

# Early Years Conference 2024


HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP



**Pre-Conference**



HELP was founded as a research centre dedicated to exploring “**the differences that make a difference**” in children’s early development.




HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP






# Early Years Matter

Early Child Development:  
*A Powerful Equalizer*  
Final Report



Prepared by  
Dr. Lori G. Irwin  
Dr. Arjumand Siddiqi  
Dr. Clyde Hertzman





ASC  
20<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION

# Early Years Conference 2024



HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP



**Pre-Conference**

## ● BC Early Years Data Trends

Dr. Mariana Brussoni, Director  
Dr. Barry Forer, Research Associate

# Contexts Influencing Child Development

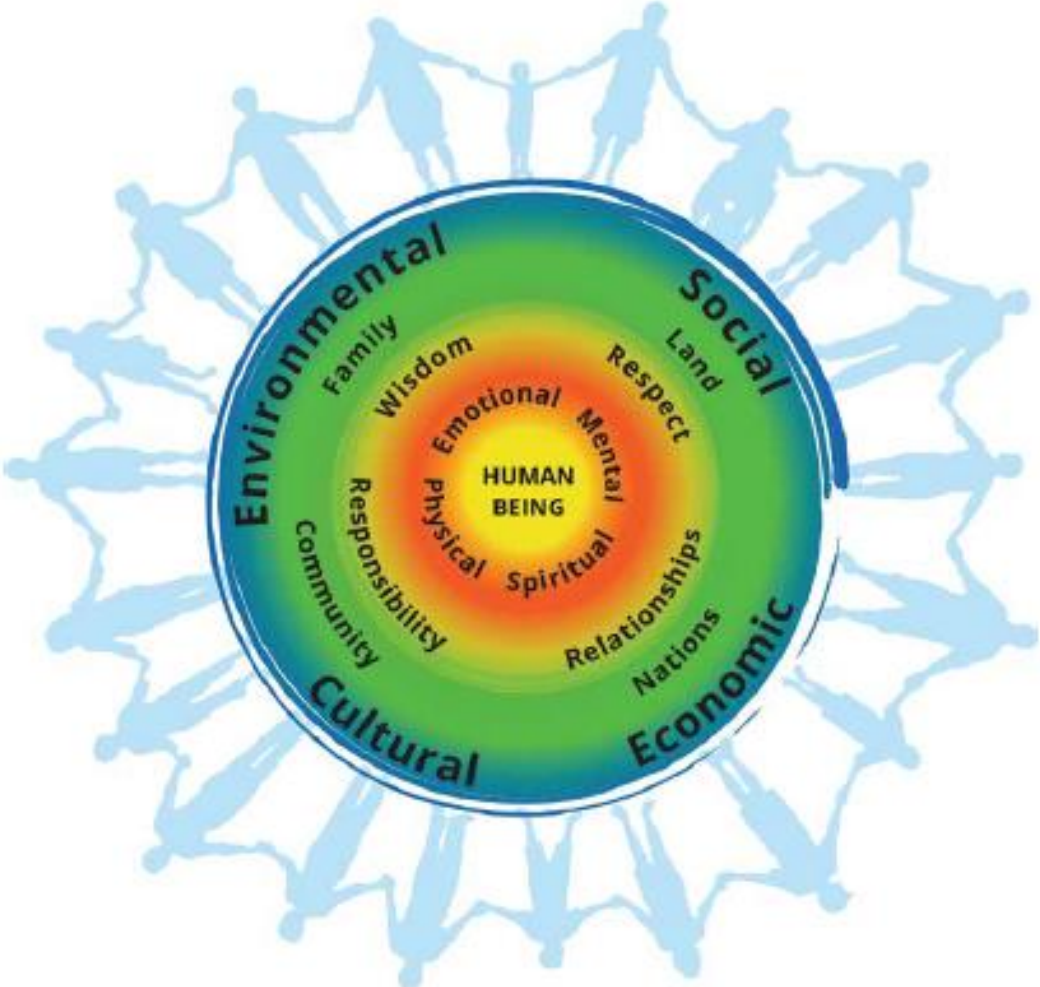
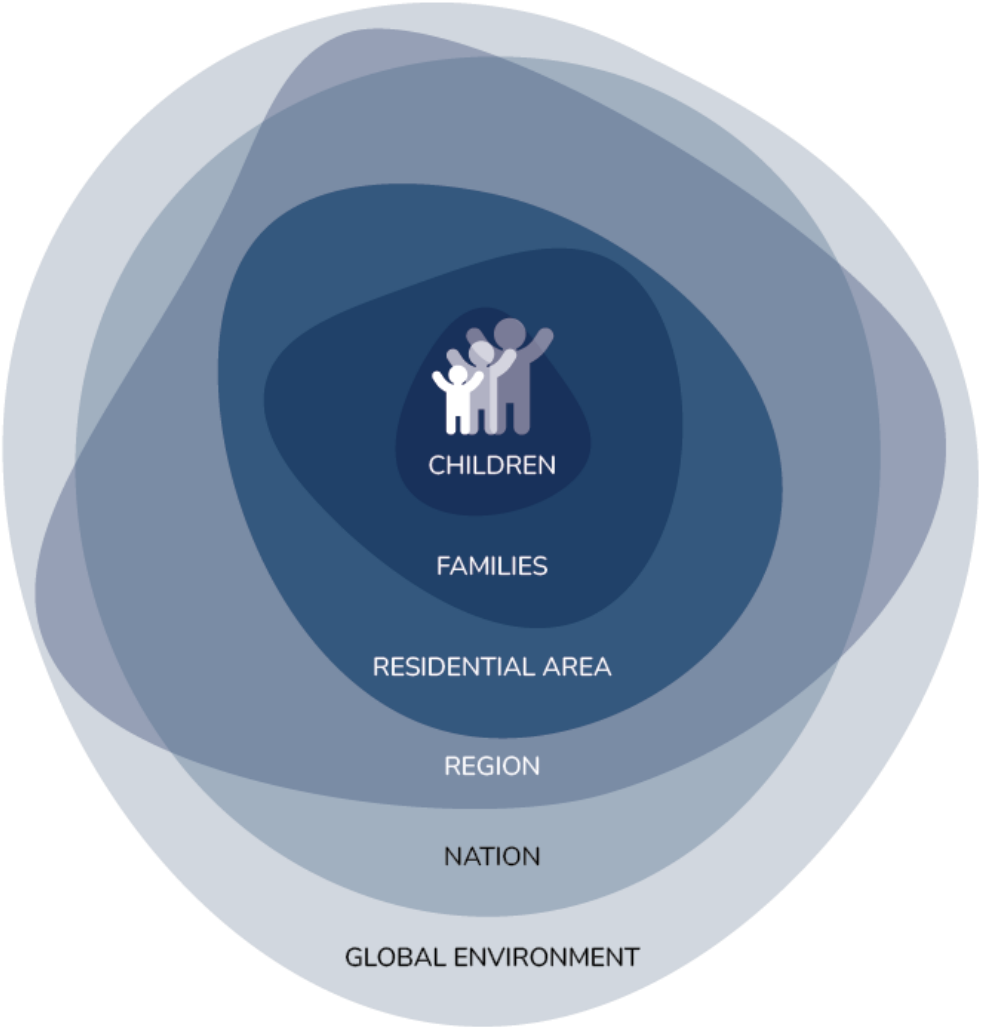
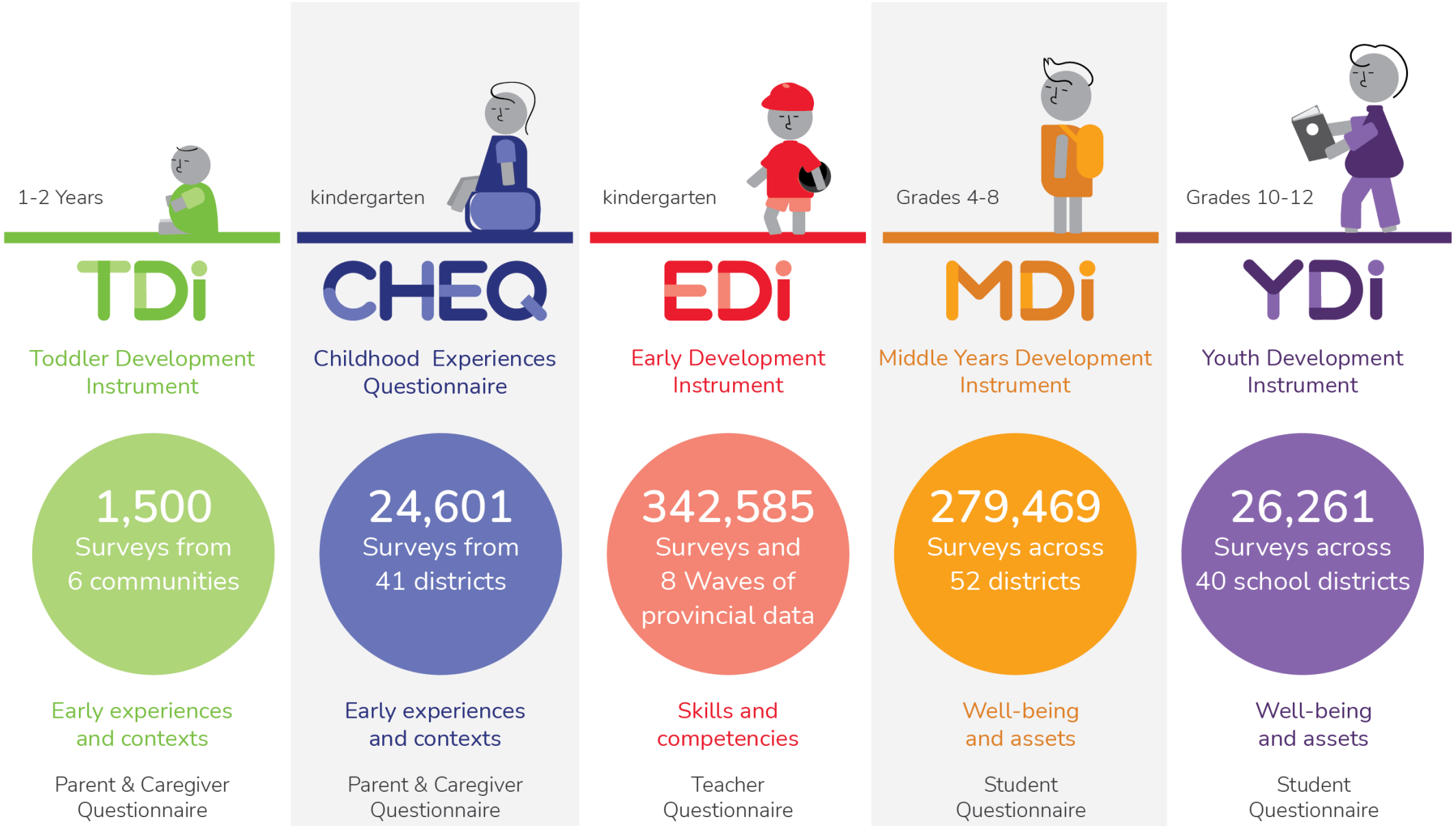
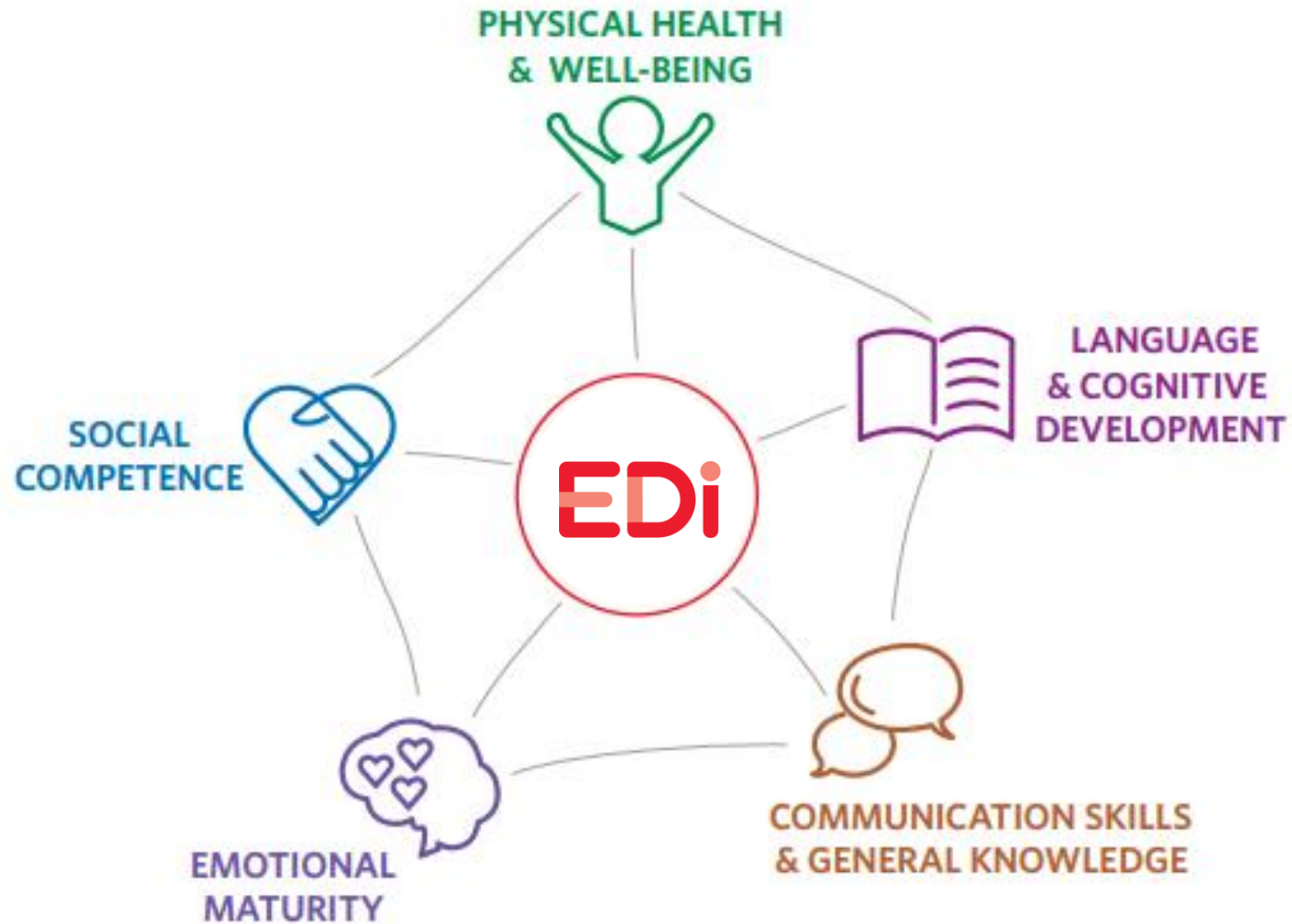


FIGURE 1. "THE FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVE ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS" AS DEVELOPED BY THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY.<sup>7</sup>

# Child Development Monitoring System



# Early Development Instrument (EDI)







# National & International Reach

## CANADA



**1,393,531**

Completed EDIs

The EDI information collected for  
five-year-old children in Canada  
since 2004

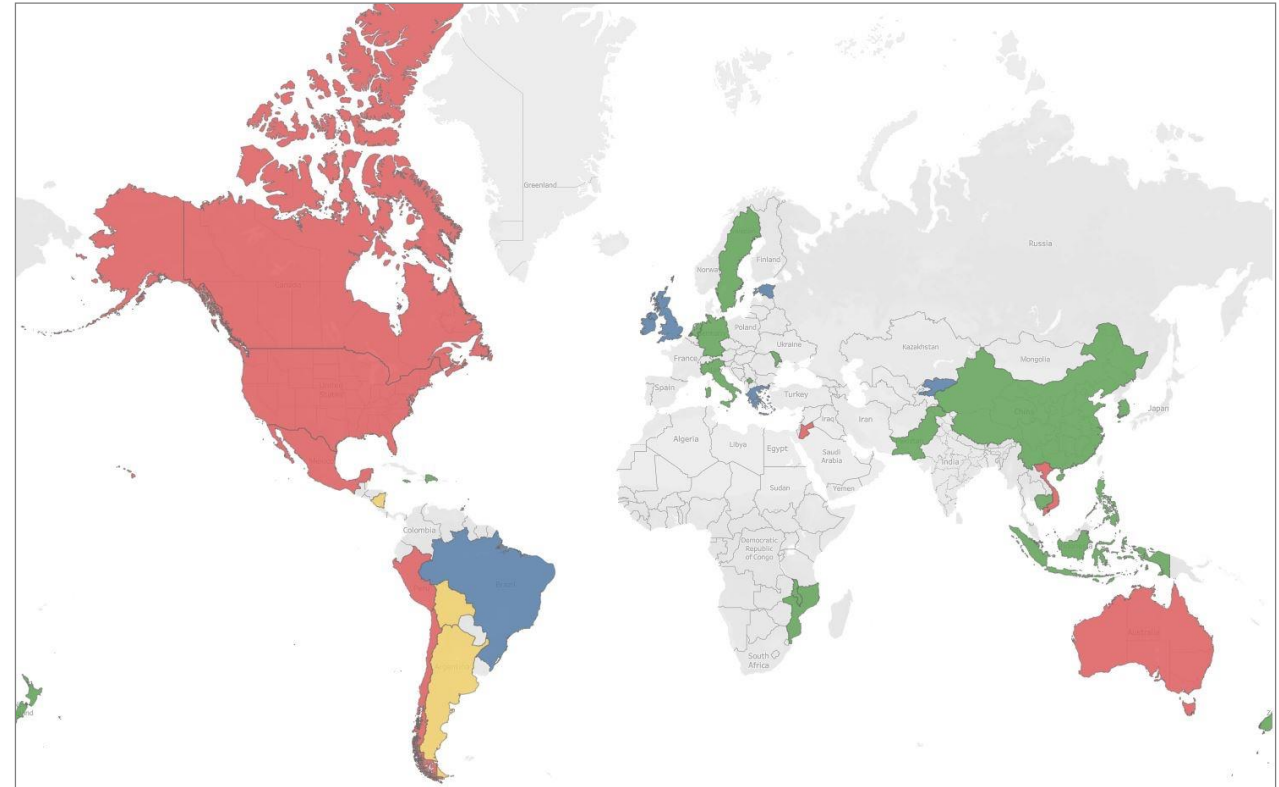


**12 of 13**

Provinces & territories

Canadian provinces and territories  
EDI has been implemented in

## INTERNATIONAL





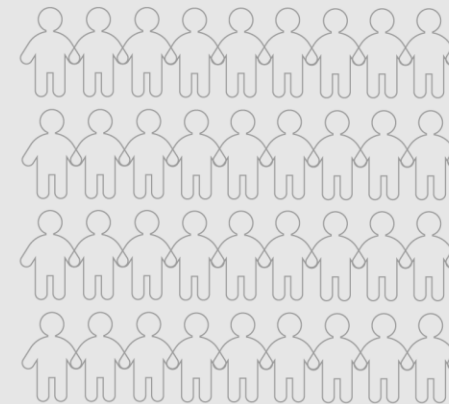
# Data Collection History

WAVES	WAVE YEARS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
EDi data collection period	2-3 year period based on the annual school calendar from September to June	EDi data are collected in February of every school year
W2	2004 SEPT ... 2007 JUN	38,411*
W3	2007 SEPT .. 2009 JUN	38,184
W4	2009 SEPT .. 2011 JUN	46,944
W5	2011 SEPT .. 2013 JUN	42,519
W6	2013 SEPT ... 2016 JUN	43,292
W7	2016 SEPT ... 2019 JUN	43,377
W8	2019 SEPT ... 2022 JUN	41,176
<b>W9</b>	<b>2022 SEPT</b> ... <b>2026 JUN</b>	<b>8,427</b>



TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN, ALL WAVES

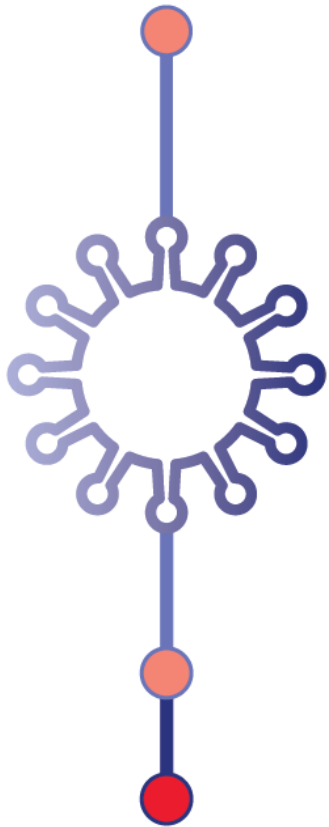
# 342,642



\*Wave 2 is used as HELP's baseline. Wave 1 data (40,312 EDIs) are not publicly reported.



# Wave 8: Data Collection



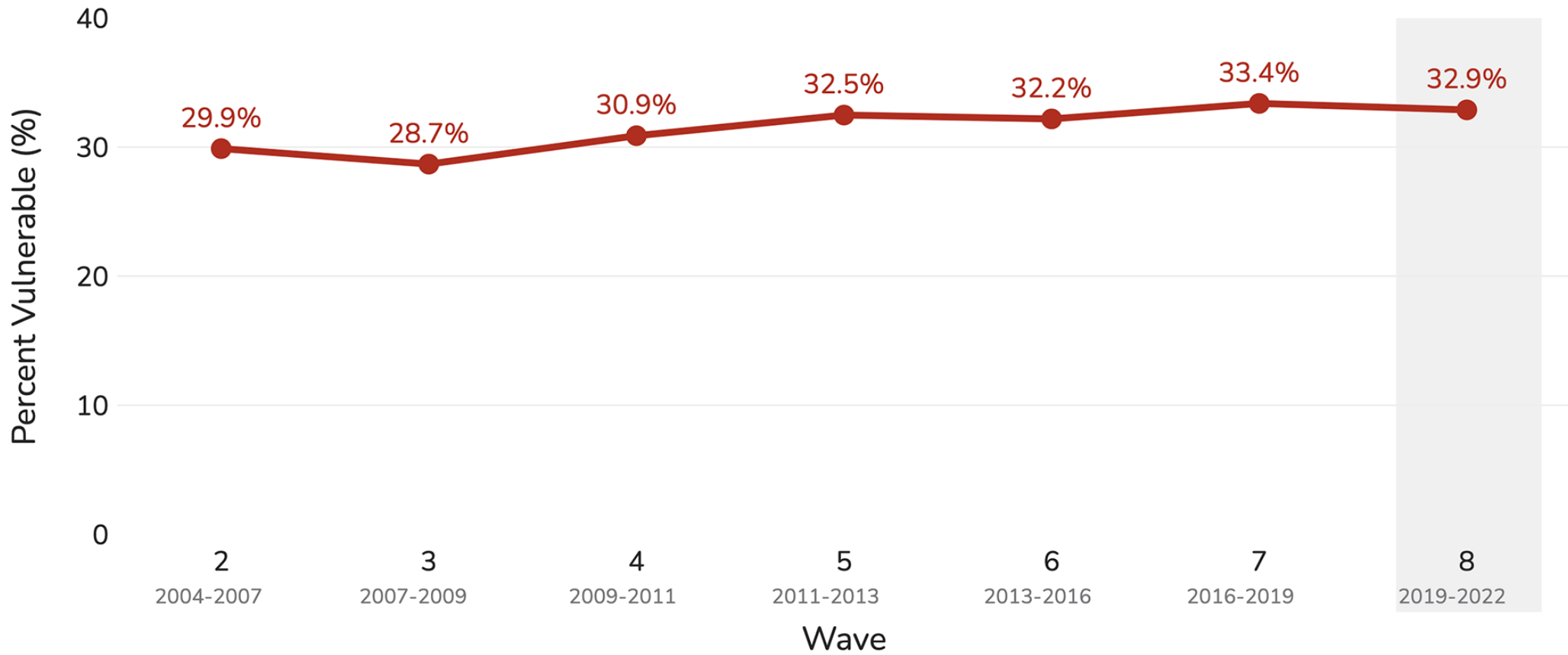
## Wave 8 Data Collection:

Wave	Year	Age of cohort
Year 1	February 2020, pre-pandemic	Born in 2014 – 6 years old when pandemic started
Year 2	February 2021, mid-pandemic	Born in 2015 – 5 years old when pandemic started
Year 3	February 2022, mid-pandemic	Born in 2016 – 4 years old when pandemic started

# BC Overall Vulnerability, Over Time, Wave 2 – Wave 8



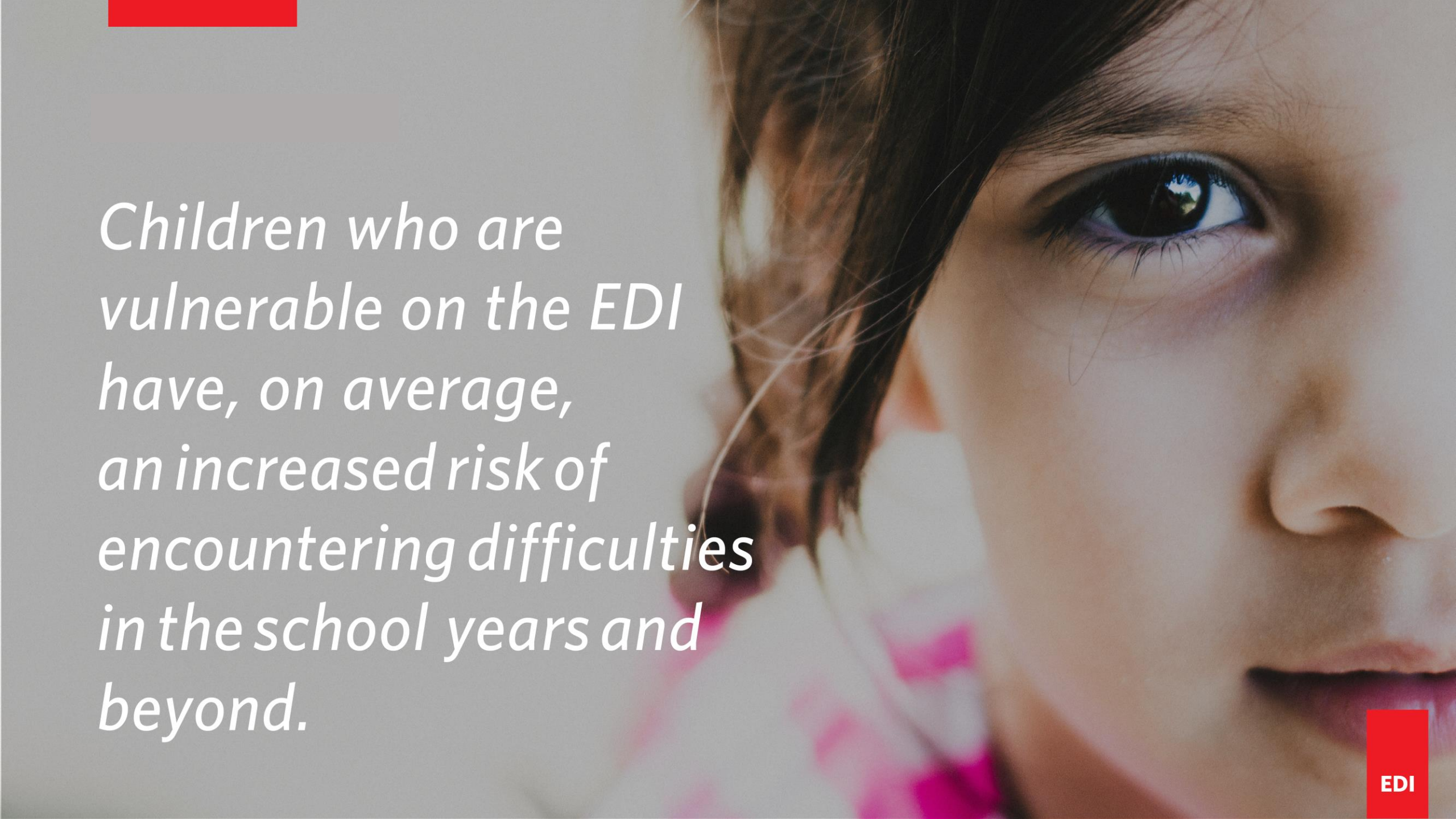
1 IN 3  
CHILDREN  
VULNERABLE  
IN BC



©Human Early Learning Partnership, UBC - 2022

▲ Long-term Trend:  
Meaningful Increase

● Short-term Trend:  
Stable

A close-up photograph of a young girl's face, looking slightly to the right. Her eyes are dark and expressive. She has dark hair with some strands falling over her forehead. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a pink and white patterned garment. In the top left corner, there is a solid red rectangular bar. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, italicized sans-serif font.

*Children who are vulnerable on the EDI have, on average, an increased risk of encountering difficulties in the school years and beyond.*

# ● New Reporting Metrics: EDI Outcomes

## FIVE SCALES OF THE EDI



### Overall Outcomes

The percentage of children *vulnerable*, *in flux*, or *on track* in their overall development across all five scales of the EDI.

### VULNERABLE

on one or more scales.

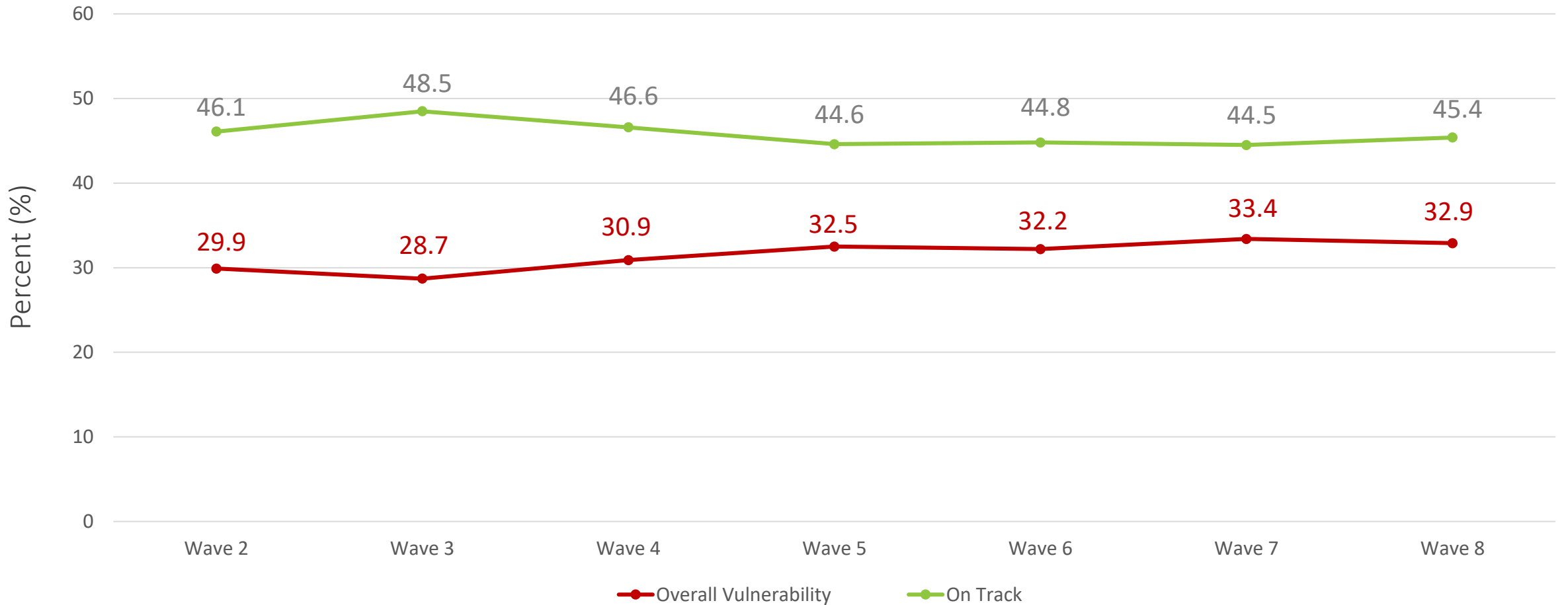
### IN FLUX

Not vulnerable or on track on any scale.

### ON TRACK

on all scales

# BC Overall Outcomes – On Track

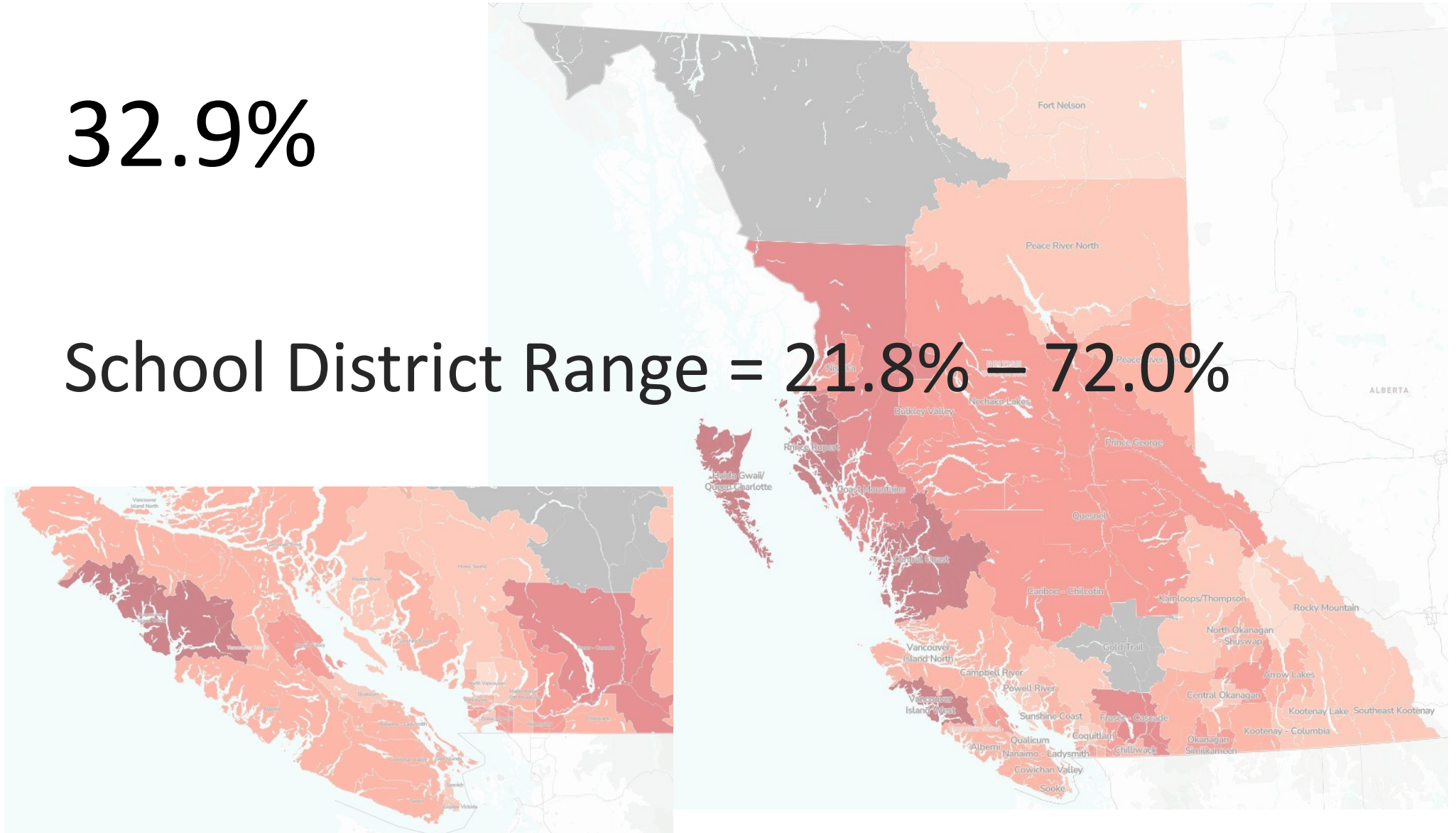


● Overall Vulnerability, BC School Districts: Wave 8



32.9%

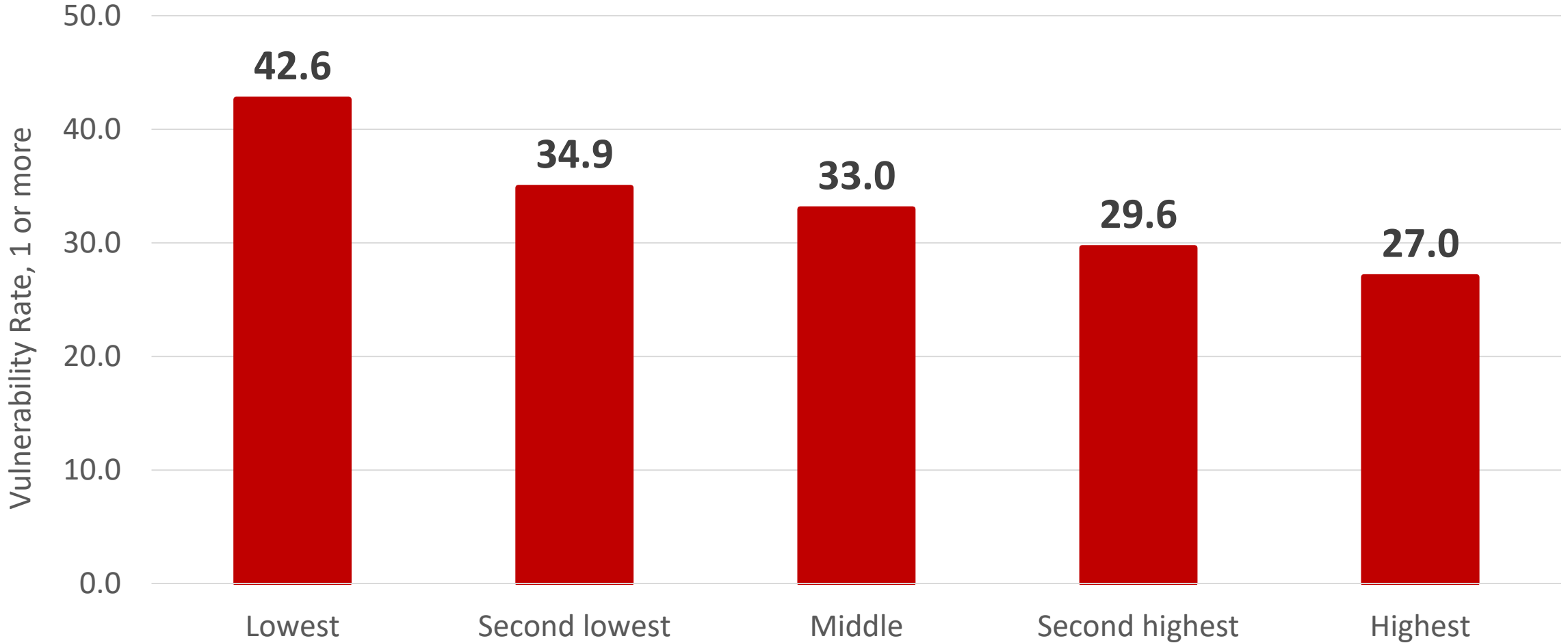
School District Range = 21.8% – 72.0%





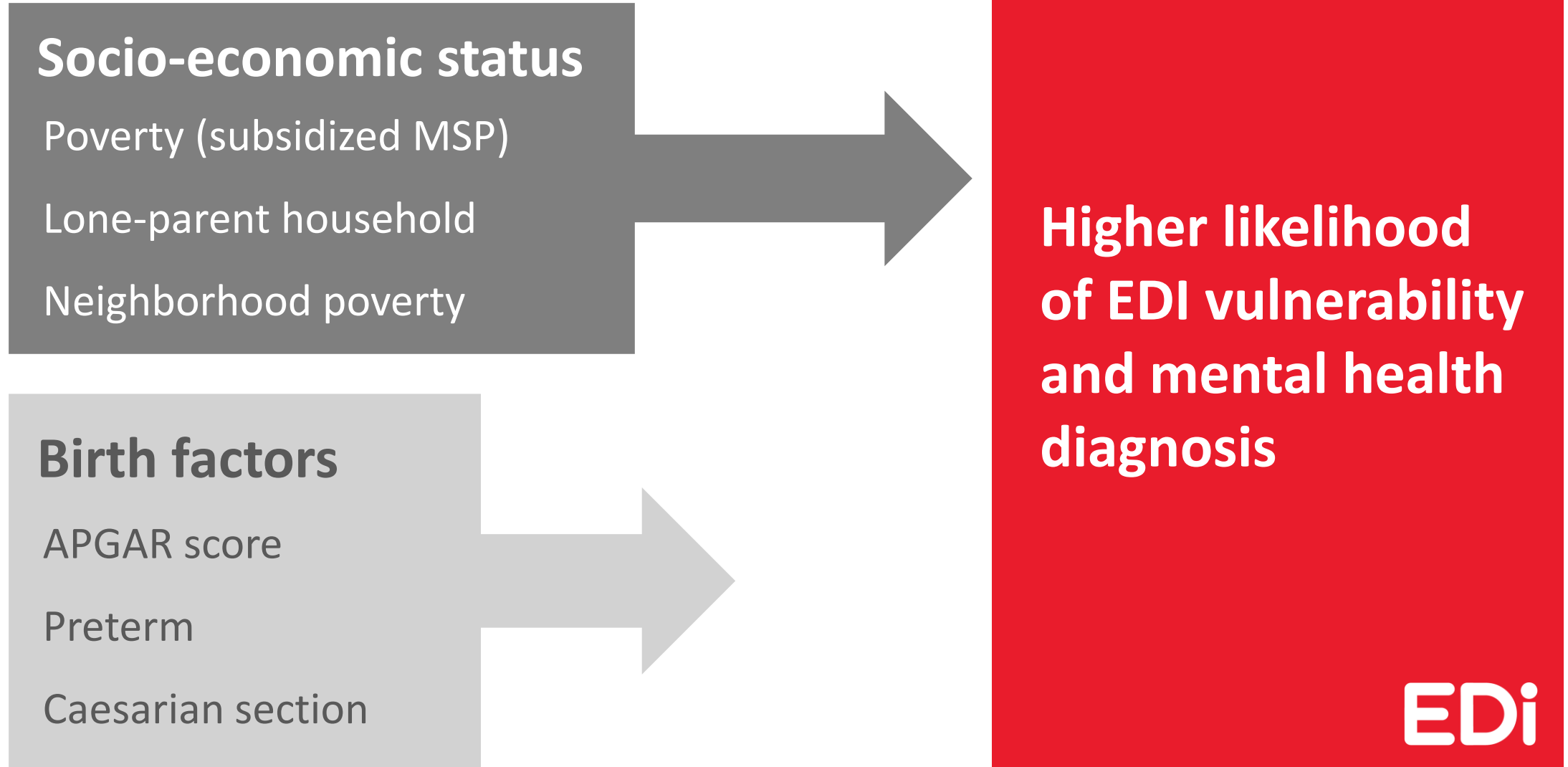


# SES Gradient for Overall Vulnerability, Wave 8





# Linking Birth Factors and SES with Early Emotional Development and Mental Health

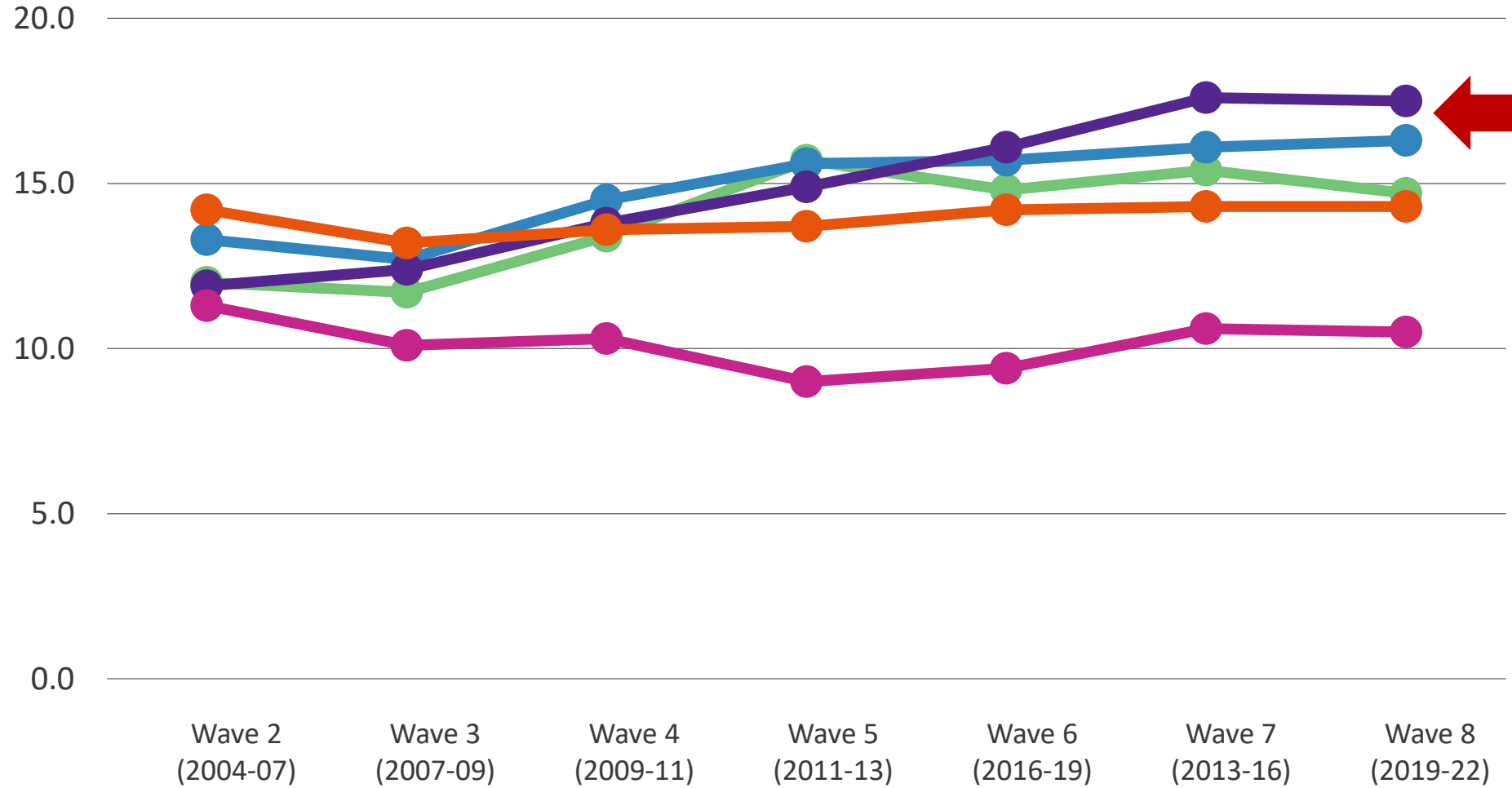




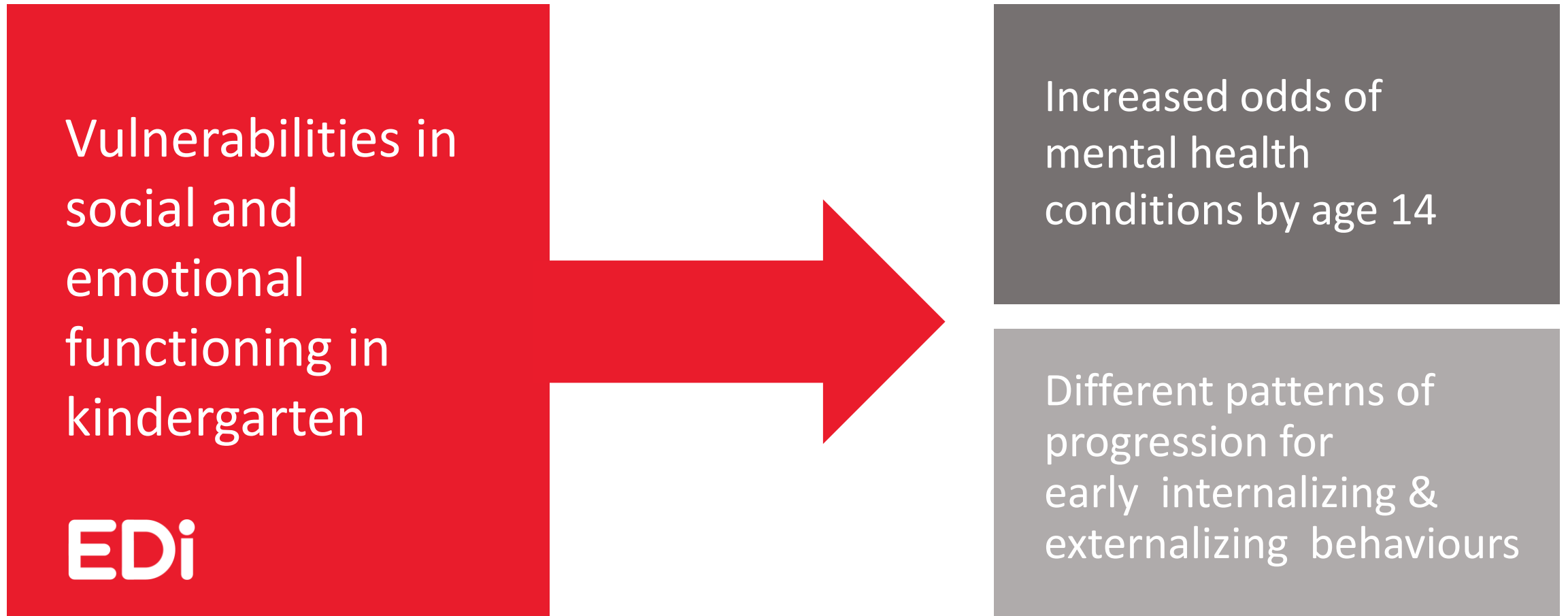
# Scale-level Vulnerability Trends, Wave 2 – Wave 8, Five Scales



- Physical
- Social
- Emotional
- Language
- Communication



# ● Childhood Social-Emotional Functioning Association with Mental Health Conditions



# EDi Wave 8: Summary of Key Findings

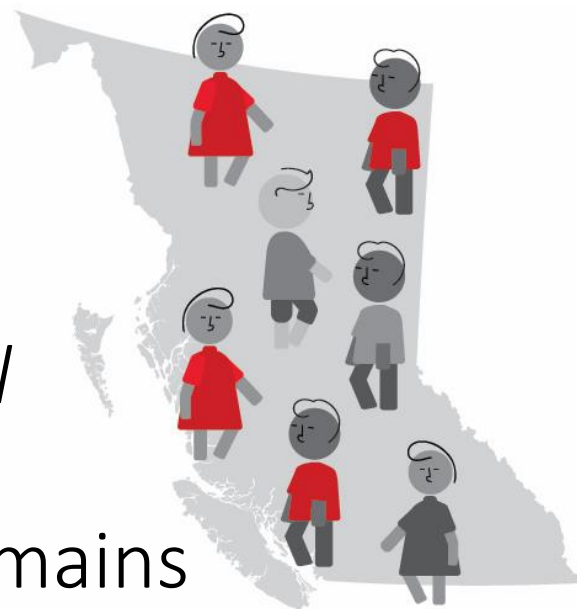


Still 1 in 3



Social Competence  
& Emotional Maturity  
continue as highest concern

Disparity in *Overall Vulnerability* rates  
across province remains



# Possible pandemic-related influences on early child development

## Families had less

- Access to consistent child care
- Social interaction and support outside the immediate household
- Access to programs, supports and services
- Income due to loss of employment

## Families had more

- Stress experienced by parents/caregivers
- Exposure to screen time
- Time spent playing together, eating together





# Wave 9: Data Collection

<b>Wave</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Age of cohort</b>
Year 1	February 2023	Born in 2017 – 3 years old when pandemic started
Year 2	February 2024	Born in 2018 – 2 years old when pandemic started
Year 3	February 2025	Born in 2019 – 1 year old when pandemic started
Year 4	February 2026	Born in 2020 – infants when the pandemic started



# Early Childhood Experiences

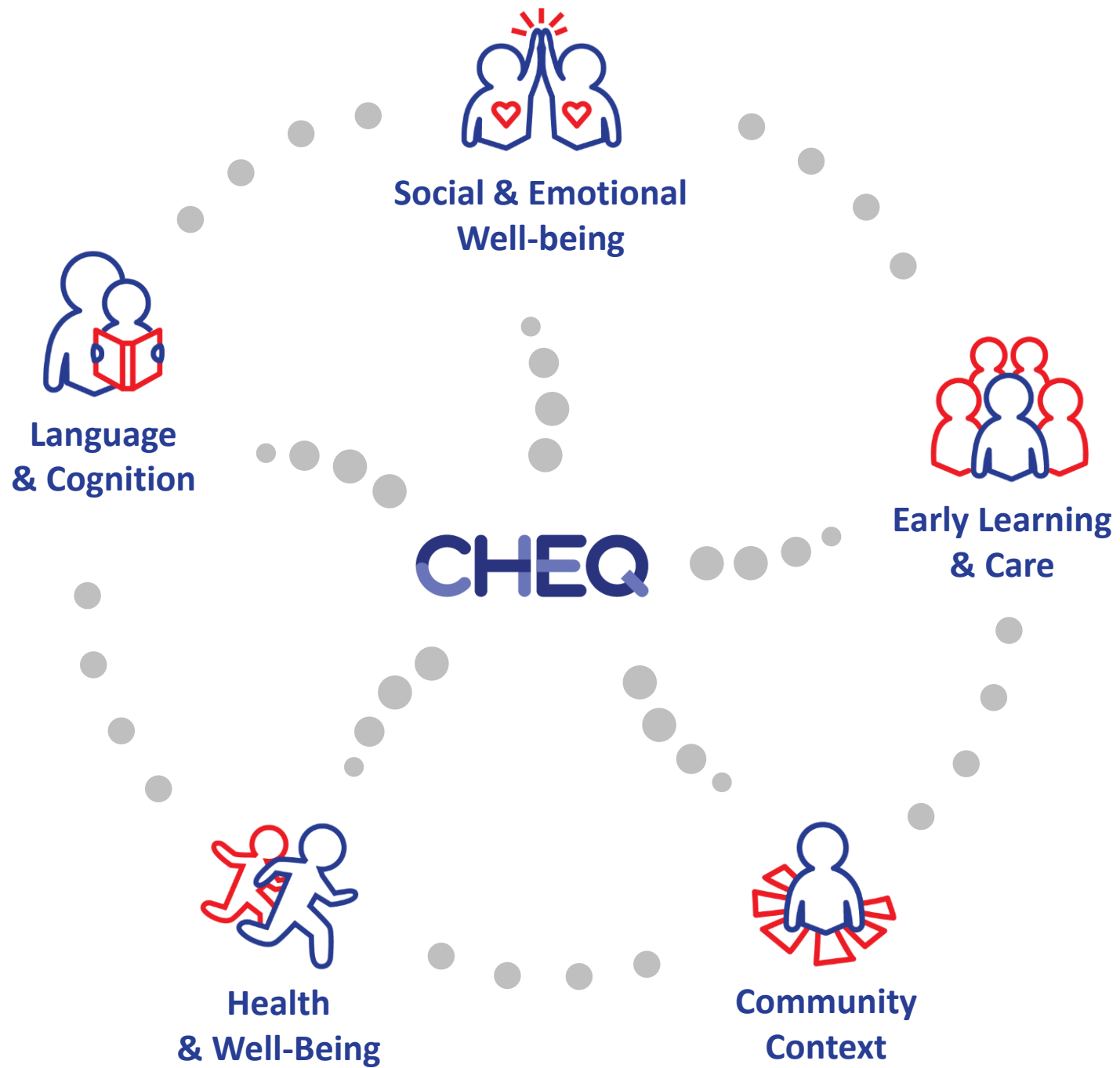
CHEQ



EDi

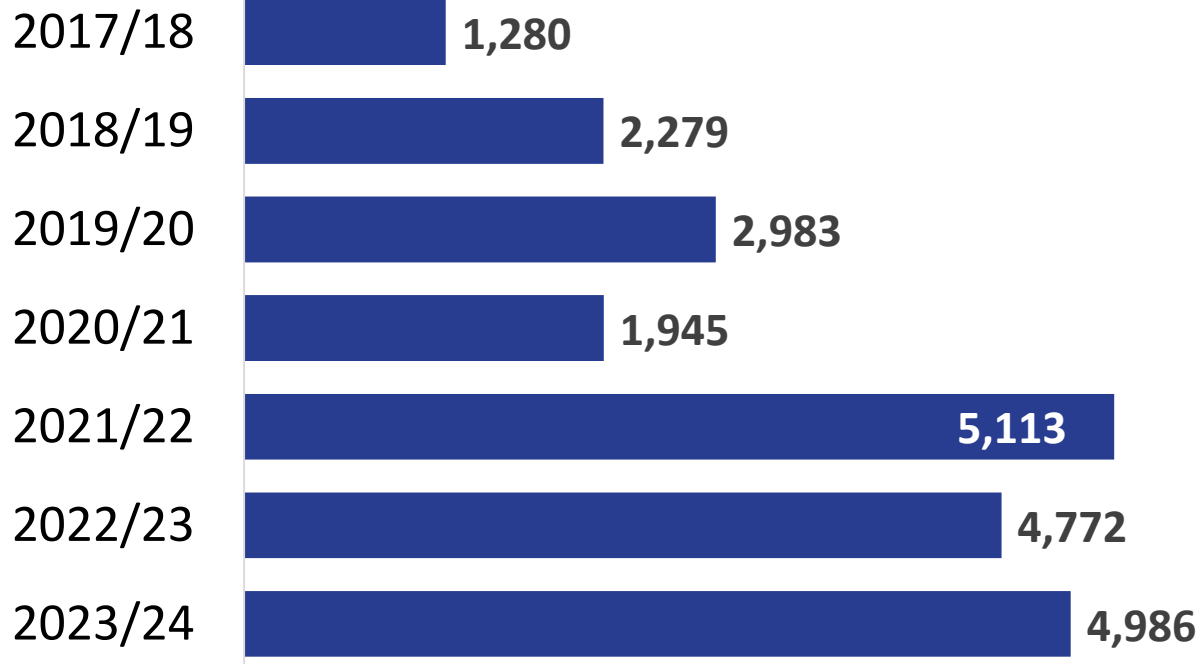


# CHEQ Domains



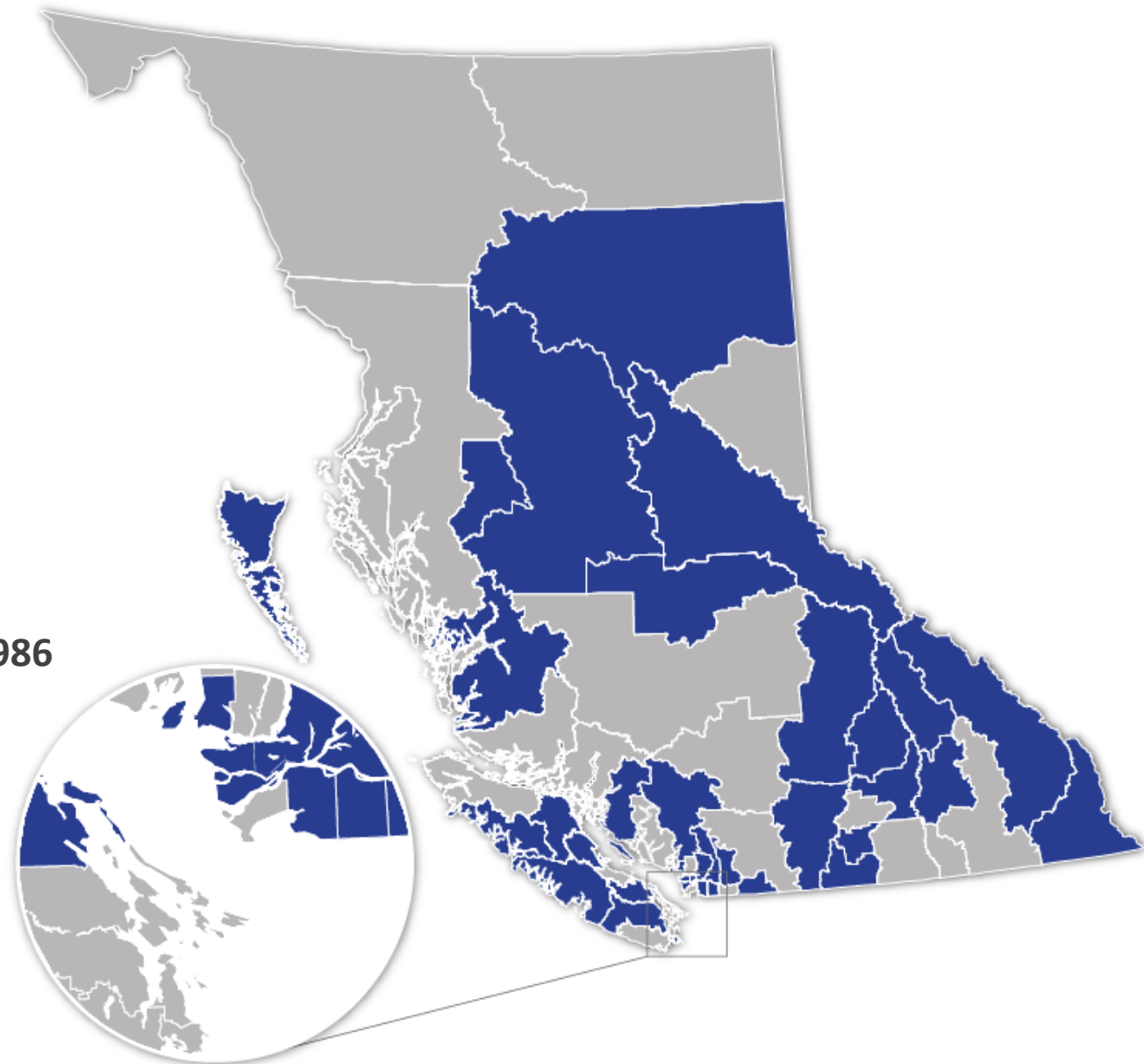


# Participation 2017/2018 – 2023/2024



Total CHEQs completed: **23,358**

2/3 of BC School Districts have participated in the CHEQ to-date



Social  
Determinants  
of Health



Daily  
experiences of  
children and  
families

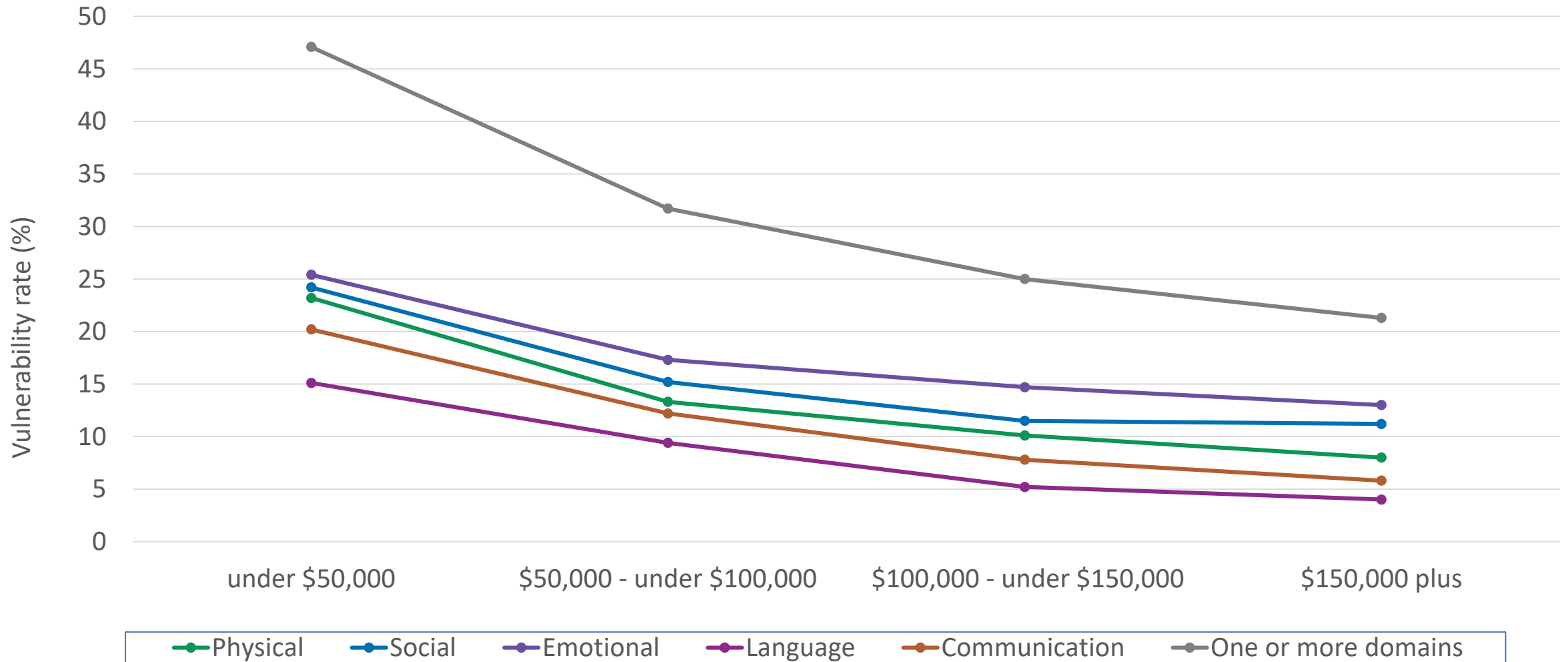


Child  
development

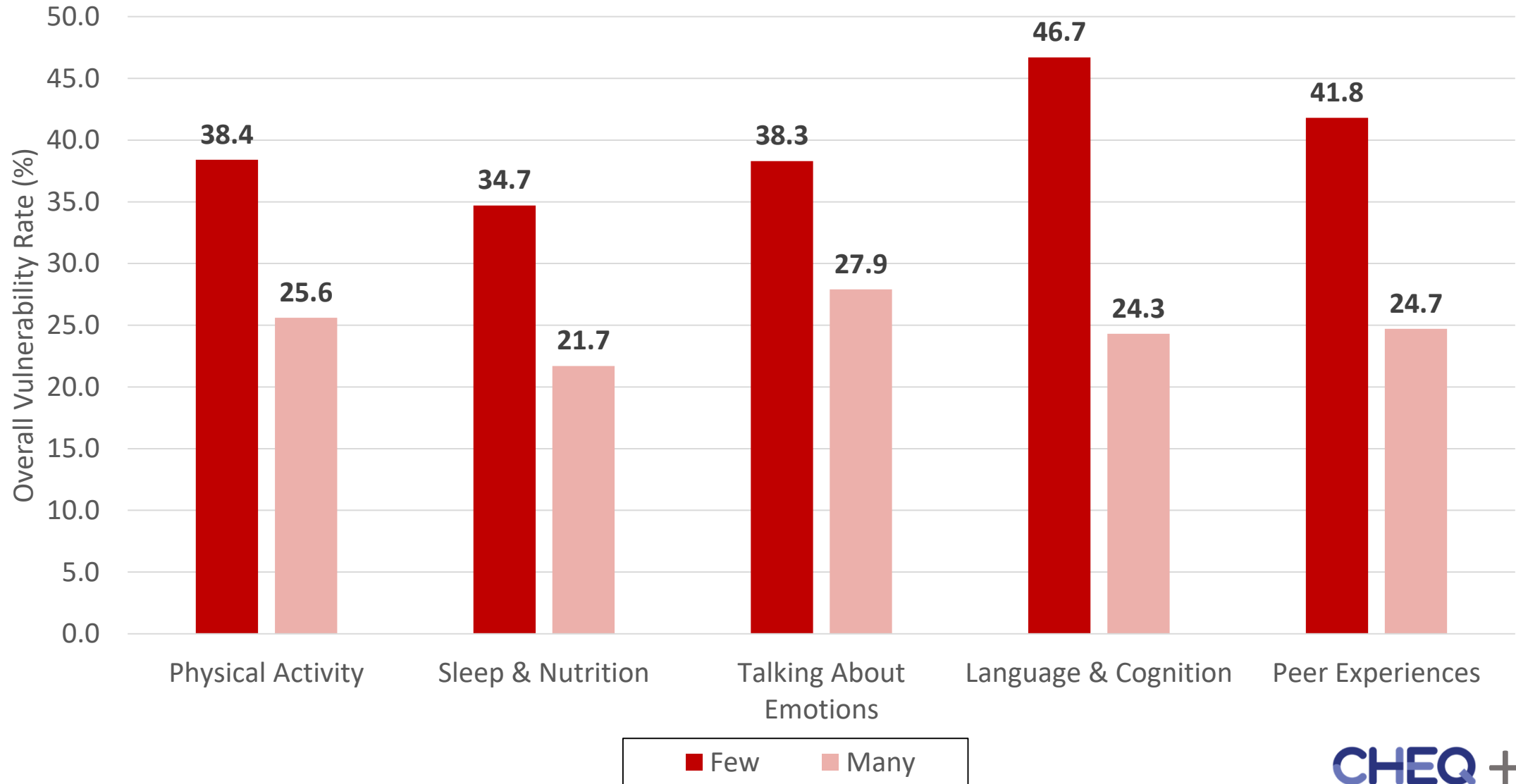
Early Child Development is a social determinant of health...  
impacting lifelong health and well-being



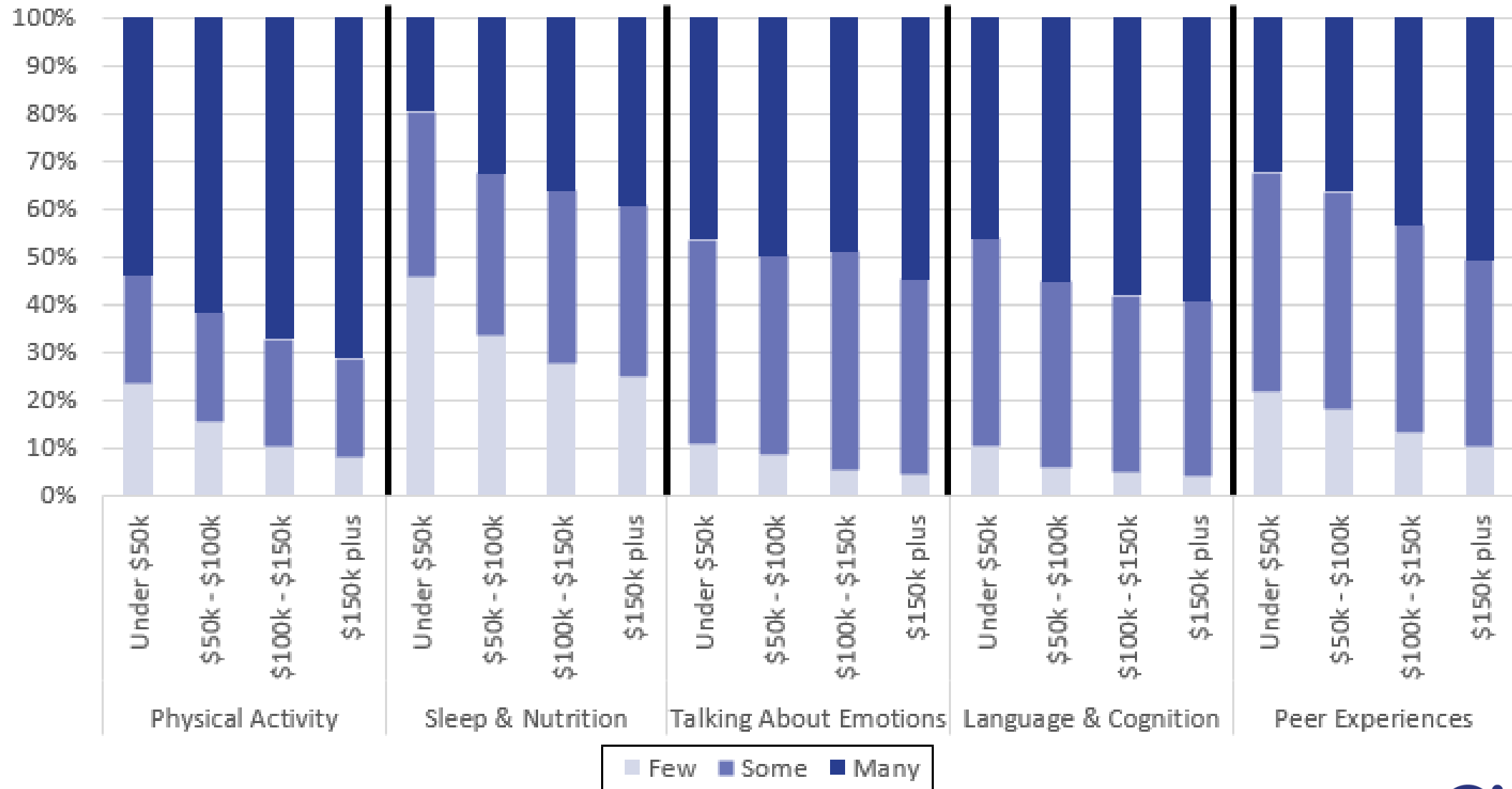
## Gradient for Household Income, All EDI Domains



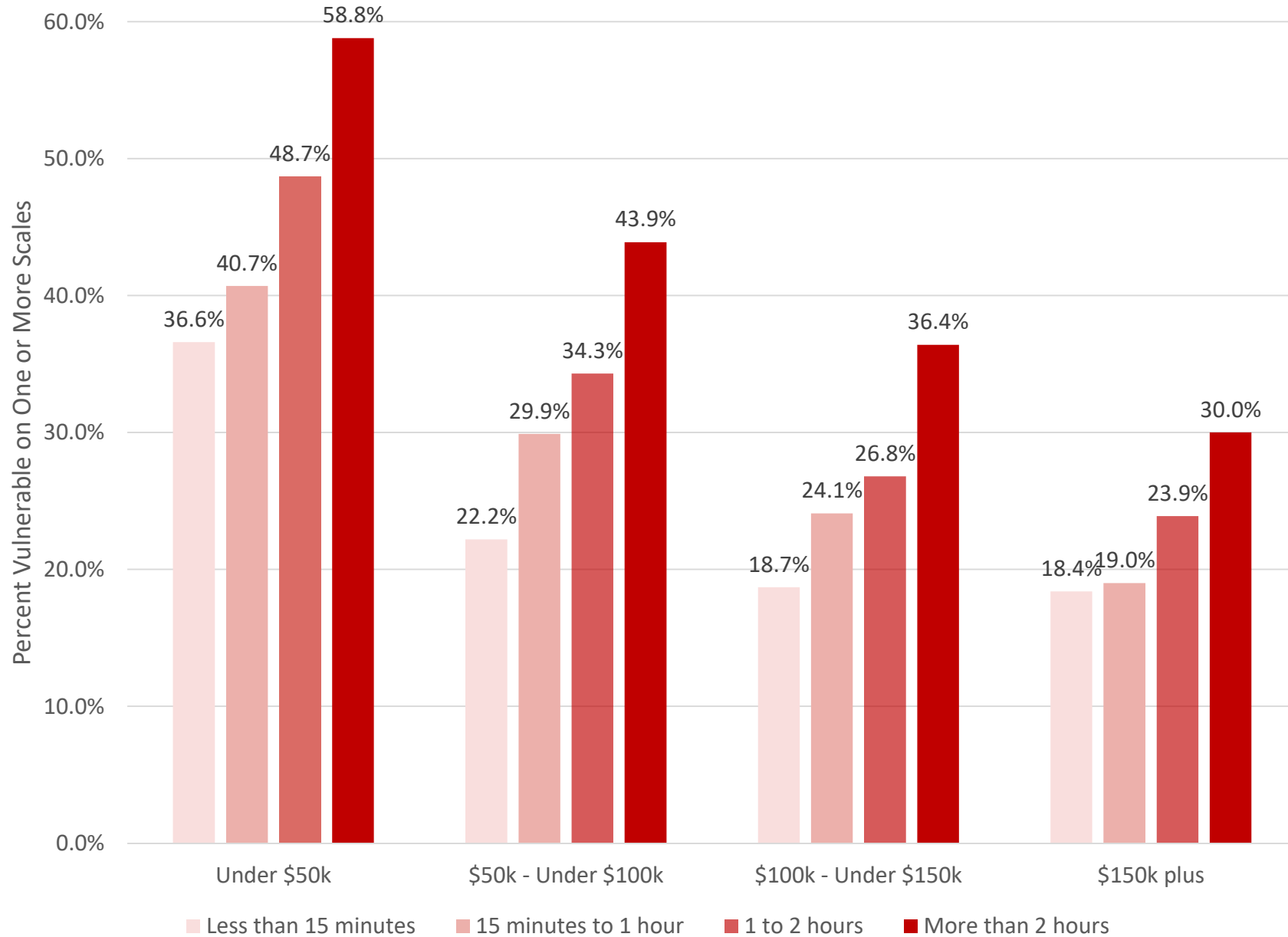
# Overall EDI Vulnerability by Frequency of Experiences, Five Composite Scores



# Frequency of Experiences, Five Composite Scores, by Household Income



# Overall Vulnerability by Screentime and Household Income



# CHEQ

## BC Project Level Data

### 2019-2023



CHEQ

THE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES QUESTIONNAIRE

BC SUMMARY REPORT  
2023

HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP



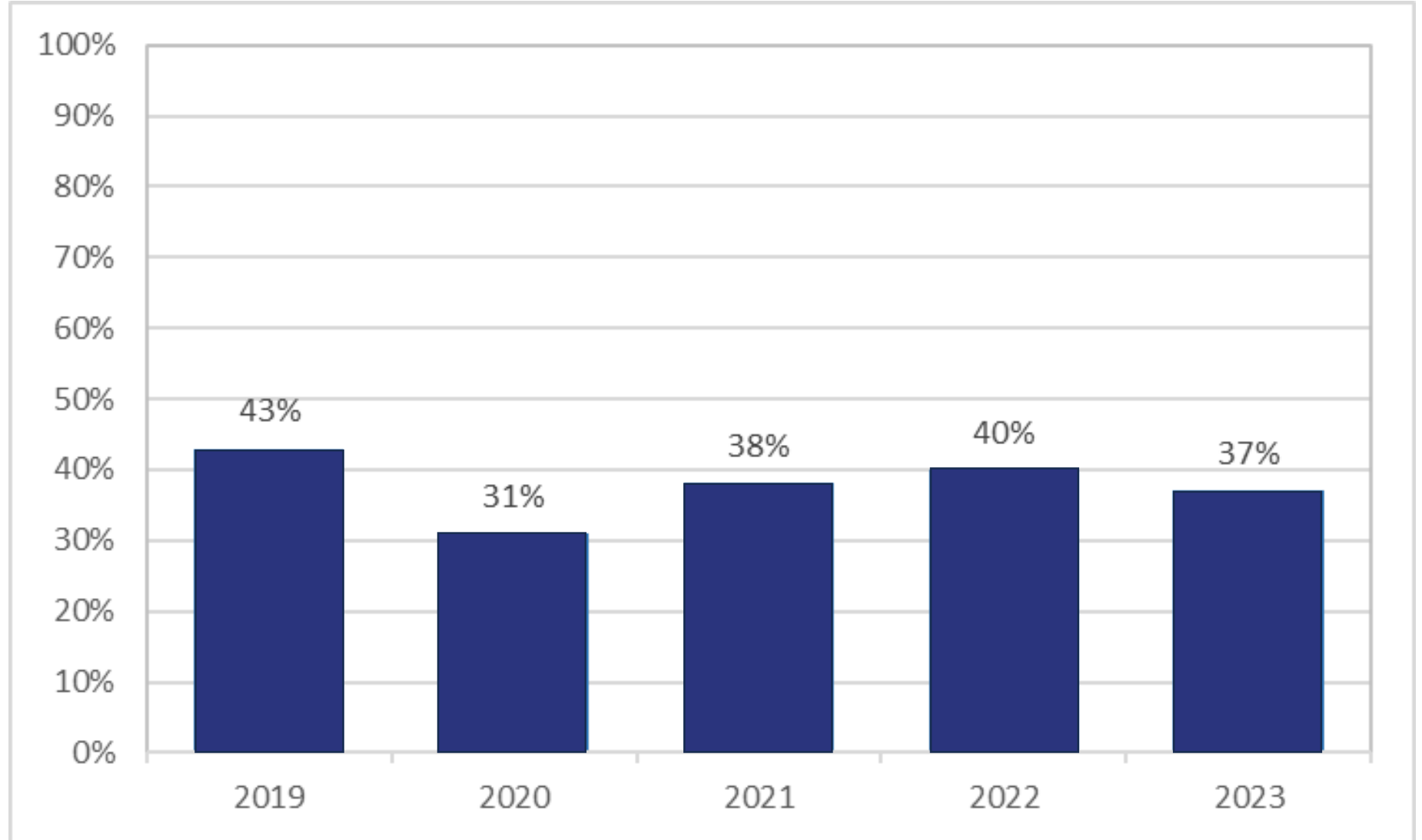


## Three Cautions When Interpreting CHEQ Trends Over Time

1. Trends Are Partly Due to the Particular School Districts Participating
  - Since 2019, 12 school districts have participated 3 or more times, 22 school districts only once
2. Participation rates vary widely across school districts, from under 20% to over 80%
  - Results are more reliable when participation is high
3. In 2023, CHEQ was revised (mostly shortened)
  - Therefore, 2023 results for some items may lose some comparability with earlier years' results

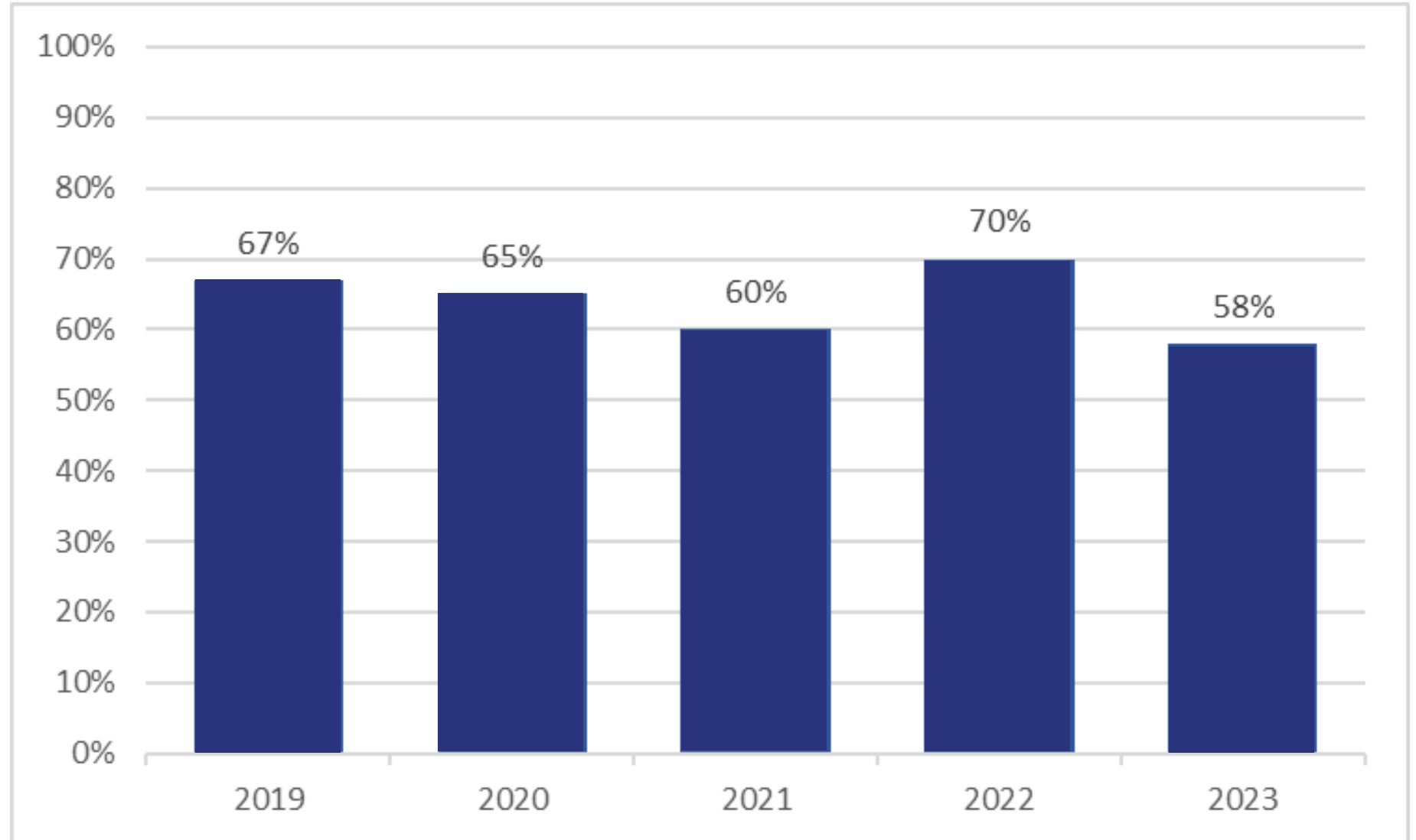
## Many Experiences, Peer Experiences Composite, 2019-2023

\* Interpret with caution,  
see slide 33



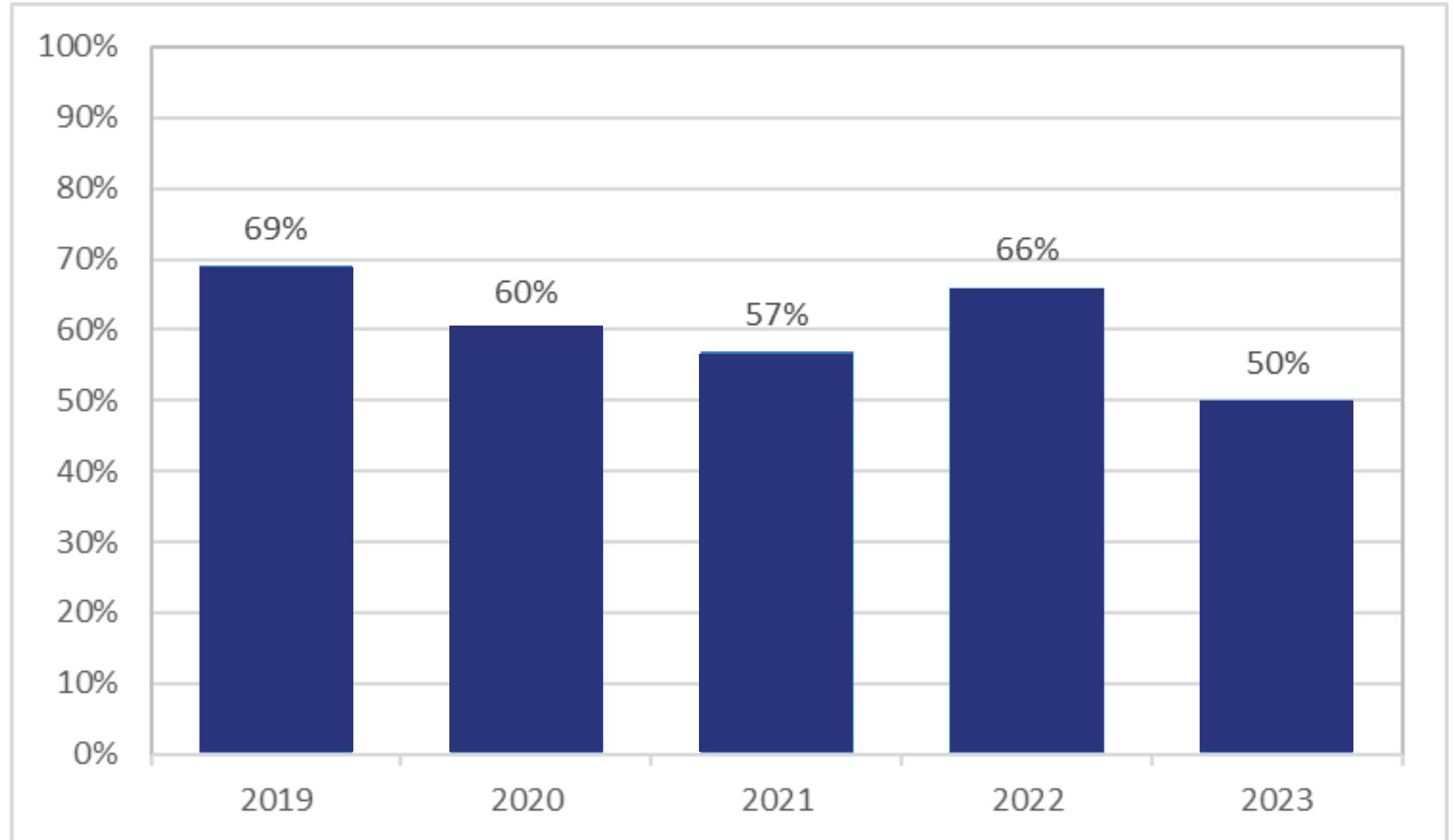
## Percent of Children Who Played Outdoors 6-7 in the Past 6 months, 2019-2023

\* Interpret with caution,  
see slide 33



## Many Experiences, Physical Activity Composite, 2019-2023

\* Interpret with caution,  
see slide 33



## Screen Time

In the last 6 months, how much per day (on average) the child used an electronic device

ANSWERED: 4885



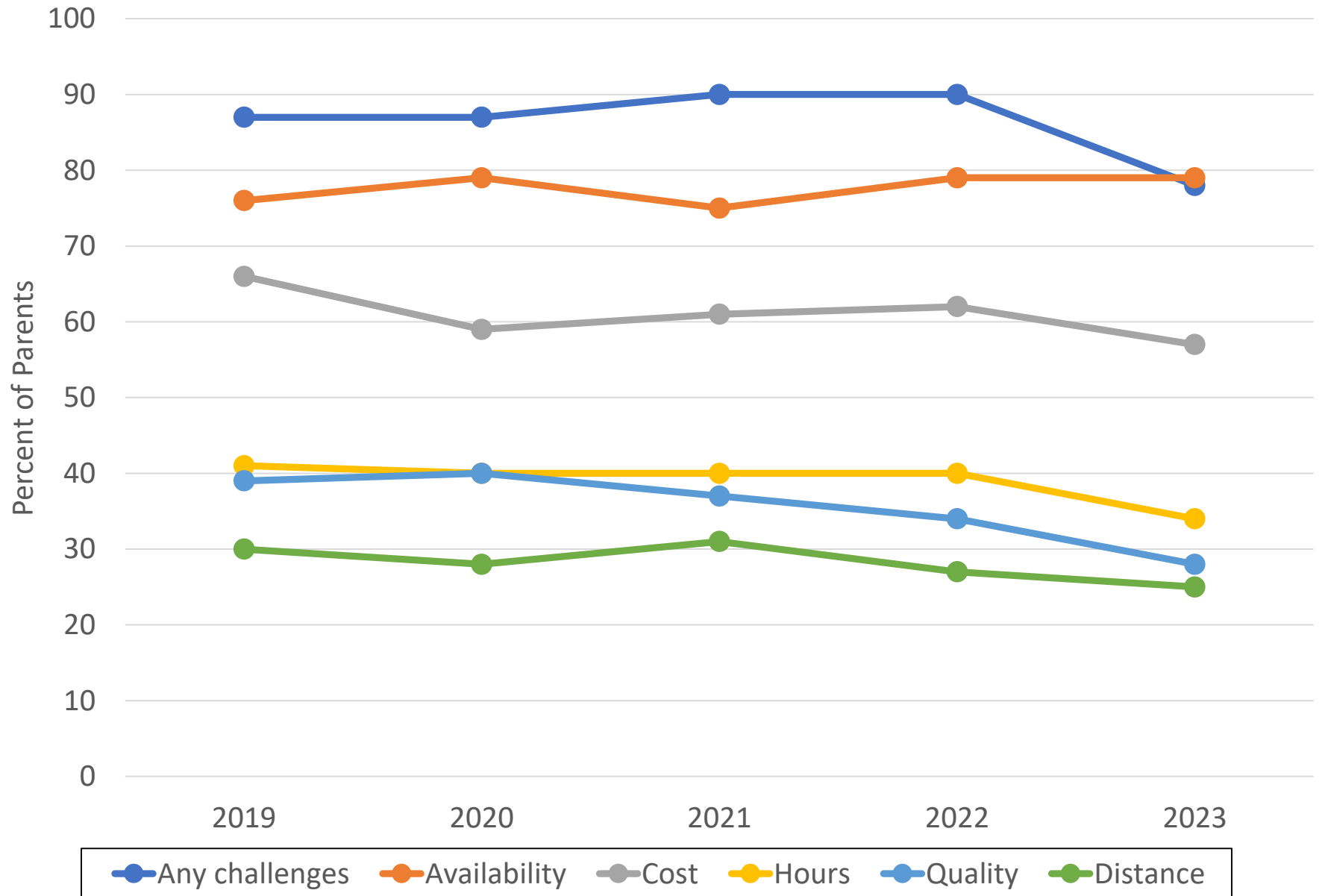
2022, question asked about different types of screen time. **45%** indicated children spent 1 or more hours “alone” on screen time.


\* Interpret with caution, see slide 33

Screen Time Recommendation: 2-5 year olds = 1 hour or less/day

\* Interpret with caution,  
see slide 33

## Parent-Reported Child Care Challenges, 2019 to 2023



 Interpret with caution,  
see slide 33

## Impact of the Pandemic

	2021	2022	2023
Parent/caregiver feel “less” or “much less” rested	50%	42%	32%
Parent/caregiver “less” or “much less” time to care for self	45%	36%	29%
Access to consistent child care “less” or “much less”	41%	38%	23%
Parent/caregiver “less” or “much less” connected to family and friends	64%	47%	30%
Household income “decreased”	25%	20%	23%
Parent/caregiver stress levels “high” or “very high”	42%	38%	34%

## Summary comparing 2022 to 2023

- Less sleep
- Lower frequency of peer experiences
- Less physical activity
- Less time outside
- Less perception of park being safe
- Less frequency of risky play
- More screen time per day
- Increase in barriers to accessing health care, programs and supports
- Negative pandemic impact still reported for one-quarter to one-third of families

**BUT** better news on the child care front – fewer barriers to access, especially cost

\* Interpret with caution,  
see slide 33



# Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) Data Trends Webinar



MDI Data Trends & Exploring the New Data Dashboard

Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023



MDi

Grades 4 - 8

Student  
questionnaire

WELL-BEING  
& ASSETS

T H A N K



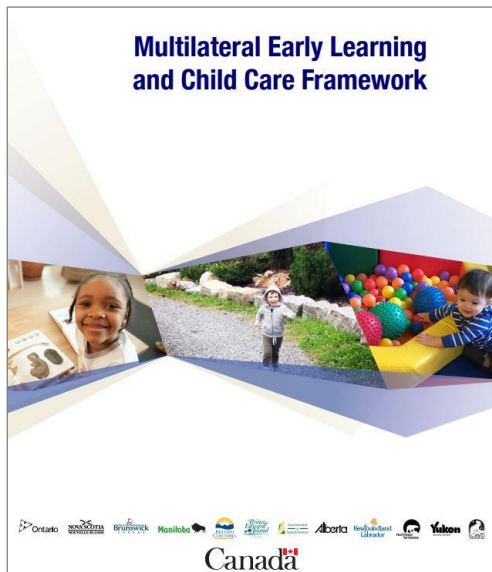
Y O U

# Recent Government Policy & Investment in Support of Children & Families



## Federal

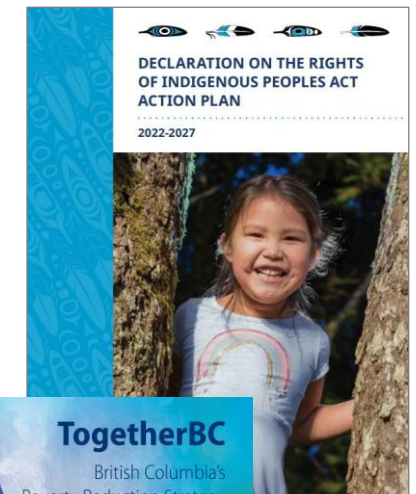
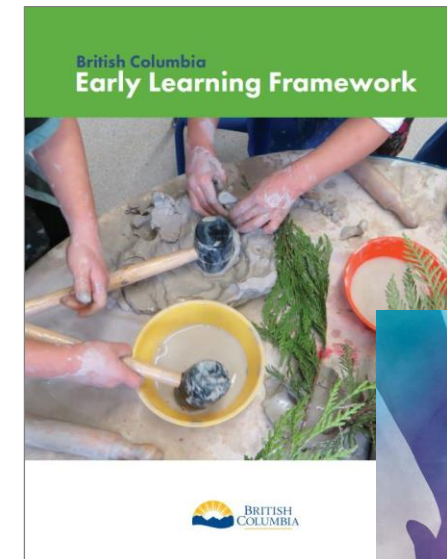
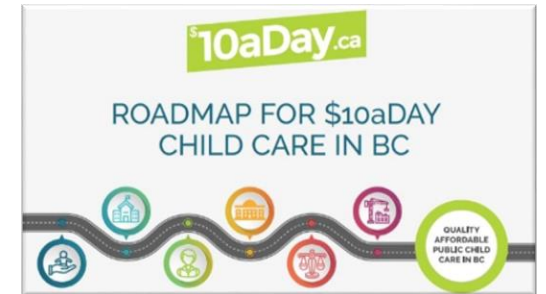
- Increases to *Canada Child Benefit* (2019, 2021)
- Extension of *parental leave* to 18 months (2019)
- *Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan* (2021)

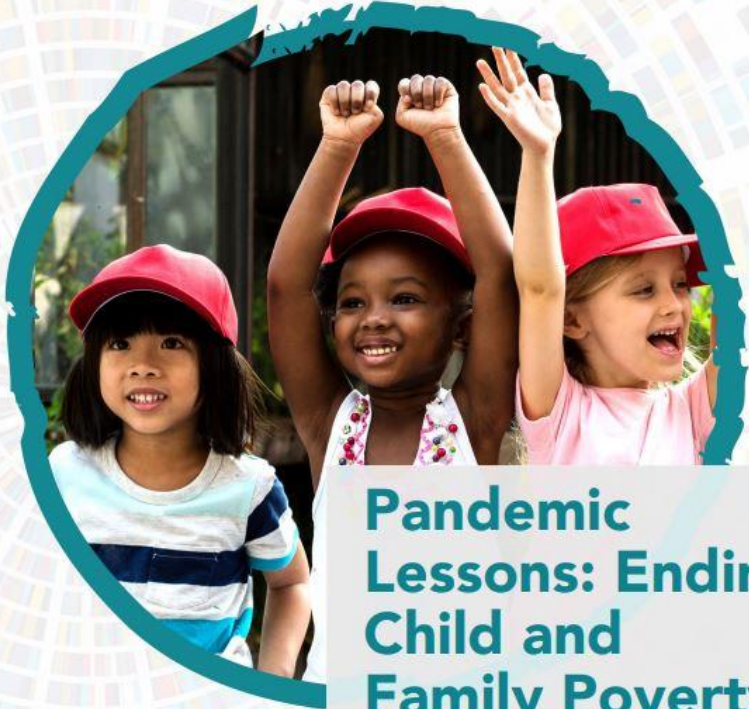


# Recent Government Policy & Investment in Support of Children & Families

## Provincial

- *Child Care B.C. Caring for Kids, Lifting Up Families* (2018)
- *B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (2019)
- *TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy* (2019)
- *BC Early Learning Framework* (2019)
- Ministry of Education and Child Care





## Pandemic Lessons: Ending Child and Family Poverty is Possible

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada's child poverty rate dropped by 40%. This progress was largely due to temporary pandemic benefits.



## 2022 BC CHILD POVERTY REPORT CARD

BC's child poverty rate dropped from 1 in 5 to 1 in 8.

**However**, progress made towards decreasing both the rate and depth of family poverty in 2020 may be all but wiped out by increasing costs in 2023.

# So, what can we do?



## Early Years Matter, continue to...

- Create **opportunities for connection IRL**  
– for children & families
- Support and **strengthen child care sector**
- Consider access to, and **remove barriers** to, existing services
- **Use data** to monitor children and family health and well-being
- Prioritize **equity and inclusion**
- Underpin all efforts with a move toward **Reconciliation**

## POSITION STATEMENT

## Healthy childhood development through outdoor risky play: Navigating the balance with injury prevention



**Posted:** Jan 25, 2024

The Canadian Paediatric Society gives permission to print single copies of this document from our website. For permission to reprint or reproduce multiple copies, please see our [copyright policy](#).

### Principal author(s)

Émilie Beaulieu MD MPH FRCPC, Suzanne Beno MD FRCPC; Canadian Paediatric Society, Injury Prevention Committee [Injury Prevention Committee](#)

### Abstract

Free play is essential for children's development and for their physical, mental, and social health. Opportunities to engage in outdoor free play—and risky play in particular—have declined significantly in recent years, in part because safety measures have sought to prevent all play-related injuries rather than focusing on serious and fatal injuries. Risky play is defined by thrilling and exciting forms of free play that involve uncertainty of outcome and a possibility of physical injury. Proponents of risky play differentiate 'risk' from 'hazard' and seek to reframe perceived risk as an opportunity for situational evaluation and personal development. This statement weighs the burden of play-related injuries alongside the evidence in favour of risky play, including its benefits, risks, and nuances, which can vary depending on a child's developmental stage, ability, and social and medical context. Approaches are offered to promote open, constructive discussions with families and organizations. Paediatricians are encouraged to think of outdoor risky play as one way to help prevent and manage common health problems such as obesity, anxiety, and behavioural issues.

**Keywords:** *Active living; Children; Injury; Play; Risk*

NEW!



**OUTSIDEPLAY.ca**  
Take a risk, go play outside!

ALREADY KNOW WHAT OUTDOOR PLAY IS AND WANT TO GET STARTED?

START PARENT OR CAREGIVER JOURNEY

START EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR JOURNEY  
(BETA)

## Outdoor & Risky Play Resources

### OutsidePlay.ca

- Parents
- Early Childhood Educators
- Teachers



BC INJURY research and prevention unit





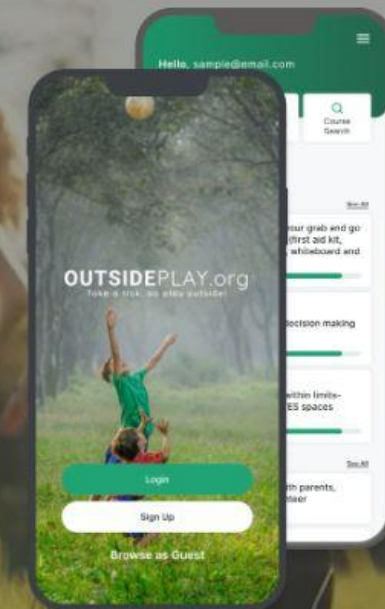
# Get Outside!

## New Resource for Educators

# Bring your class outside!

Go to the Tool

Go to [OutsidePlay.org](https://OutsidePlay.org)



## Outdoor Play and Learning

This tool is designed for elementary school teachers. There are four themes to explore which offer valuable insights and hands-on resources to begin locating play and learning outdoors.

[teacher.outsideplay.org](https://teacher.outsideplay.org)

# Early Years Conference 2024



HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP



Pre-Conference

We gratefully  
acknowledge the  
financial support of  
the Province of  
British Columbia:



Ministry of  
Children and Family  
Development



Ministry of  
Health



Ministry of  
Education and  
Child Care