



**COMOX VALLEY EARLY YEARS  
COLLABORATIVE**

# Building Connections for Valley Families

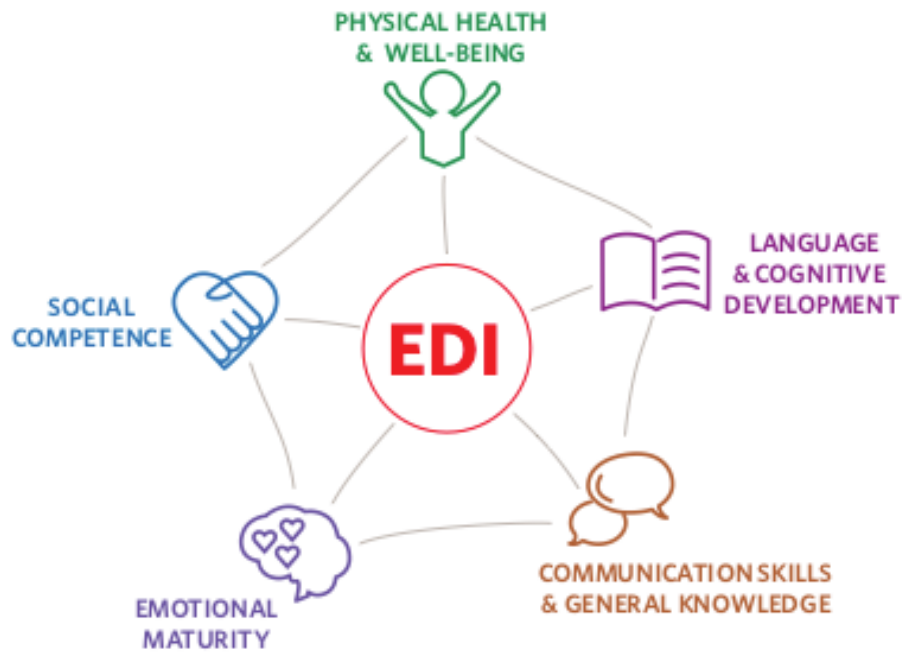
**Cross-Ministry EDI Table**  
May 15, 2023

Alison Bruderer & Joanne Schroeder

# The Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative

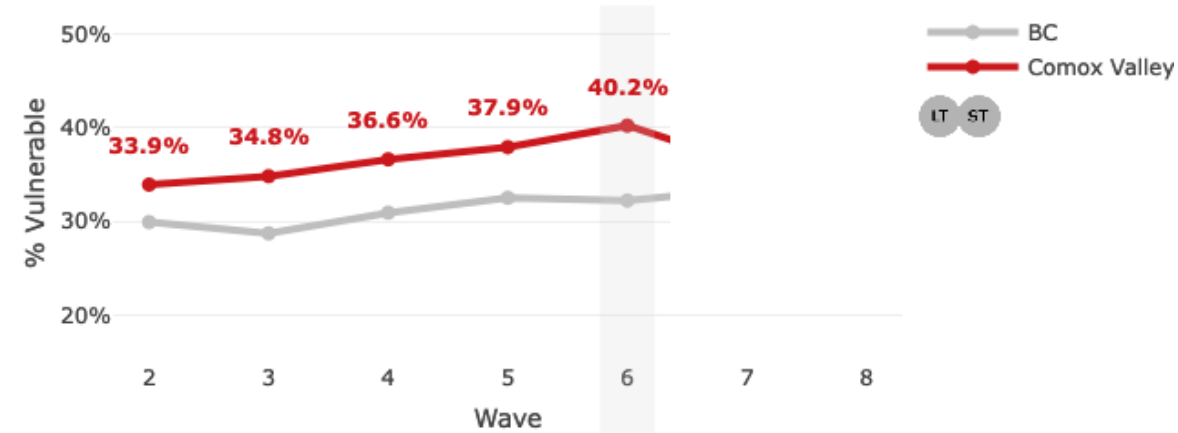
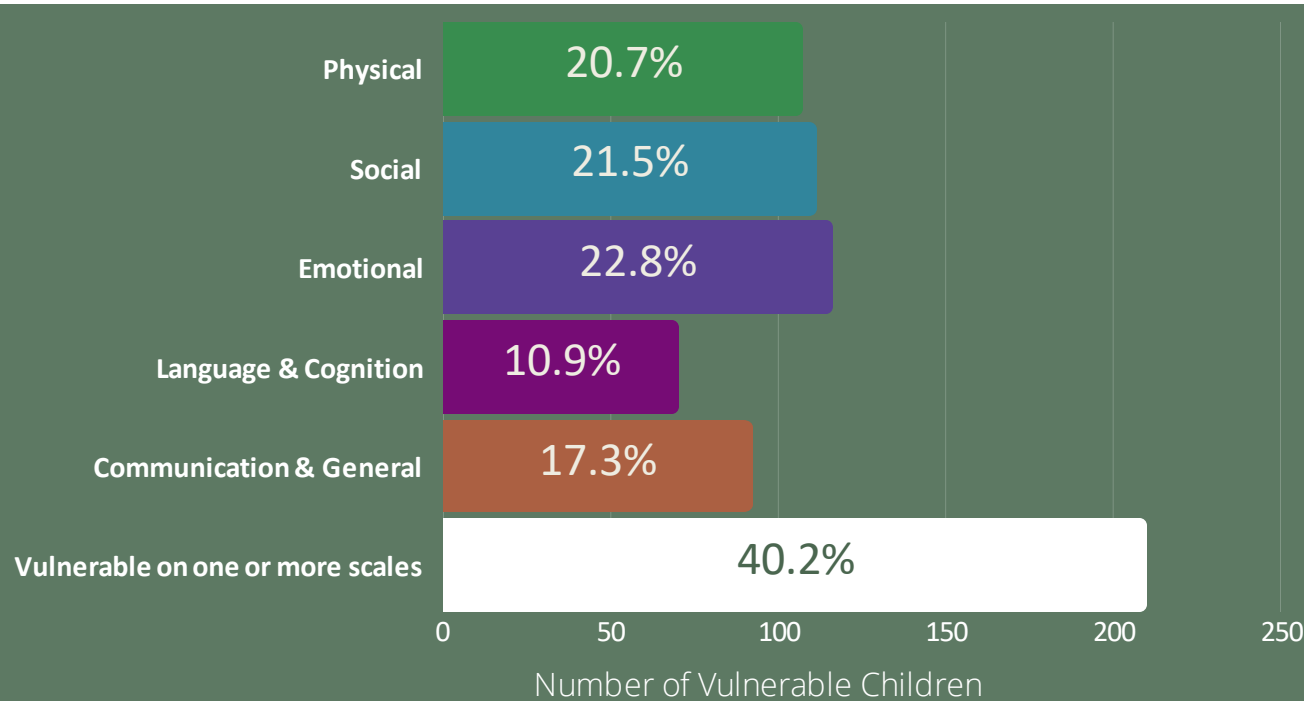


The Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative is a network of over 50 individuals and organizations committed to improving the lives of the children in the Comox Valley.



# Comox Valley EDI Data

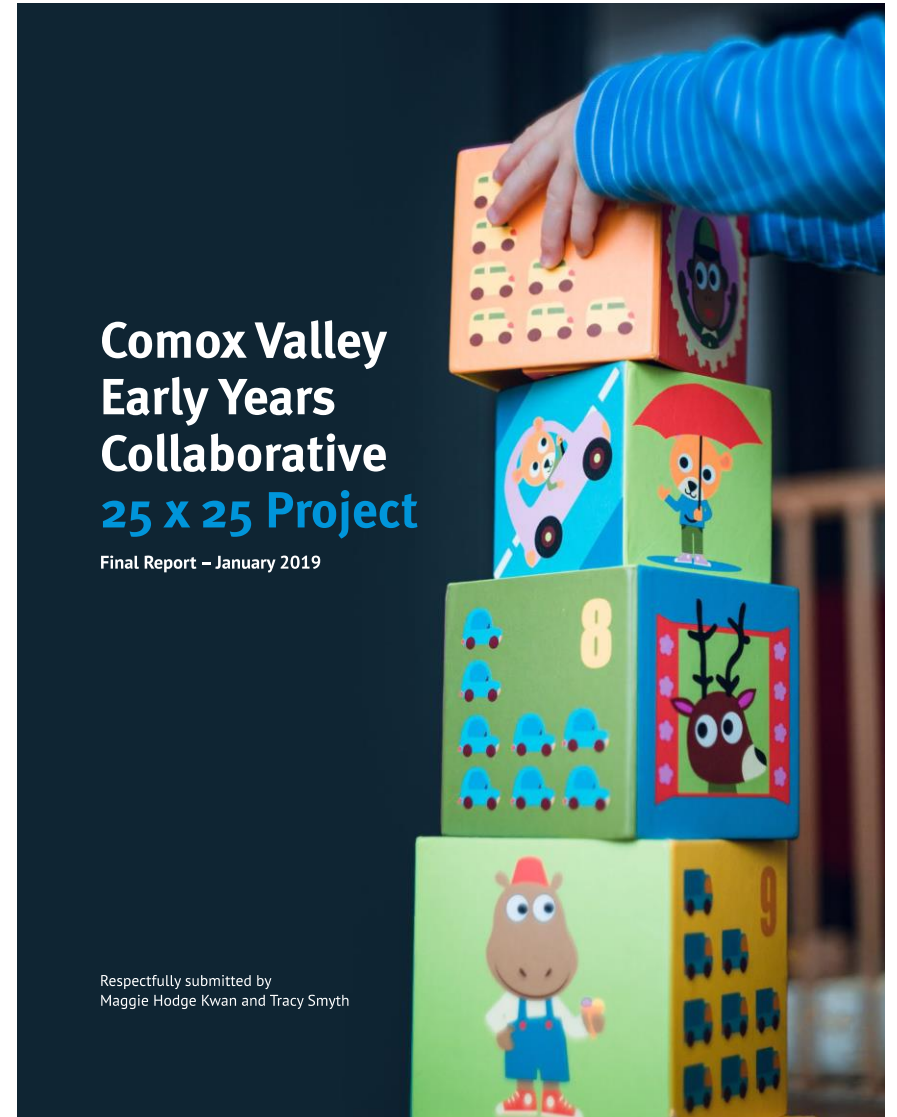
Wave 6 (2013-2016)



# Putting data into action

A commissioned report suggested using a *Social Innovation Lab* approach to create place-based solutions for local families, starting in the areas with greatest EDI vulnerability.

Throughout the resulting project, we considered the **systems and nested environments** that influence and support the development of children.



# Social Innovation Labs



Social Innovation labs are used to tackle complex challenges that have proved difficult to solve and where no simple solution is available.



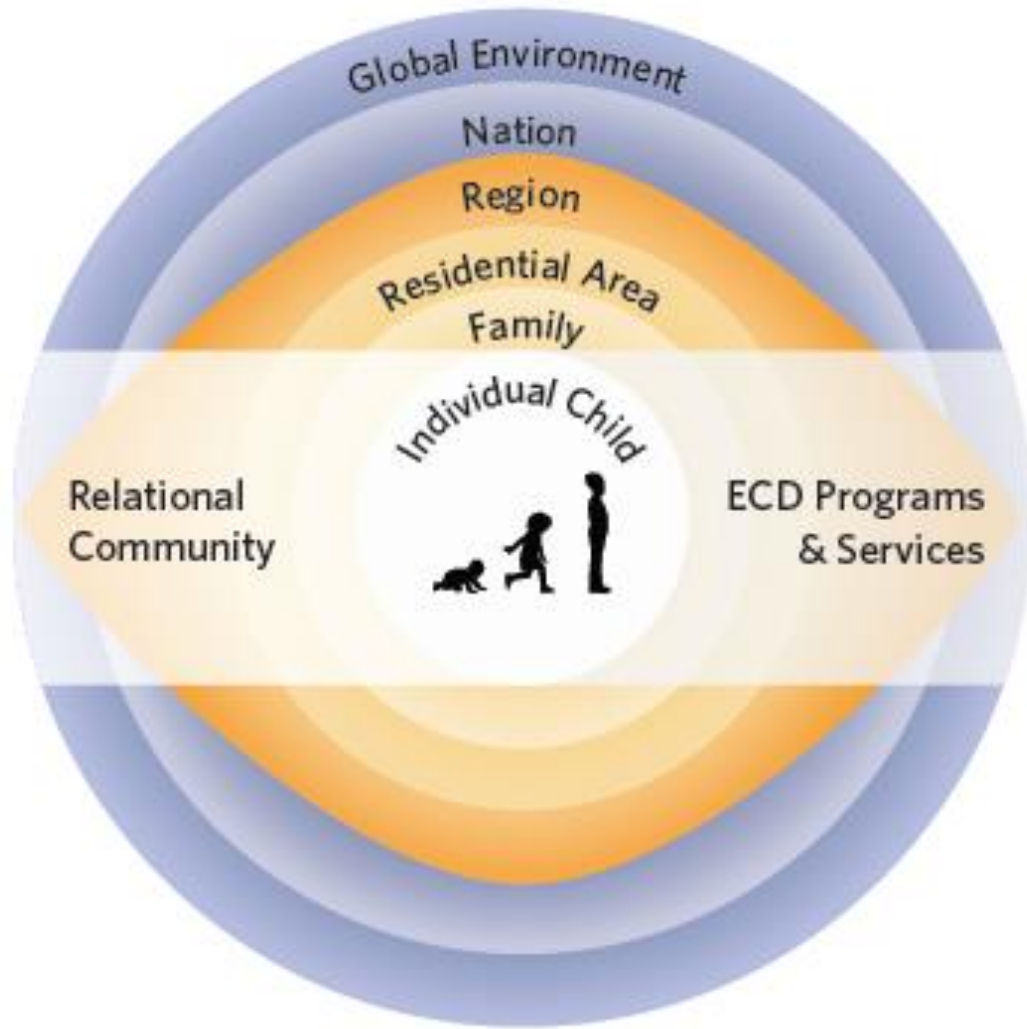
The process includes diverse stakeholders, especially those who are most impacted by the challenge.



Social Innovation Labs are experimental. Innovative interventions are trialed and reviewed.



Utilize a systems thinking approach.



Human Early Learning  
Partnership's  
*Team ECD Model*

# *Building Connections for Valley Families*



## **PROJECT PRINCIPLES**

- Children thrive in healthy environments.
- Children's development is complex. It is impacted by individual, family, community and broader societal factors.
- Parents know what is best for their children.
- Parents do the best they can for their children within their context and circumstances.
- Parents and community residents are the most effective leaders in local change.

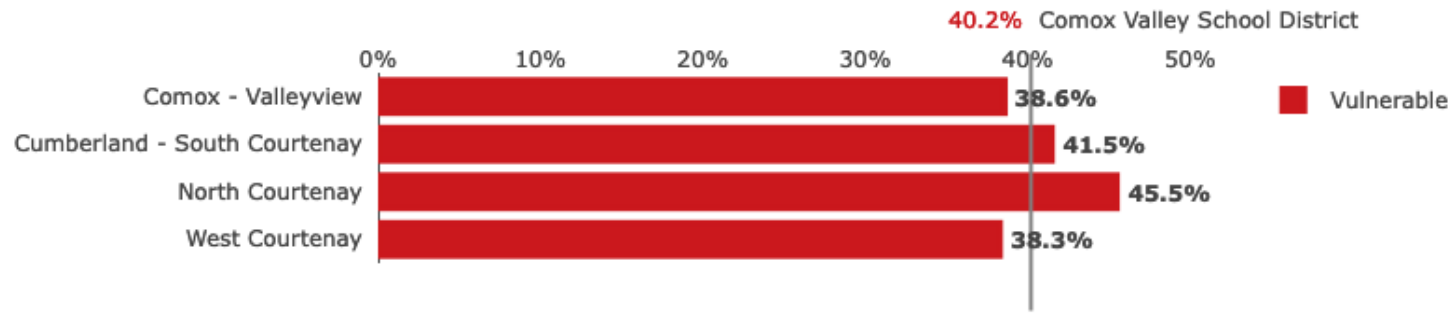
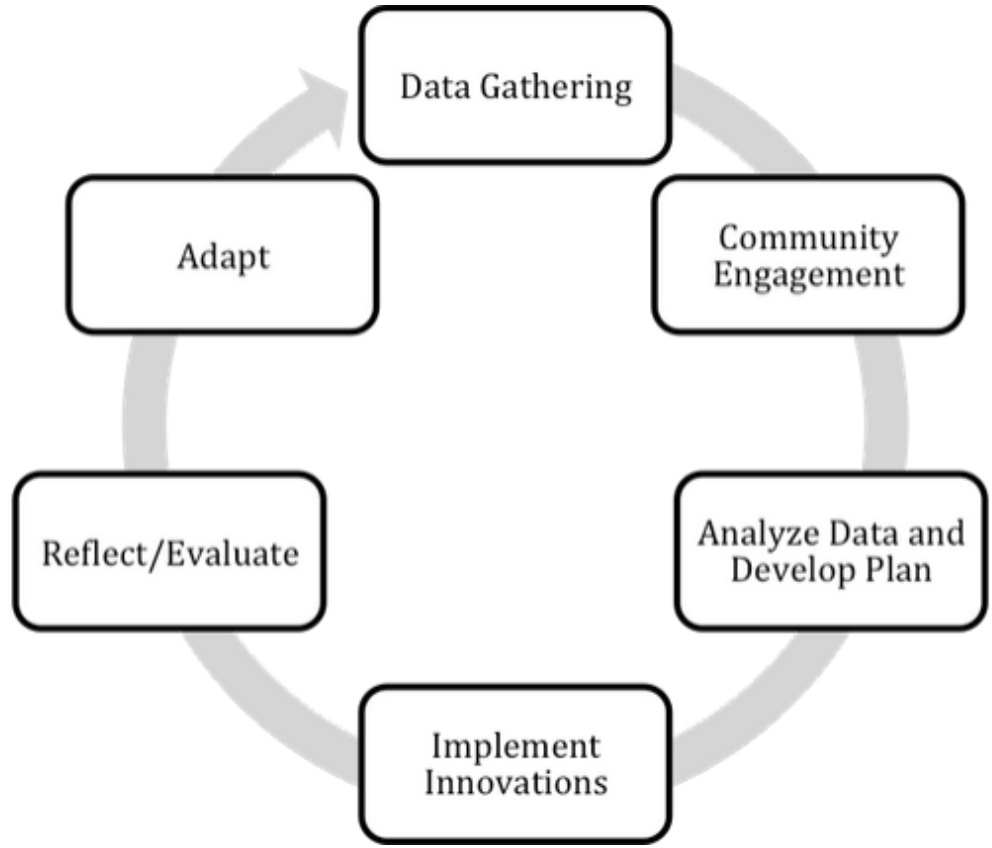
## **COMOX VALLEY SOCIAL INNOVATION LABS**

To increase child health and well-being in Comox Valley neighbourhoods, we aim to:

- build on strengths,
- determine needs, and
- address barriers.



# The Process





TIMELINE OF

# BUILDING CONNECTIONS

- SUMMER 2019**

Steering Committee meetings are held to determine focus and scope of work; **strength-based approach** confirmed
- FALL 2019**

Project begins with a focus on reaching **North Comox Valley** parents: Parent-caregiver survey distributed through SD71
- WINTER 2020**

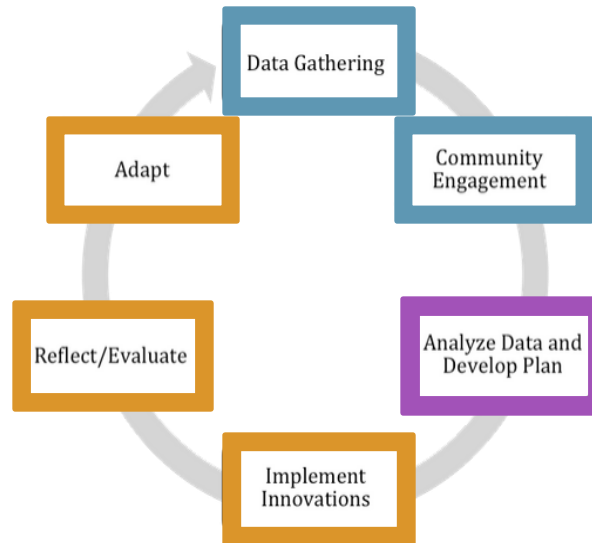
**North Comox Valley:** In-Person focus groups
- SPRING 2020**

**North Comox Valley:** Innovation Workshop 1 — Seeing the System
- FALL 2020**

**North Comox Valley:** Innovation Workshop 2 – Designing Innovations  
**Project Expansion:** Parent-caregiver survey Version 2 distributed through SD71, with focus on reaching other 3 neighbourhoods
- WINTER – SPRING 2021**

**North Comox Valley:** Innovations planned and developed  
**Project Expansion:** Virtual focus groups, focus on connecting with parents in South Comox Valley, as well as Courtenay & Comox

*Building Connections* started in 2019 in the North Comox Valley, and continued through the other 3 EDI neighbourhoods in order of EDI vulnerability: South Comox Valley, Courtenay & Comox.



- SUMMER 2021**

**North Comox Valley:** Innovations established and piloted
- FALL 2021**

**Project Expansion:** Community engagement and partnership development continues
- WINTER 2022**

**North Comox Valley:** Innovations continue to grow; first evaluations of pilot project  
**South Comox Valley:** Conversation Circles and additional community engagement
- SUMMER - FALL 2022**

**Courtenay & Comox:** Community engagement and data gathering continues; attend programs to meet with parents  
**South Comox Valley:** Innovation Workshop - Designing Innovations
- WINTER 2023**

**South Comox Valley:** Innovations established and piloted
- SPRING 2023**

**Courtenay & Comox:** Innovation Workshop - Designing Innovations  
 Final reporting and long-term planning to maintain and sustain innovations

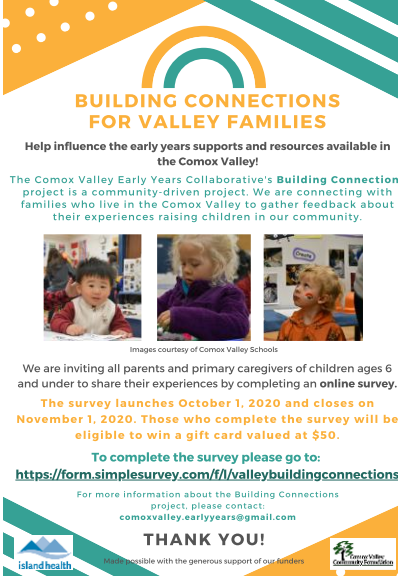
# Phase 1: Data Gathering & Community Engagement

# Data Gathering & Community Engagement

In each EDI neighbourhood we gathered data from parents & community members through surveys & focus groups about families' experiences raising children in their communities.

We heard from over **300 parents** through our online surveys.

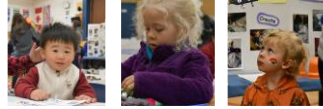
We connected with over **120 parents** at focus groups and community events.



**BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR VALLEY FAMILIES**

Help influence the early years supports and resources available in the Comox Valley!

The Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative's Building Connections project is a community-driven project. We are connecting with families who live in the Comox Valley to gather feedback about their experiences raising children in our community.



Images courtesy of Comox Valley Schools

We are inviting all parents and primary caregivers of children ages 6 and under to share their experiences by completing an online survey.


The survey launches October 1, 2020 and closes on November 1, 2020. Those who complete the survey will be eligible to win a gift card valued at \$50.

To complete the survey please go to: <https://form.simplesurvey.com/#!/valleybuildingconnections>

For more information about the Building Connections project, please contact [comoxvalley.earlyyears@gmail.com](mailto:comoxvalley.earlyyears@gmail.com)

**THANK YOU!**

island health | Made possible with the generous support of our funders | Comox Valley Community Foundation



**BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR VALLEY FAMILIES**

WANT TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE RAISING CHILDREN IN THE COMOX VALLEY?


The Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative is hosting virtual conversations for parents with children ages 6 and under. We will be gathering ideas about how we as a community can help improve early childhood well-being for children in the Comox Valley.

Thursday, Jan 14 7pm- 8pm  
OR  
Saturday, Jan 16 10am-11am

On Zoom

Participants will receive a \$25 gift card!

For more information or to RSVP for Zoom link, please email: [comoxvalley.earlyyears@gmail.com](mailto:comoxvalley.earlyyears@gmail.com)



**TEDDY BEAR PICNIC PLAY SERIES**

FREE drop-in mornings of play for children 0 to 6 years and their caregivers!

Bring your favourite stuffy, picnic blanket and water bottle and join us for a morning of fun, fresh air, and child friendly activities!

**JULY 12TH, 10:30 TO 1PM  
GARDENS ON ANDERTON**

**JULY 20TH, 9:30 TO NOON  
DOVE CREEK HALL**

**JULY 28TH, 9:30 TO NOON  
BLACK CREEK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

SUPPORTED BY

**THE BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR VALLEY FAMILIES PROJECT**

An initiative of the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative: [www.eveyc.ca](http://www.eveyc.ca)  
Facebook: The Building Connections Project  
Email: [comoxvalley.connections@gmail.com](mailto:comoxvalley.connections@gmail.com)



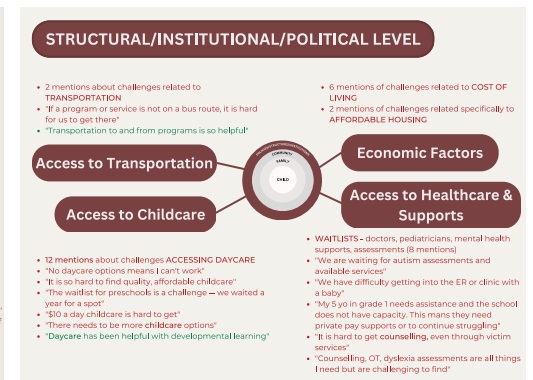
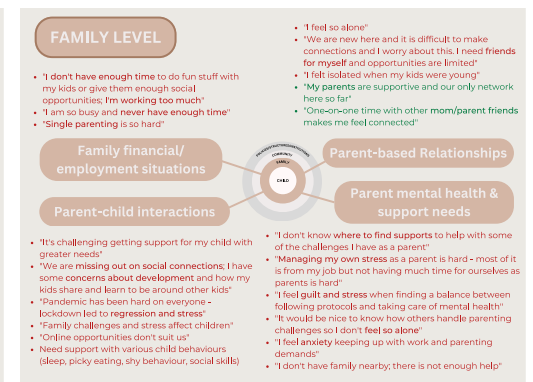
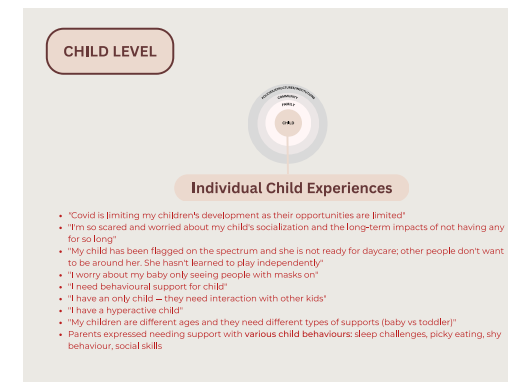
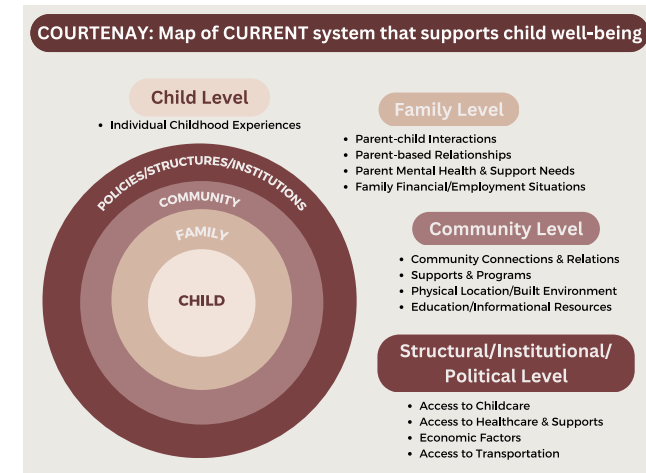
## **Phase 2: Data Analysis & Plan Development**

# Data Analysis & Plan Development

In each EDI neighbourhood we organized data into **data maps**, which showed us the **system that currently supports local children**, and a vision of a **future, better system** for each neighbourhood.

We hosted **innovation planning workshops** using these maps to guide our planning.

We connected with over **65 community stakeholders, service providers, and parents** at our innovation workshops.



# **Phase 3: Implement & Evaluate Innovations**

# Implement & Evaluate Innovations

We have *developed and established* innovations in two of our EDI neighbourhoods:

## North Comox Valley

- 1: Local community drop-in programs
- 2: Family Connector role

We have *begun to develop* innovations in our other two EDI neighbourhoods:

## Courtenay

- 1: Weekly Neighbourhood House Program
- 2: Expand Valley Child website

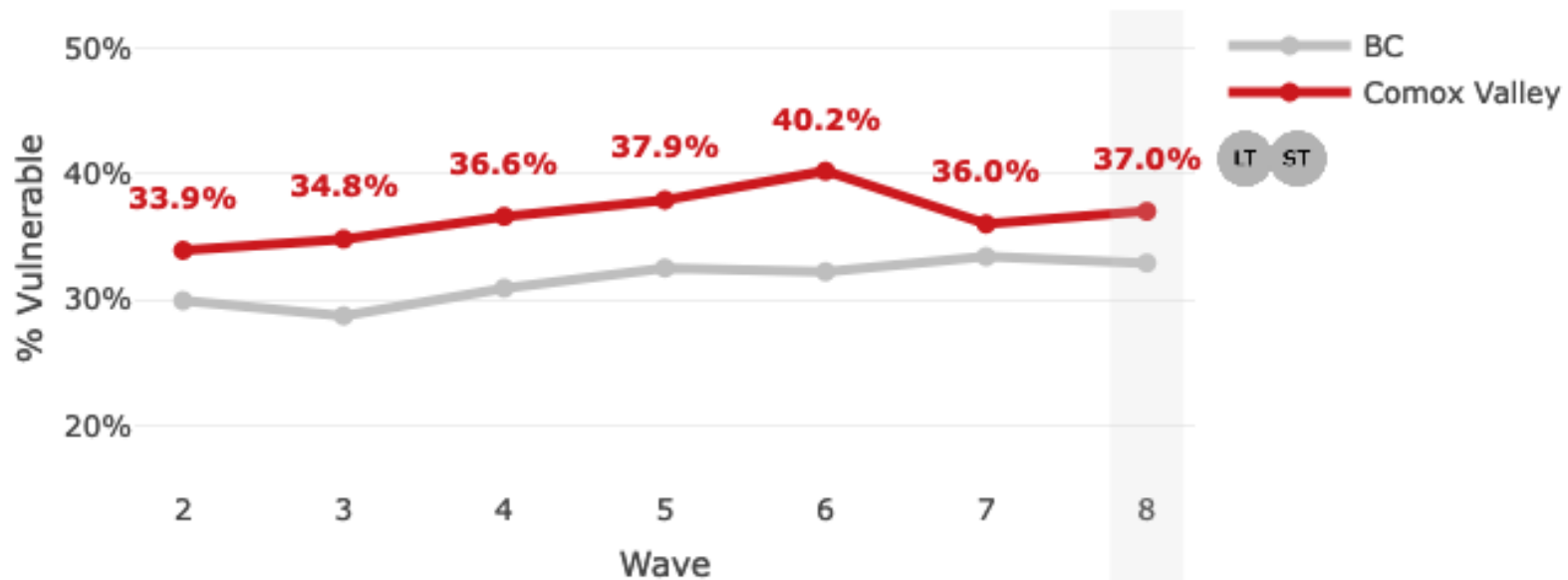
## South Comox Valley

- 1: Cumberland Early Years Collaborative
- 2: Family Connector role

## Comox

- 1: Increase intergenerational connectedness
- 2: Host series of short, accessible, special interest workshops

# What does success look like?





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*The Vancouver Foundation's  
Robert and Florence Filberg  
Fund for Medical (Health)  
Research*



*Island Health Community  
Wellness Grant*



*Comox Valley Regional  
District Rural Community  
Grant*



# Our Team

## STEERING COMMITTEE

**Jacquie Anderson**, SD71 Early Learning

**Susan Bullock**, CVRD Manager of Recreation Programs

**Michelle Carty**, PacificCare CCRR

**Vivian Collyer**, SD71 Director of Instruction

**Colleen Friendship**, Early Years Advocate

**Michelle Guthrie**, CVFSA Healthy Families Program Manager

**Lisa Pedersen-Skene**, SD71 District Principal Early Learning & Childcare

**Natalie Robinson**, Today N Tomorrow Learning Society Executive Director

**Sarah Shelin**, CVCDA Early Years Wellness Program Manager

**Betty Tate**, CV Community Health Network & CV Social Planning

**Allison Trumble**, VIRL Librarian

**Kristin Weinzierl**, MCFD Child & Youth Mental Health

**Cindy Xavier**, CVCDA Executive Director

## RESEARCH SUPPORT

**Joanne Schroeder**, UBC Human Early Learning Partnership

## PROJECT TEAM

**Alison Bruderer**, Coordinator, Building Connections Project

**Darcie Emerson**, Family Connector, Building Connections Project

**Jessie Gill**, Coordinator, CV Early Years Collaborative

**Simone Sando**, Family Connector, Building Connections Project

# Extra Slides

# North Comox Valley Innovations

## INNOVATIONS OFFER CONNECTION POINTS

Primary reason that motivates parents/caregivers to attend is *relational*

### 1. Create **community drop-in programs** within the North Comox Valley

- Allows families to meet their neighbors for easier connections outside program times
- Programs are as low barrier as possible
- Gives families a space to gather informally

### 2. Create a **Family Connector** role enriches the programs in several ways

- Looks for further ways to connect families
- Acts as a listening ear to parenting challenges
- Provides a link between family services & resources, and refers if necessary



# South Comox Valley Innovations

## INNOVATIONS OFFER CONNECTION POINTS



### 1. Create a Cumberland Early Years Collaborative

- Priority #1: To gather a variety of Cumberland community members together for **connection & information sharing**
- Priority #2: To establish a shared commitment to supporting early years families in Cumberland



### 2. Create a South Comox Valley Family Connector role

- Looks for further ways to connect families in Royston, Union Bay, Fanny Bay
- Focuses on relationship building within & among families in the community
- Aims to build partnerships with local service organizations and community boards
- Organizes drop-in events with partner organizations (including Healthy Families Program) for South Comox Valley families