central region coalition provides literacy program kits to their community partners. Their partners are encouraged to adapt these resources to better reflect their diversity and cultural backgrounds and develop their program schedules to meet their community's needs. Since Kit & Kaboodle started in 2006, there are over 60 trained facilitators, and the program is used in 27 communities.

"The response from families has been universally positive. All participants from every walk of life have enjoyed the chance to meet with other parents and share a fun time with their children," reports Joan Stainton, program facilitator.

Early Learning and Child Care Innovations

Many preschool children spend time in early childhood education. Early learning and care providers use EDI results to identify and support the strengths and needs of the children in their care. Child care experts across the province are using EDI results to guide program development. An example of this comes from SPLASH Child Care Inc. in Winnipeg's Point Douglas Community.

SPLASH Child Enrichment Centre

After reviewing their mapped EDI data reports, the director and staff of the SPLASH Child Care Inc., the community area child care co-ordinator and members of the community's parent-child coalition identified a need in language and literacy.

A partnership was formed with SPLASH, MaMawi, YM/YWCA, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, with support from the Manitoba Child Care Program. Their vision was to develop a new Child Enrichment Centre in Winnipeg's North End.

"As the child care co-ordinator for the Point Douglas community, I encouraged SPLASH to use their community EDI data to develop early learning programs relevant to the needs of children," reports Brenda Wild, co-ordinator for the Manitoba Child Care Program and chair of the Point Douglas Parent-Child Coalition.

The SPLASH Child Enrichment Centre opened its doors in September 2009. The accessible location in the North End Wellness Centre will provide 48 new child care spaces for North End families. With a curriculum-based program designed around the developmental areas of the EDI, their goal is to give their children a love of learning and positive skills for future learning in school.

"We have enhanced our programming philosophy – learning through play – by threading a literacy and numeracy focus through everything we do – even in gym!" reports Lesley Massey, director of SPLASH Child Care Inc. and the SPLASH Child Enrichment Centre.

Identify community need

Collaborate, Partner & Plan

Implement Action!

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