

Community Summary

MDI 2011-2012 - Interim Report

School District 40 New Westminister

OVERALL WELL-BEING IN NEW WESTMINSTER

50% of Grade 4 children in New Westminister reported feeling happy, optimistic, confident, and healthy.

22% reported feeling good on some of these dimensions of well-being, but not all.

28% reported not feeling good on at least one dimension of well-being.

Middle childhood - the time between ages 6 to 12 - universally marks a distinct period in human development. Children undergo important cognitive, social, and emotional changes that establish their identity and set the stage for adolescence and adulthood.

The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) is a self-report survey that children complete in Grade 4. The survey asks children to report on 5 domains pertaining their overall health and well-being: 1. Social and emotional development, 2. Connectedness to family, peers, and community, 3. School experiences, 4. Physical health and well-being, and 5. Constructive use of after-school time. This report summarizes the interim results for children in New Westminister. A full report will be available in 2013.

MDI PARTICIPATION

In March of 2012, the MDI was completed by 230 Grade 4 students (representing 55% of the public school Grade 4 population in New Westminister). 7 elementary schools participated, representing 78% of public elementary schools in the district.

MDI RESULTS: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

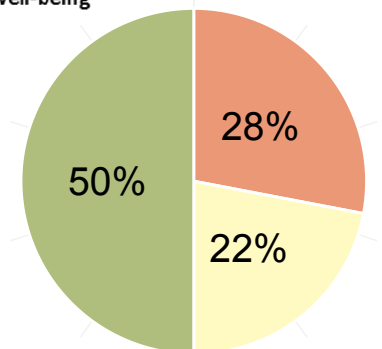
Overall in New Westminister, 50% of children were considered "thriving" - these children had high scores on at least 4 dimensions of health and well-being.

22% of children were considered to have medium-high well-being. These children had fewer than 4 high scores, but did not score low on any of the 5 well-being dimensions.

28% of children were considered to have low well-being. These children scored low on 1 or more dimensions of health and well-being. One of the uses of the MDI is to provide indication where the community can build greater assets for all students.

FIG 1: MDI WELL-BEING INDEX FOR SD40

■ Thriving
■ Medium to high well-being
■ Low health and well-being



The MDI calculates an overall health and well-being score which is composed of 5 dimensions: optimism, happiness, self-esteem, general health, and sadness (reverse-scored).



The MDI measures the presence of assets in children's lives. Assets are qualities in children's environments that help to promote positive development.

5 key assets during middle childhood are measured on the MDI:

1. Supportive adult relationships
2. Positive peer relationships
3. Constructive after-school activities
4. Proper nutrition and sleep
5. Positive school experiences



MDI RESULTS: ASSETS AND OVERALL HEALTH

One of the most consistent findings on the MDI across School Districts is that children's health and well-being is directly related to the presence of assets in their lives.

Figure 3 shows how children in New Westminster who reported having more assets also reported greater well-being. For example, among children who reported having fewer than 2 assets, only 40% experienced moderate or very high well-being, whereas 86% of children with all 5 assets experienced moderate or very high well-being.

FIG 2: MDI ASSETS INDEX

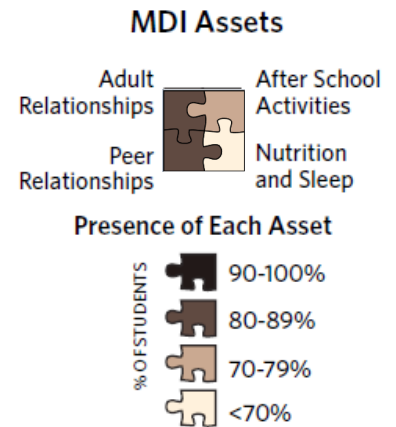
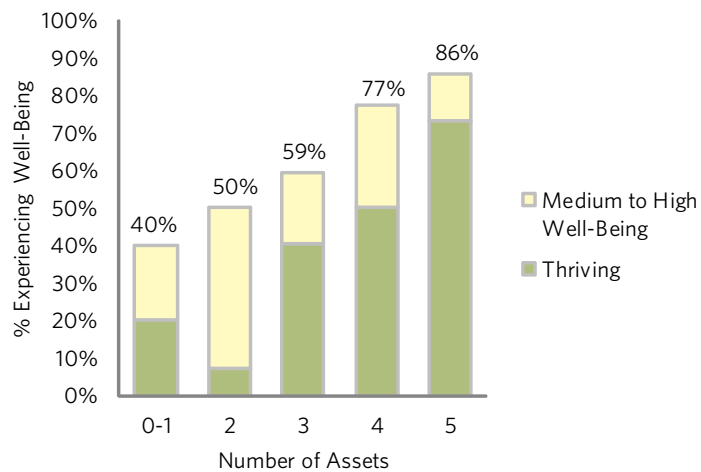


FIG 3: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENCE OF KEY ASSETS AND OVERALL WELL-BEING



AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The activities in which children participate during the after-school hours provide distinct and important opportunities for promoting children's development. Activities such as arts groups, sports, and community organizations provide rich contexts for promoting cooperation and perspective-taking. After-school activities also provide opportunities for children to build competence and confidence in areas other than school.

What do children do after-school?

51% of children in New Westminster said they went home every day after-school, and 78% said they went home after-school 3 or more

days a week. 58% went to a friend's house at least once a week, and 60% went to a park, playground, or community centre at least once a week.

95% of children said they watched TV between 3pm and 6pm, and 89% went on the computer. 78% of children participated in one or more organized after-school activities during the week. Among these children, most were involved in team sports (45%), individual sports (52%), and arts or music activities (37%). 29% of children were involved in educational lessons or activities such as tutoring or language school. (Full results are listed in the District Report, available online).

On the MDI, children are asked to name one activity that they wish they could do.

In New Westminster, most children named a physical or outdoor activity. The second most frequent response was hanging out with friends.

FIG 4: WHERE CHILDREN IN NEW WESTMINSTER GO AFTER-SCHOOL

How often do you go to these places after-school (from 3pm-6pm)?	Never	Once or twice a week	Three or more days a week
Home	7%	15%	78%
Stay at school for an activity	64%	27%	9%
After-school program or child care	65%	18%	18%
Friend's house	41%	48%	10%
Park/playground/community centre	40%	40%	20%
The mall or stores	55%	36%	10%

What do children wish to be doing after-school?

When children were asked what they wished to be doing after-school, the majority (65%) wanted to be doing physical or outdoor activities. 16% wanted to hanging out with friends, 7% wanted to be playing video or computer games, and 5% wanted to be doing arts or music activities (Figure 5).

Children were also asked what they thought were the largest barriers to them participating in desired activities. Having to go straight home after-school and being too busy were the top two responses (Figure 6).

FIG 5: WHAT CHILDREN IN NEW WESTMINSTER WISH TO BE DOING

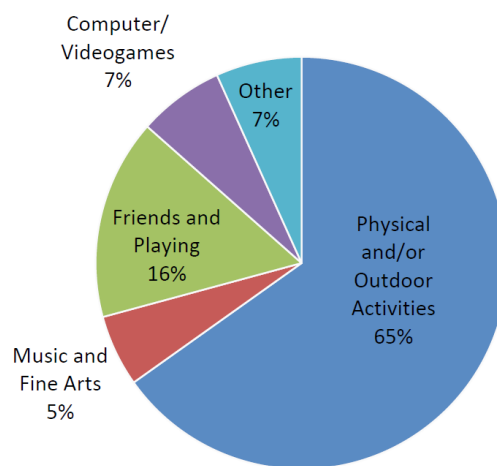
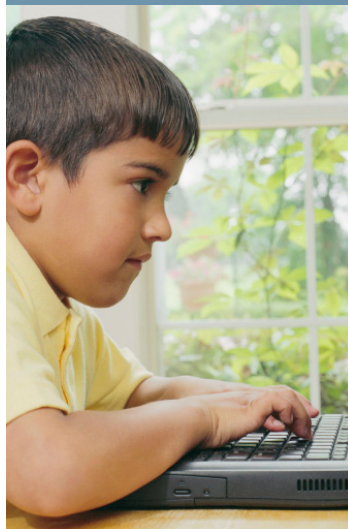
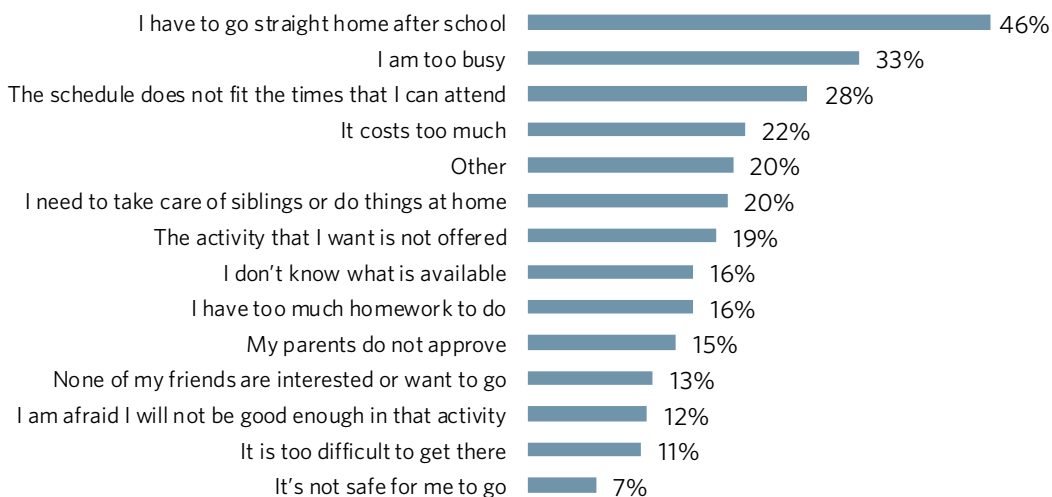


FIG 6: PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN DESIRED ACTIVITIES



NEIGHBOURHOOD DIFFERENCES

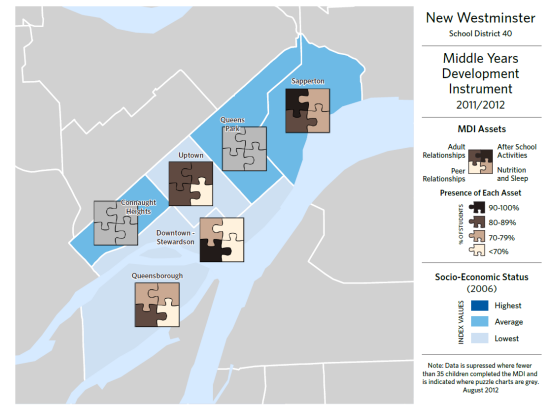
The MDI maps provide an overview of children's responses by neighbourhood. The following are a few notable characteristics of the New Westminster community.

- Children reported having very strong relationships with peers across all neighbourhoods (Map 2).
- More children participated in after-school activities in Uptown than any other neighbourhood. Positive relationships with peers and adults were also high in this neighbourhood (Maps 2 and 6).
- Nutrition and sleep was the lowest reported asset across all neighbourhoods (Map 2).
- Also across neighbourhoods, more than 25% of children said they watched TV for 2 or more hours per day after-school during a normal school week (Map 9).
- Children in Sapperton on average reported the highest number of total assets. However children in Downtown-Stewardson reported the highest overall well-being (Maps 1 and 11).

COMMUNITY ACTION

Putting research to action is the most important piece of the MDI project, yet it can be difficult to know where to begin.

When reviewing the research results, look first to see what's already working well. Identifying the structures and strategies that have enabled success in one area can provide clues for why other areas may not be working as well. Engaging colleagues, educators, community organizations, and children in this process is often beneficial.



MDI maps available at earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi

INTERPRETING THE MAPS

The **MDI Well-Being Index** is a combined score of children's reported optimism, happiness, self-esteem, general health, and sadness.

The **MDI Asset Index** shows the percentage of children for whom the asset was present. For example, the darkest puzzle piece indicates that between 90-100% of children in that neighbourhood reported having that asset.

Average Total Assets represents the average number of assets (from 0 to 5) that children reported in that neighbourhood. The 5 assets are positive adult relationships, peer relationships, after-school activities, nutrition and sleep, and school experiences.

MDI Tools for Action is a new online resource that provides presentation slides, videos, research briefs, and reference material to assist with interpreting, sharing, and working with MDI results. These tools, as well as all reports and maps, are available through earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi.