

# The EDI TEACHER NEWSLETTER



The Early Development Instrument (EDI) provides a snapshot of the readiness of Manitoba's kindergarten children as they begin school. All of Manitoba's 37 school divisions take part in the collection of the EDI every other year, representing more than 500 kindergarten teachers who collect EDI questionnaires on more than 12,000 kindergarten children.

This newsletter will highlight a few EDI stories – examples of how school divisions, schools, the child care community, parent child coalitions, governments and policy-makers are using the EDI to plan, develop, implement and evaluate the programs and services that will make a difference for Manitoba's children. As you'll see, there is a lot of great work being done with the EDI across Manitoba – and it all begins with you, the kindergarten teacher.

So on behalf of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, we would like to thank you for your commitment and contribution to ensuring the best possible outcomes for Manitoba's children.

Thank you!

#### **Kerri Irvin-Ross**

Chair of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet,  
Minister of Healthy Living

#### **Peter Bjornson**

Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth



#### **Contact us:**

This newsletter will appear twice a year to update you on the Healthy Child Manitoba (HCM) strategy, and how the EDI is being used across the province to support and evaluate this strategy. If you have an EDI story you'd like to share with us and your colleagues, please send it to Terra Johnston, Provincial Coordinator of the EDI, at [Terra.Johnston@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Terra.Johnston@gov.mb.ca)

The EDI, developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies, measures children's readiness for school in the following areas:

- Physical Health & Well-being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language & Thinking Skills
- Communication Skills & General Knowledge

For information on the EDI tool, please visit:

[http://www.offordcentre.com/readiness/SRL\\_project.html](http://www.offordcentre.com/readiness/SRL_project.html)

## Using the EDI Schools and School Divisions

The school divisions in Manitoba utilize EDI data to assist in planning and implementing initiatives that address preparing preschool children for successful school entry through the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) support provided by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth.

"In the Louis Riel School Division, we share our EDI data with our school administrators to help us in school planning, and we share our EDI data with our school board to assist us with our programming needs and budget planning," said Sylvia Madill, student services coordinator for the Louis Riel School Division. "In our work with the parent child coalitions, our EDI results help us to identify goals for our parent child family centres, and help us to monitor the needs of our community."

In Brandon, the *Kinderlinks* preschool program is currently offered in Brandon School Division's Valleyview Centennial School. Recently highlighted in the Brandon Sun, the program offers preschoolers and their parents a positive introduction to school and helps prepare them for the transition to kindergarten.

"This program works because of the collaboration between our school and our community – we're working together for the future of our children," said Shawn Lehman, principal of Valleyview Centennial School.

The program is a partnership with the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre and the Brandon Parent Child Coalition. It was created from the results of their EDI data, and the program goals of *Kinderlinks* are based around the five domains of the EDI's measurement of school readiness.

"I see how this program gives our community's future school children an opportunity to experience school activities with their parents," said Lehman. "It really promotes a strong partnership of learning for parents and their children."



## Using the EDI Parent Child Coalitions

Ensuring Manitoba children get the best start in life is one of the key reasons for using the EDI. That's why parent child coalitions use their EDI data to support early childhood development initiatives and services that reflect each community's diversity and unique strengths and needs.

A number of coalitions are using their EDI results to connect with their community's stakeholders and identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

"This spring our coalition hosted a forum – *Growing the Future* – a successful event which brought together the many partners and stakeholders from across our large region," said Tracy Bamford, coordinator for the Central Region Parent Child Coalition. "Having people from schools, school divisions, the health authority, Manitoba Family Services and Housing, Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services, the child care community, town councils, local governments, and parent child coalition programming partners was an amazing opportunity."



# Using the EDI The Child Care Community

Many preschool children spend time in early childhood education. Early learning and care providers are in an excellent position to use their 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 their program development. One such example comes from SPLASH Child Care Inc. of Winnipeg's Point Douglas Community.

"Because our EDI results show we have a need in the language area, we have taken a hard look at what we do and have put a greater focus on literacy in our nursery school," said Lesley Massey, director of SPLASH Child Care Inc. "We have developed a literacy and numeracy 'learning through play' program, and this literacy focus threads through everything we do – even in gym!"

The Manitoba Child Care Program oversees the operation of licensed child care in the province, and is committed to ensuring Manitoba families are able to access high-quality child care services across the province. They point to SPLASH Child Care as a success story in early childhood education.

"The SPLASH nursery program is a great example of how we can address the evidence-based needs of communities, using EDI results, as we move forward with our five-year plan to improve early learning and child care across Manitoba," said Lois Speirs, acting director of the Manitoba Child Care Program.

Using their EDI data, the forum participants examined the strengths and needs of their community and identified opportunities for the future.

"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," said Bamford.

The region has also used the EDI data to develop new programs that meet the needs of the children in their region.

"The decision to develop our coalition's literacy-focused preschool program - "Kit and Kaboodle" - evolved from our EDI data which showed 'need' in the language and thinking skills domain," said Kathy Wightman, chair of the Central Region Parent Child Coalition. "Our coalition's steering committee consults with our EDI data in reviewing our grant applications, and the data is one of the factors we consider when making our funding decisions."

For more information on the parent child coalition in your community, visit: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/parentchild/index.html>



The child-care community is also thrilled with how the nursery school program is helping children in their community.

"As the child care coordinator for the Point Douglas community, I encourage child care centres to use their community EDI data to develop early learning programs relevant to the needs of children. I am pleased to see the development of SPLASH's new nursery school program," said Brenda Wild, child care coordinator for Family Services and Housing, and Chair of the FACT coalition (parent child coalition for Point Douglas). "I know SPLASH used their community EDI results to leverage funding for their program, and that they continue to use their EDI results as they develop programming that best meets the needs of their children."



# Using the EDI Governments and Policy-makers

The mission of Healthy Child Manitoba is to ensure the best possible outcomes for Manitoba's children. That is why Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has committed to using the EDI to monitor and evaluate the HCM strategy.

"The EDI helps us measure what matters most to Manitoba: the well-being of our children," said Dr. Rob Santos, from Healthy Child Manitoba. "As a province and in our communities, it helps us look back, to evaluate the outcomes of our investments in early childhood development. It also helps us look ahead, to improve our future decisions in policy and program development, to make the Manitoba we want for all of our children".

And it's not just Manitoba that is using the EDI to guide investments in early childhood education. Jurisdictions across the country are also using the EDI.

"The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child commits Canada and 191 other countries to doing all they can to help young children thrive. But how do we know if we are succeeding? In our world, what gets counted, counts and the EDI makes early childhood count," said Dr. Clyde Hertzman, president of Canada's Council on Early Child Development.

"Better than anything else, it tells us if we are fulfilling our promise to our youngest children."



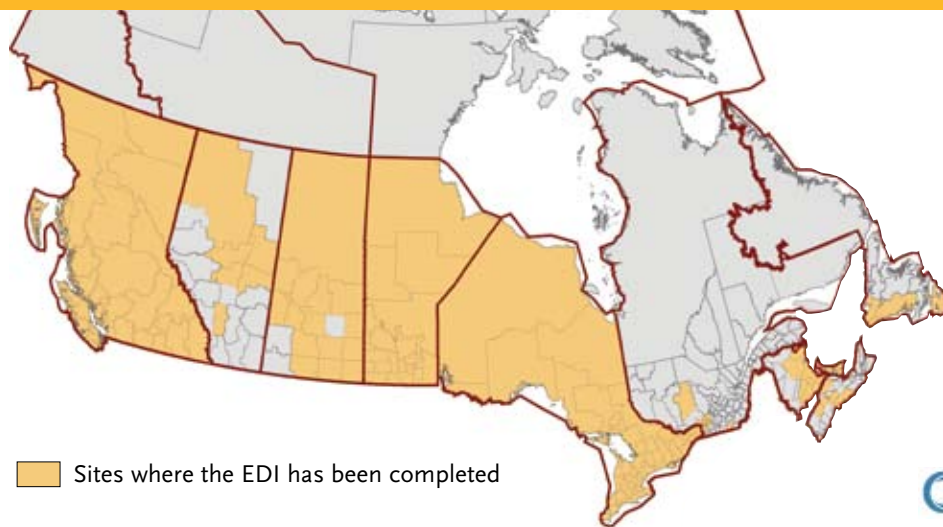
"The EDI helps us measure what matters most to Manitoba: the well-being of our children."

Dr. Rob Santos,  
Healthy Child  
Manitoba Office

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Dr. Clyde Hertzman,  
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## EDI Completion in Canada - 2000 to 2007



For more information on Manitoba's EDI, visit the Healthy Child Manitoba website at:  
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/ecd/edi.html>

For more information on the pan-Canadian approach to using the EDI, visit the Offord Centre for Child Studies' website at: [http://www.offordcentre.com/readiness/SRL\\_project.html](http://www.offordcentre.com/readiness/SRL_project.html)