

EDI PARENT & CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER

“Every child requires someone in his or her life who is absolutely crazy about them.”

- Urie Bronfenbrenner

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT...

- is a Canadian-made research questionnaire developed at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University;
- is completed by Kindergarten teachers from across BC for all children in the month of February;
- is designed to help us understand trends in children’s development at a population level, and in this way is similar to the Canadian Census;
- is never used as an individual assessment of a child and no child’s EDI results are individually reported. Instead, an individual child’s EDI data are included in summary data only, showing trends at a group level, such as school district or neighbourhood.

PARTICIPATION IN THE EDI QUESTIONNAIRE IS VOLUNTARY...

Even after a school district agrees to take part in EDI data collection, participation by individual schools, teachers and parents and/or caregivers is completely voluntary. If a parent or caregiver does not wish his or her child to participate in the study, they simply need to inform the teacher or the EDI team at HELP (edi@help.ubc.ca).

WHY DO THE EARLY YEARS MATTER?

Children’s early experiences and the environments in which they spend their time have an important and measurable effect on their later health and well-being. In the first few years of life, our genes are particularly sensitive to the environments in which we spend time. The interaction of genes and environments influences the developing brain and other key biological systems. By increasing the quality of early childhood experiences, we ensure that children are ready to learn as they enter school, find meaningful work and contribute to thriving communities.

WHAT IS THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT (EDI)?

The EDI questionnaire comprises 103 items measuring five important domains of early child development: Physical Health & Well-Being; Social Competence; Emotional Maturity; Language & Cognitive Development; and Communication Skills & General Knowledge. Research has shown that these domains are good predictors of adult health, education and social outcomes. Below is a summary of the five scales of the EDI questionnaire, which map directly on to these domains, and the type of questions asked on the survey for each one.

EDI SCALES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT



PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Questions regarding children’s gross and fine motor skills, physical independence and readiness for the school day. *E.g., Can the child hold a pencil? Is the child able to manipulate objects?*



SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Questions regarding children’s overall social competencies, capacity for respect and responsibility, approaches to learning, and readiness to explore new things. *E.g., Is the child able to follow class routines? Is the child self-confident?*



EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Questions regarding children’s prosocial and helping behaviours, as well as hyperactivity and inattention, and aggressive, anxious and fearful behaviour. *E.g., Does the child comfort a child who is crying or upset? Does the child help clean up a mess?*



LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Questions regarding children’s basic and advanced literacy skills, numeracy skills, interest in math and reading, and memory. *E.g., Is the child interested in reading and writing? Can the child count and recognize numbers?*



COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Questions regarding children’s English language skills and general knowledge. *E.g., Can the child tell a story? Can the child communicate with adults and children? Can the child take part in imaginative play?*



The EDI questionnaire was developed by child development experts and researchers in Canada and with the help of Kindergarten teachers and school administrators. It has been used in all Canadian provinces over the past two decades. In BC, the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Education, and Health have funded the collection and use of the EDI questionnaire since 2001. To date, we have collected EDI data for almost 300,000 Kindergarten students in BC. We have one of the world's largest data sets on children's development as they start school.

You can find a sample copy of the EDI questionnaire at: earlylearning.ubc.ca/edi.

Information from the EDI questionnaire has proven essential to educators, school districts, health professionals, early years care providers, community members, and governments in planning programs, services, and policies relating to children and families. Public institutions, including school districts, use EDI information (data) in their school district planning. Schools and communities use EDI information to understand how children are doing in key areas of development, and to plan interventions. The information obtained from the EDI questionnaire also support provincial investment, policy development, and program planning and evaluation. The EDI questionnaire is never used to report on the development of individual children or to compare schools.

EDI data and research can serve as a way to provide insight into how kindergarten children are doing and facilitate discussions about the factors affecting children's early development in neighbourhoods across the province. The information from the EDI questionnaire is used to increase awareness of the ways in which we can create environments in which all children can thrive and develop.

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING FROM THE EDI?

With over 18 years of EDI data now gathered, clear trends and patterns in children's development are emerging. HELP completed our last data gathering process in 2019. Based on our new data, 33.4% of BC Kindergarten children are vulnerable in one or more aspects of their development. This is the highest level of vulnerability we have seen in 20 years. Vulnerable children are children who, without additional support and care, may experience future challenges in school and society.

HELP's EDI BC: 2019 Provincial Report provides a comprehensive overview of the provincial trends that are emerging from over 18 years of EDI data collection and analysis. The information shared in the report offers a common place to start as we work together to improve child outcomes across the province. You can find the Provincial Report at: earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/edi

For more information about how HELP determines the vulnerability rate, see the Vulnerability Factsheet: earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/edi-vuln-factsheet.pdf.

DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Please see the EDI Parent/Guardian Informed Passive Consent Letter, distributed by your child's school, for more detailed information about the EDI research project. The letter can also be found at: earlylearning.ubc.ca/edi/community-resources.

Please visit earlylearning.ubc.ca to learn more about HELP and our program of research including the Toddler Development Instrument (TDI), Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ), and Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI).

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THE HUMAN EARLY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) is a research institute based at the University of British Columbia. For 18 years, HELP has worked in partnership with schools and school districts across BC to gather population-health data related to healthy child development.

The EDI questionnaire is one of four research questionnaires that we use as part of our child development monitoring system at HELP. The information collected is shared with schools and communities.

TDI
Toddler Development Instrument

18 months

toddler experiences inside & outside of the home

parent/guardian survey

CHEQ
Childhood Experiences Questionnaire

Start of Kindergarten

early life experiences inside & outside of the home

parent/guardian survey

EDI
Early Development Instrument

Mid-Kindergarten

early childhood development & readiness for school

teacher survey

MDI
Middle Years Development Instrument

Grades 4 & 7

experiences & assets in school, home & community

student survey