



EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT

A SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN'S
READINESS FOR LEARNING



Early Baseline Results in the Northwest Territories (NWT)

2011-12 AND 2012-13 SCHOOL YEARS

All children are born ready to learn, but not all children arrive at school ready to learn. In fact, one in four Canadian children enters kindergarten without the skills they need.

Children are ready to learn when they can meet the expectations placed on them and when their development allows them to fully benefit from the learning experiences at their schools. Children who are not ready are at a disadvantage from the beginning, and often never catch up.

In 2011-12, the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and Health and Social Services (HSS) conducted a comprehensive review of the previous 10 years of investments in early childhood development, to inform new directions for Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the NWT. The

review quickly identified a significant gap in program monitoring and assessment in ECD programs and services.

Right from the Start: A Framework for Early Childhood Development in the NWT (ECD Framework, 2013) will guide the work of the Departments for children five and under and their families over the next ten years.

To complement the focus on ECD, the Early Development Instrument (EDI), a population-based measure used across Canada and internationally, was implemented as one of the tools to measure and monitor progress in the area of child development. The EDI was developed at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University and first introduced in Ontario and British Columbia in 2000. It has been used in all provinces and territories, as well as a number of other countries throughout the world.



WHAT DOES THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT MEASURE?

The EDI is a checklist completed by kindergarten teachers that measures a child's readiness for learning as they enter grade one. The EDI is not used as a diagnostic tool for individual children. The data is combined to provide overall information about groups of five year old children. The EDI is used to gather information and provide a snapshot of groups of children's development in five areas:

- Physical health & well-being
- Emotional maturity
- Social competence
- Language & cognitive development
- Communication skills & general knowledge

Physical Health & Well-Being – Examples: running on the playground, holding a pencil, muscle coordination, having enough energy for classroom activities.

Social Competence – Examples: curiosity about the world, willingness to try new things, ability to control behaviour, ability to play and work with other children, following rules.

Emotional Maturity – Examples: thinking before acting, a balance between fearful and impulsive behaviour, ability to deal with feelings appropriately, consider feelings of others.

Language and Cognitive Development – Examples: likes to listen to stories, developing beginning reading, writing and number skills, plays board games, ability to see things that are the same and different, ability to repeat information from memory.

Communication Skills and General Knowledge – Examples: ability to communicate needs and wants in socially appropriate ways, storytelling ability, some knowledge about life and the world around.





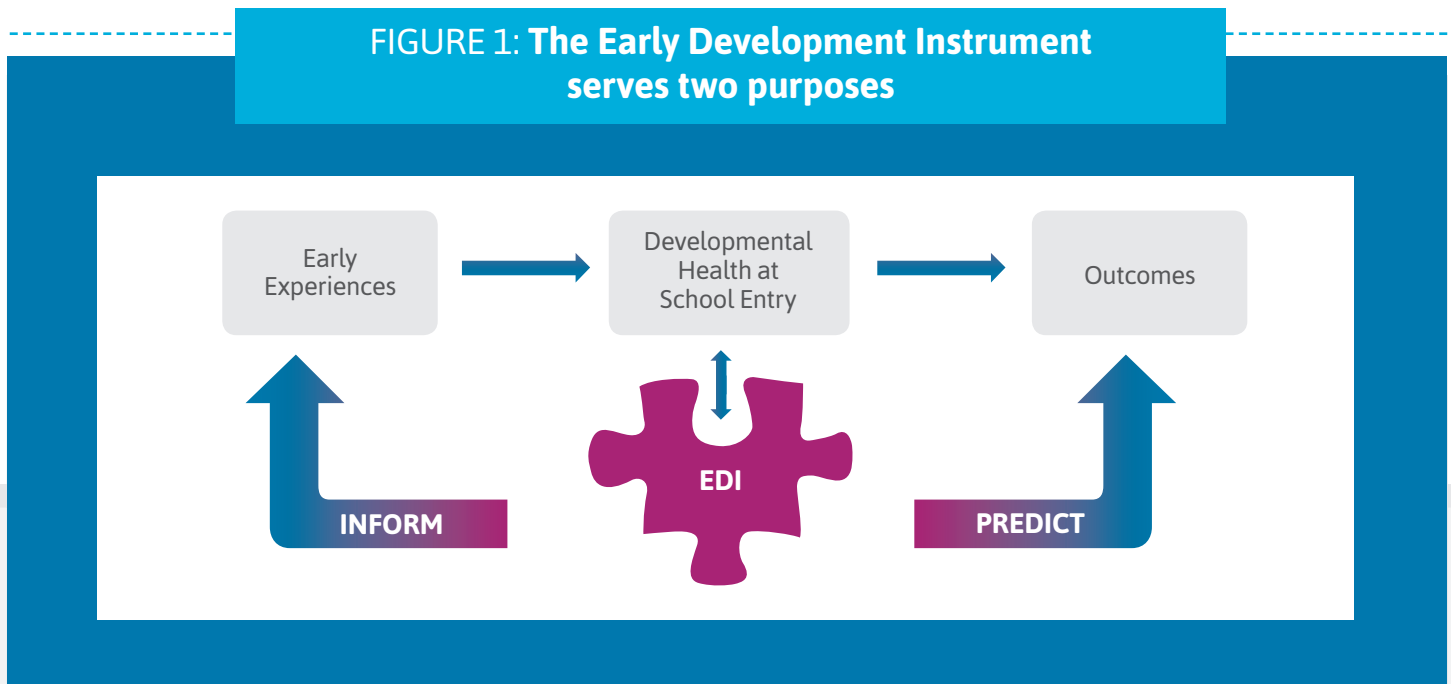
WHY MONITOR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT?

Monitoring children's development is extremely important. Research and studies done across Canada show that children who are successful in kindergarten will most likely succeed through school and throughout their lifetime. If children struggle in kindergarten, their lifelong health, learning, behaviour and quality of life will be affected. The EDI results are being used across Canada and internationally by governments and agencies to make

decisions to improve children's early years. The information gathered from the EDI in the NWT will help track the developmental health of children across the Northwest Territories. The EDI is only one source of information and so it is important to recognize that on its own it does not hold the answers to improving the state of children's development in the NWT. But it does provide information that people can explore, use, and consider as they make decisions for how to make changes to support child development in their communities. (Figure 1)



FIGURE 1: The Early Development Instrument serves two purposes



EARLY RESULTS FROM THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – 2012-2013

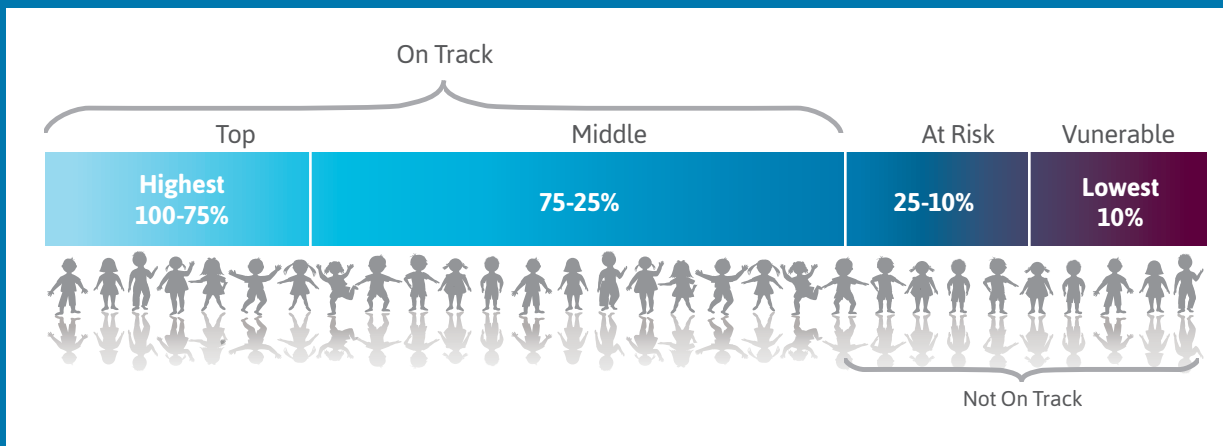
Population measures like the EDI require time and multiple collections of information before findings can be considered valid and reliable. This is especially true in the NWT with a small population scattered over a large territory. This report shares some early indicators from two years of using the EDI. These results are still early and will take at least one more year of information collection before they can be considered as a reliable baseline to monitor and measure change in early childhood development in the NWT.

HOW ARE EDI SCORES CALCULATED?

The average EDI scores for each of the five areas of child development measured are divided into categories representing the highest scores to the lowest scores in the community. “Vulnerable” children are those that score low (the bottom 10% of the total group) in any of the five areas. Children in the “at-risk” category are also not on track to be ready for learning in grade one, but appear to be doing better than the vulnerable population. (Figure 2)



FIGURE 2: HOW EDI SCORES ARE CALCULATED





EDI surveys were completed in March 2012 and again in March 2013 by kindergarten teachers across the NWT. There were 1136 valid surveys completed over these two years. This number represents approximately 87% of the children in kindergarten in these two years combined.

The comparison in Figure 3 shows that based on early results, there is a higher percentage of vulnerable NWT children than in Canada overall.

EDI – COMPARATIVE RESULTS

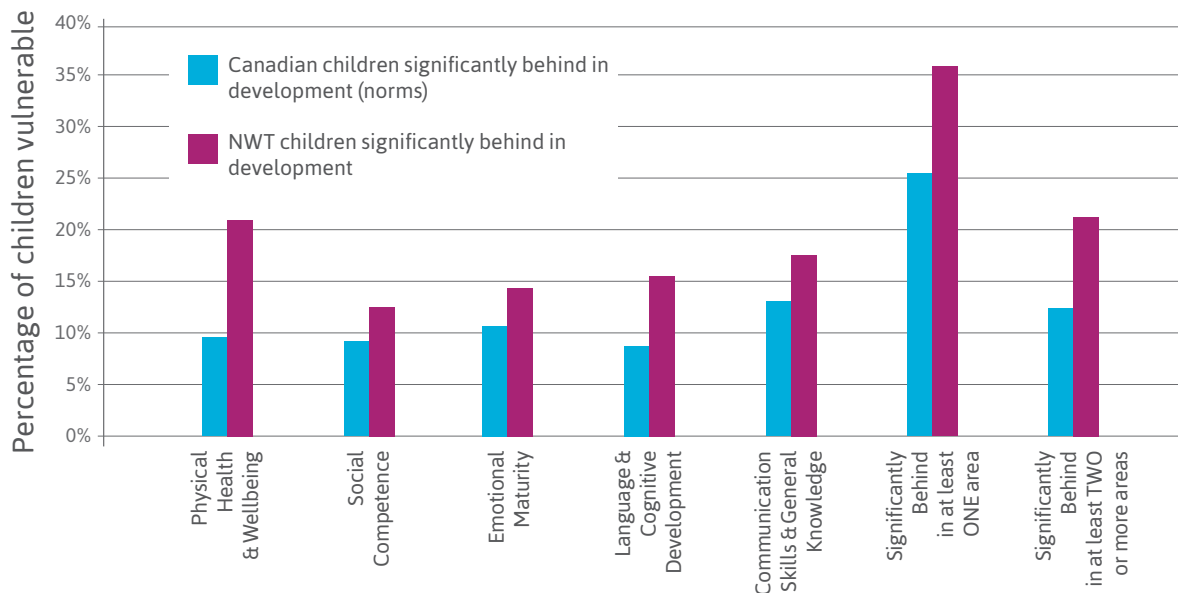
Using the two years of information, Yellowknife, the regional centres (Inuvik, Fort Smith, and Hay River), and the remaining 28 small NWT communities were compared.

This breakdown intentionally follows the same categories that the NWT Bureau of Statistics uses in their comparisons of educational and other data.

This comparison combines two school years – 2011/2012 and 2012/2013. The numbers used for this comparison include children with diagnosed special needs who attended kindergarten for more than one month; it does not include children with special needs or children who dropped out after less than one month. Figure 4 gives the number of EDI surveys administered, the gender and age of the children.

Although conclusions cannot yet be drawn from the EDI because the NWT baseline is still being established, the two years of data suggest there are overall differences, shown in Figure 4:

FIGURE 3: Early NWT EDI Results



All Northerners wish the best for our children; the right care and attention, development, opportunities and services. With the Government of the Northwest Territories' focus on early childhood development, the message here is one of hope.

We are on the right path and the EDI is one of the tools that can help guide our actions and measure our progress to ensure our children have the right start.

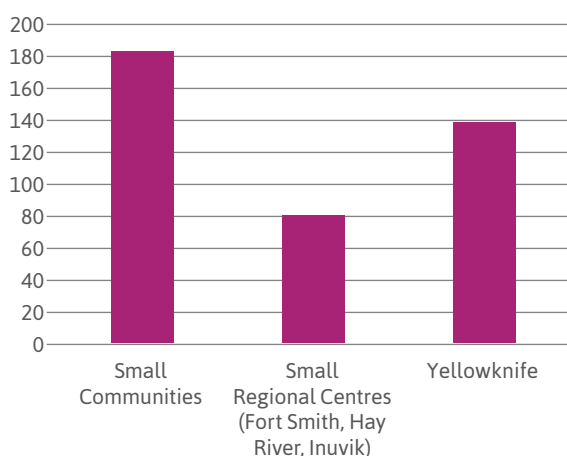


FIGURE 4: Early NWT EDI Results

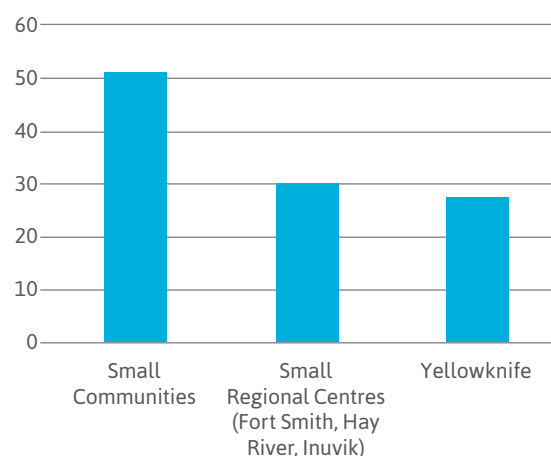
Number of EDIs administered - 2011/2012 and 2012/2013

	Yellowknife	Regional Centres	Small Communities
EDIs analyzed	503	264	369
Girls	242	139	177
Boys	261	125	192
Average age	5yr. 7mo.	5yr. 8mo.	5yr. 8mo.

Number of children significantly behind in their development



Percentage of children significantly behind in their development



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