Early Years Conference 2024



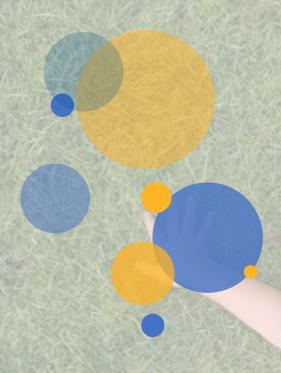








Early Years Conference 2024

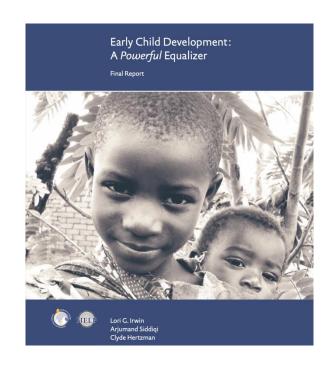






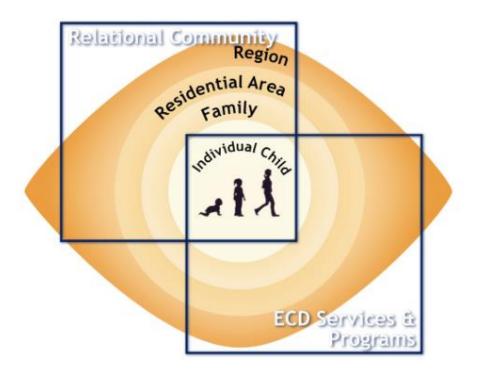


What we all believe in



Investing in improving early childhood context and outcomes makes sense from both developmental and economic perspective

Children are both shaped by and shape their environments: family, residential and relational communities, regional and national programmes and policies





FAMILY



Physical Health and Well-being



Social Competence



Emotional Maturity



Language and Cognitive Development



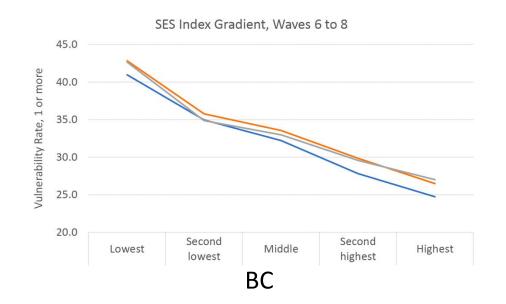
Communication Skills and General Knowledge

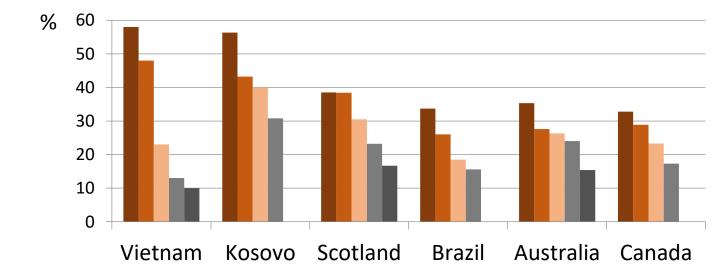




Over the years, we found...

- Child development and learning outcomes measured all over the world demonstrate the "social gradient"
- That means that children from less advantaged families/neighbourhoods have poorer outcomes than those who are more advantaged and that relationship forms a continuous line
- 372 peer-reviewed papers and counting https://edi.offordcentre.com/resources/bibliography-of-the-edi/





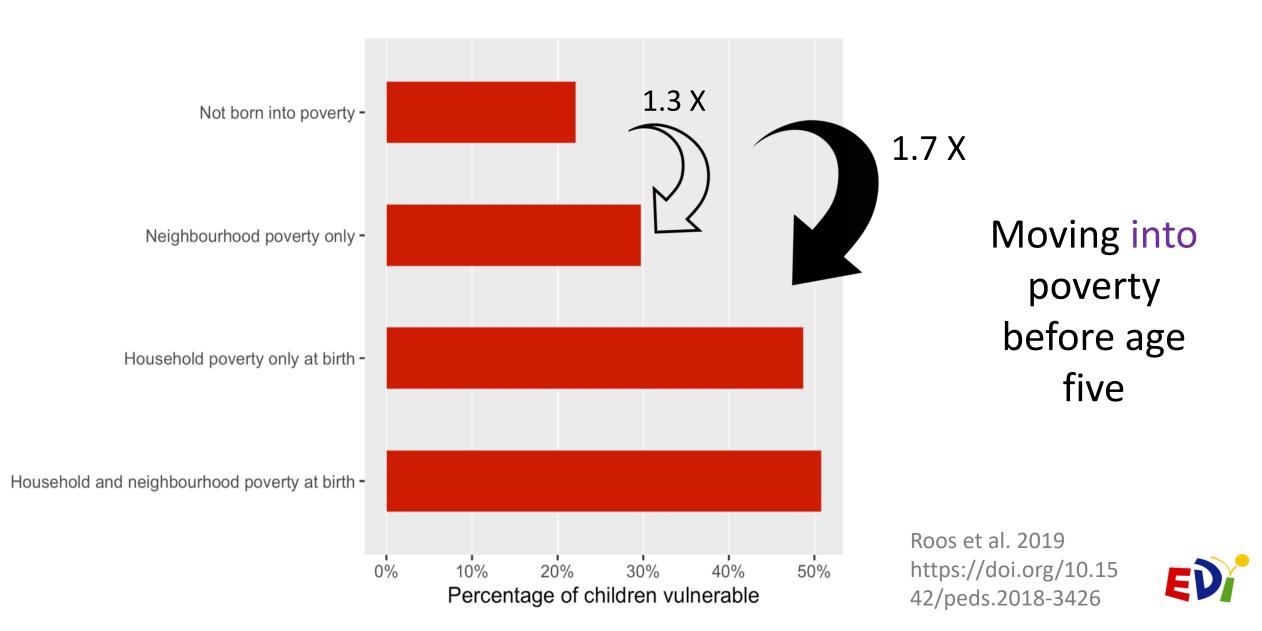


Social gradient is tied to measures of poverty (that need to be nuanced)

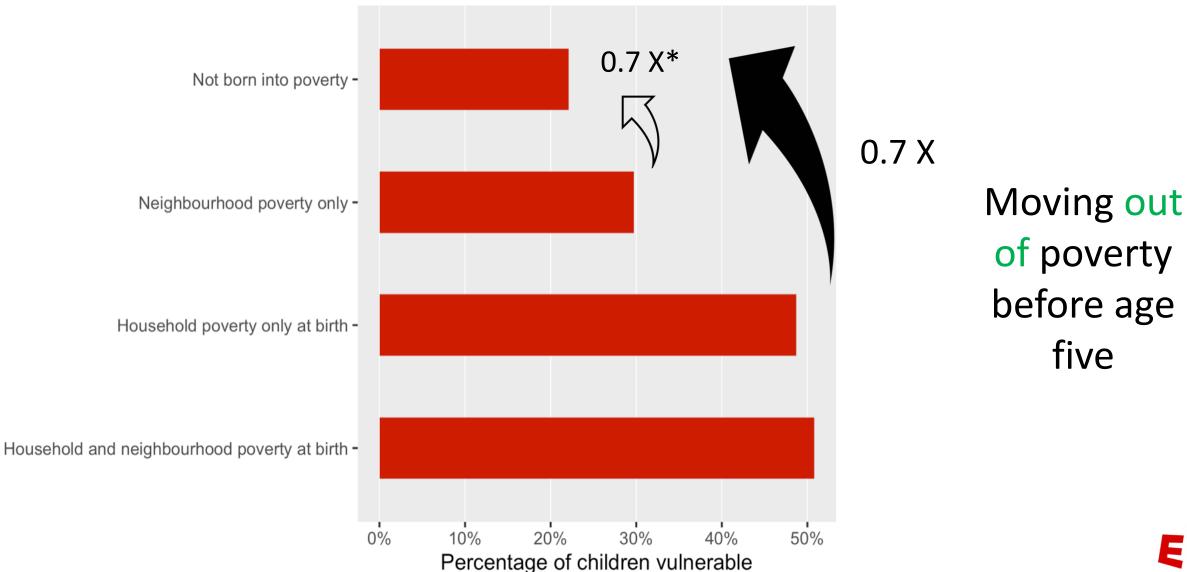
But examining the impact of poverty over time can tell us a lot about what matters, and when



In and out of early poverty: Manitoba, children 0-5 years



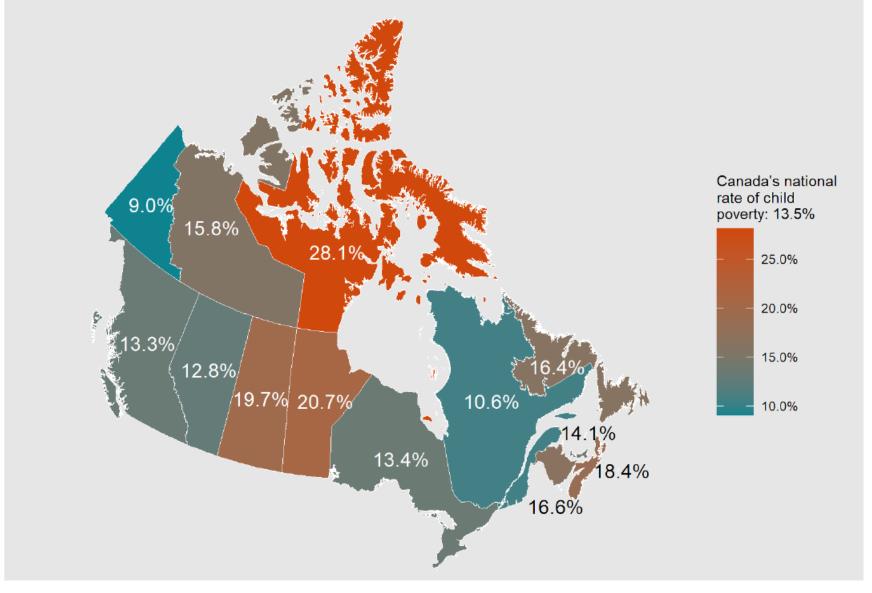
Impact of early poverty: Manitoba, children 0-5 years



of poverty before age



Figure 3. Child poverty rates across Canada, under 18, 2020



MAYBE???

Campaign 2000 End Child & Family Poverty, 2022 Report Card

https://campaign2000.ca/pan demic-lessons-ending-childand-family-poverty-ispossible/

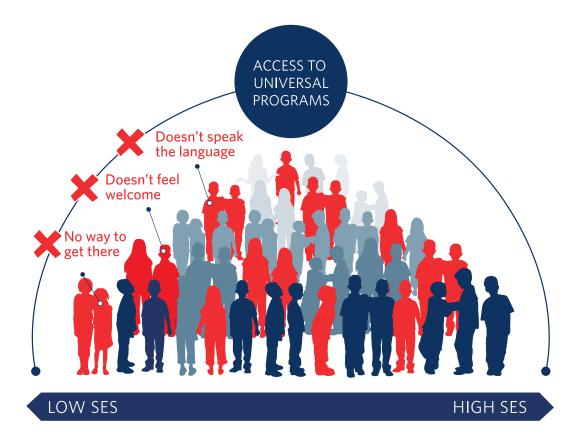
Source: Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0018-01. After-tax income status of tax filers and dependents based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family type composition (T1FF), 2020.



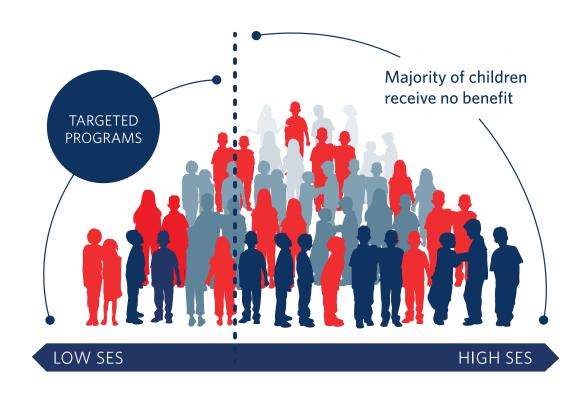
Preschool and full time kindergarten

- Most existing evidence indicates that preschool attendance (and junior kindergarten) is associated with better developmental outcomes at school entry and in elementary school
- Full-time kindergarten (BC and Ontario) are universal interventions
- They deliver the same support for all children without considering the proportional universality dilemma

Universality



Proportionate Universality



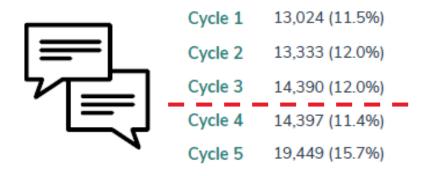


Ontario pre-post Full Time Kindergarten

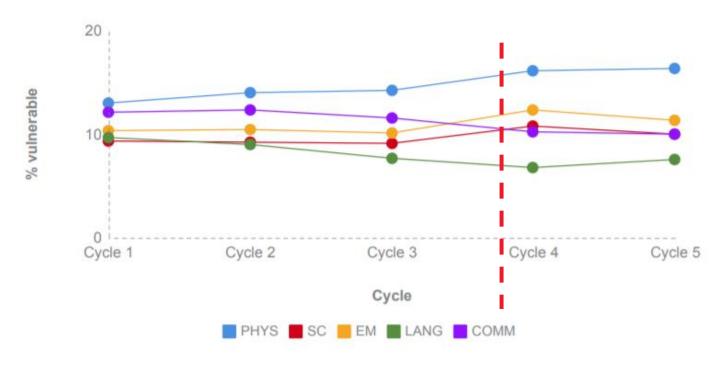
Children with Special Needs



Children Considered ELL, ALF, or PANA



Percentage of Children Vulnerable by Domain



https://edi.offordcentre.com/partners/canada/edi-in-ontario-2004-2018/ https://edi-offordcentre.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2021/03/ONT-C1-C5-Web-Report.pdf Lesser known small groups — equity and inclusion

Advantages of the population level coverage:

- Inclusivity of small or underrepresented populations
- For example: Children with special educational needs, or children with specific conditions or health disorders; refugee children





Children who are English/French learners

Evidence from pan-Canadian data: more likely to show symptoms of anxiety

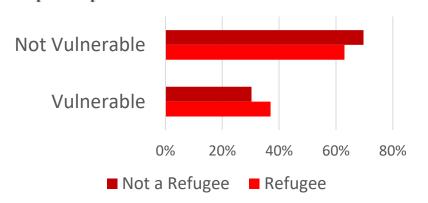
Table 4 Demographic characteristics and vulnerability rates in four EDI domains among anxious and non-anxious children

Janus et al. 2022 https://doi.org/10.10 07/s10578-022-01332-9

	Anxious %	Non-Anxious %	χ^2	Cramer's V
Demographics				
Male	55.4	51.2	178.1*	0.014
SN	11.1	3.4	4210.0*	0.066
E/FSL	14.2	12.9	37.9*	0.006
Developmental domain vulnerability				
Physical	43.1	11.3	23,446.6*	0.155
Social	42.6	10.3	26,016.3*	0.163
Language-cognitive	27.8	8.8	10,555.8*	0.104
Communication and general knowledge	42.8	13.2	18,029.4*	0.136

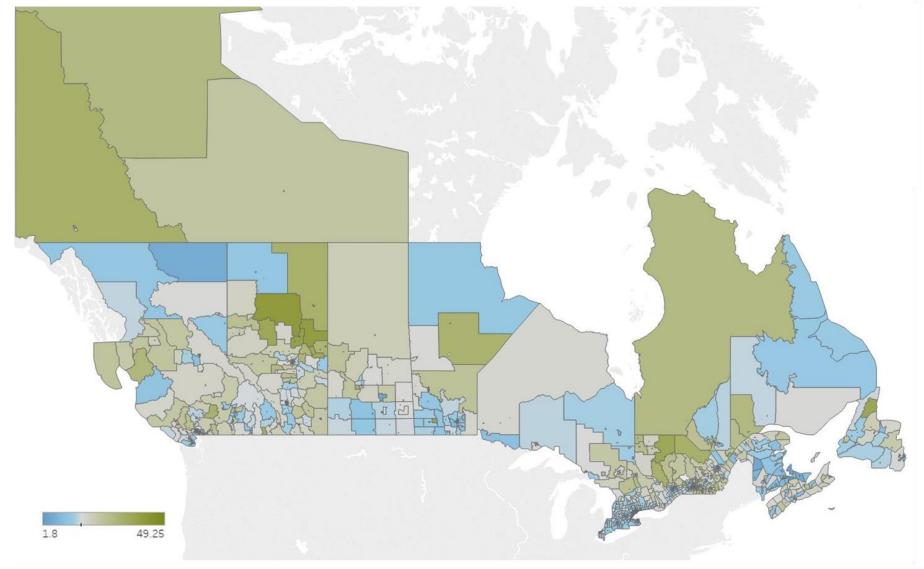
^{*}p<0.004, corrected for multiple comparisons

Evidence from 2015 Ontario data: Child or mother is a refugee N=3366 (3.2%)



Saunders et al. 2020 https://doi.org/10.23889/ ijpds.v6i1.1407

Prevalence of childhood health disorders in Canadian neighbourhoods



Excluding neighbourhoods with fewer than 10 children, childhood health disorder prevalence ranged from 1.8 to 49.3%, with an average of 16.8% (SD = 5.97).



Special Needs classification





37 Medical diagnoses



Association of prevalence with SES



TYPE Original Research
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DOI 10.3389/fpubh.2023.1295195



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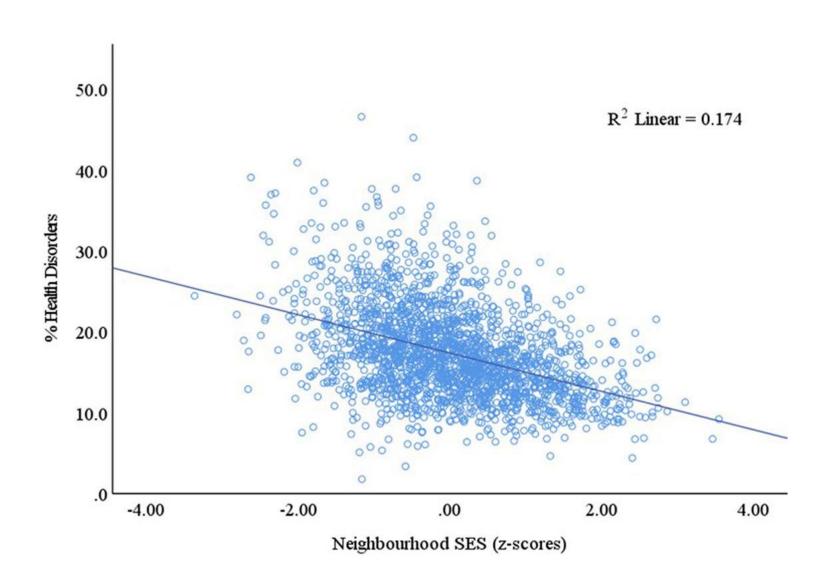
CITATION

Neighbourhood-level socioeconomic status and prevalence of teacher-reported health disorders among Canadian kindergarten children

Magdalena Janus^{1,2*}, Marni Brownell³, Caroline Reid-Westoby¹, Molly Pottruff¹, Barry Forer^{2†}, Martin Guhn^{2†} and Eric Duku^{1†} on behalf of the Canadian Children's Health in Context Study Investigators

¹Offord Centre for Child Studies, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada, ²Human Early Learning Partnership, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada, ³Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada

Association of prevalence with SES



When province/territory (P/T) is added to the model, the R² increases to 0.40

P/T associations significant for:

Alberta

BC

Manitoba

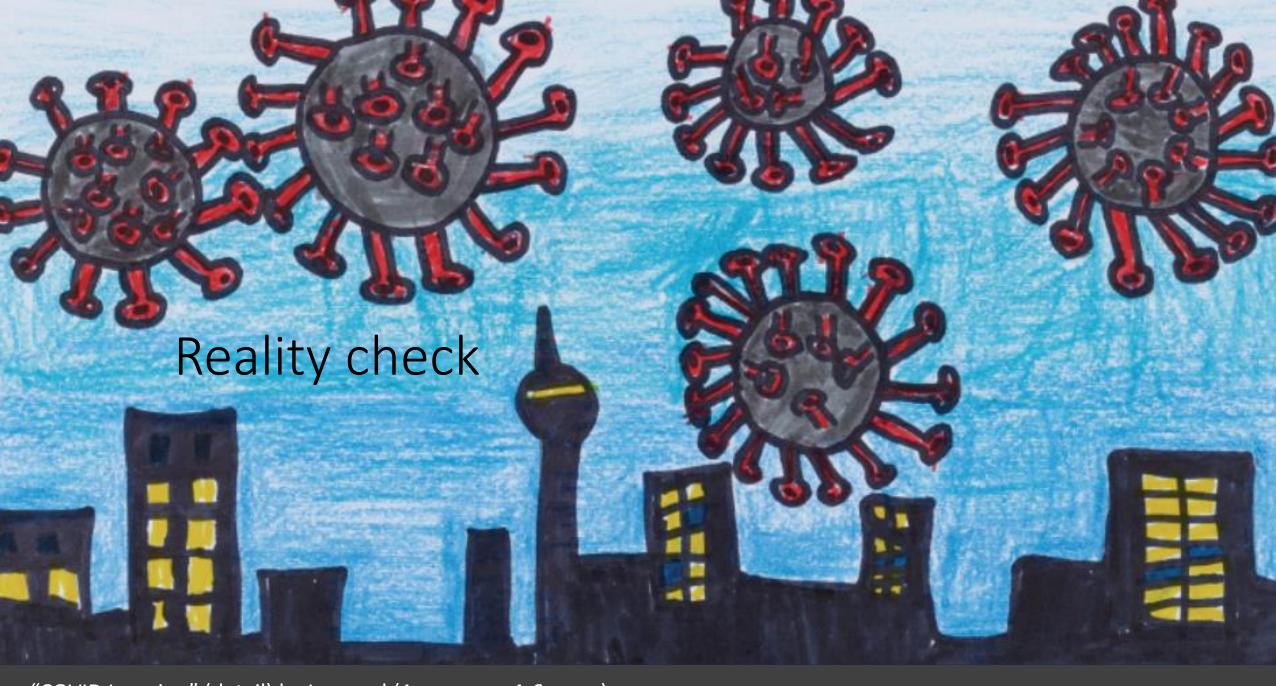
Newfoundland and Labrador

Nova Scotia

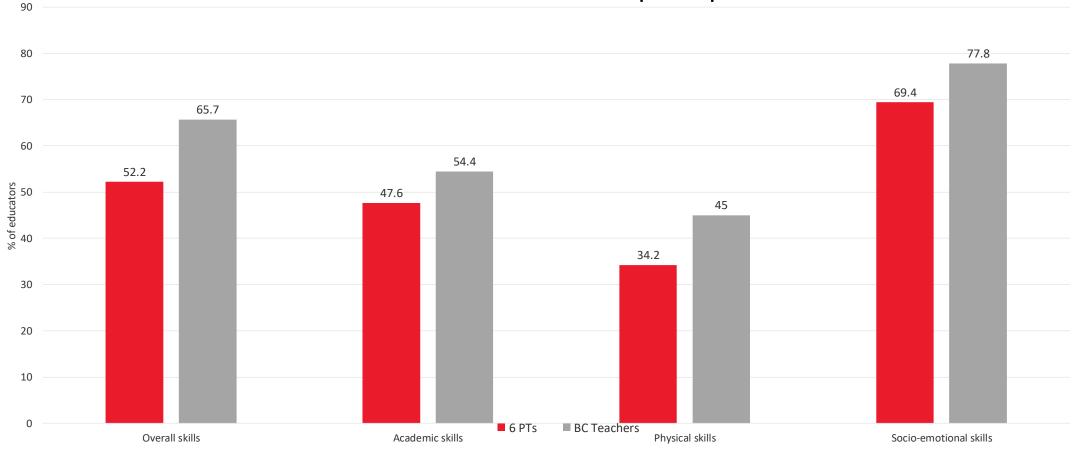
Ontario

Quebec

Saskatchewan



Percentages of educators who reported that student skills were "lower or much lower" than pre-pandemic cohorts



Kindergarten Teachers in all 2023 EDI data collections (except BC, 76% response rate)

and Kindergarten Teachers in BC in 2022 and 2023



Summary of EDI Research Findings

Children born into poverty or those that move into poverty before age 5 are more likely to be vulnerable on the EDI. There is a difference between neighbourhood and household income (EDI-census)

Early recognition of neurodiversity is helpful because children more likely to access services that support development; many children who have similar developmental profiles in Kindergarten but cannot receive diagnosis, have poorer outcomes over time (EDI-health data-MDI)

Newcomer children require close monitoring and partnership with families, just like other groups whose development and learning (school readiness) may not be well understood

Pandemic-related disruptions need to be kept in consideration in comparison of results over time



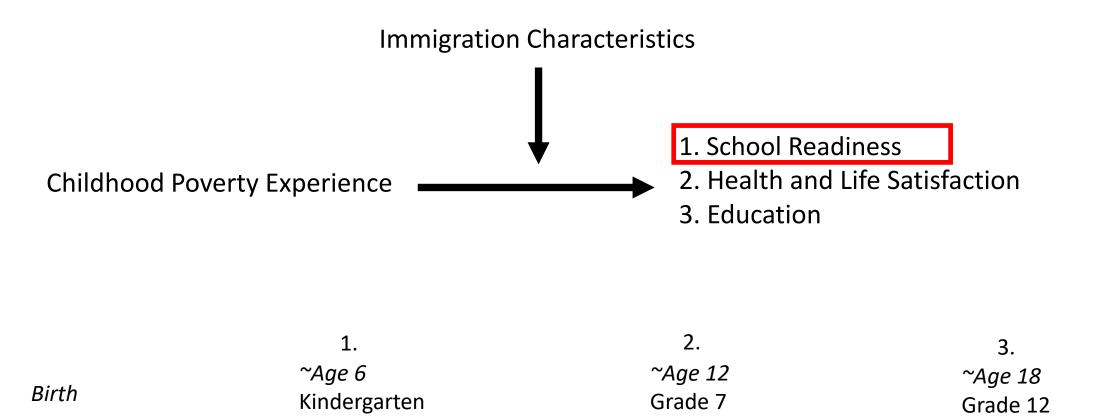
Early Years Conference 2024







OVERARCHING PROJECT GOAL

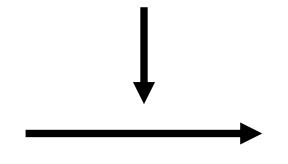


3 Studies

STUDY 1: SCHOOL READINESS

Immigration Characteristics

Infancy/Early Childhood Poverty Experience; Timing



School Readiness (EDI) at kindergarten -Rated by classroom teacher

Study 1

Birth ~Age 6
Kindergarten Crade 7 Grade 12
Grade 7

SCHOOL READINESS: POVERTY PREVALENCE AND ASSOCIATIONS

Childhood poverty: 11% in B.C. in 2018 (Ex. 2 Adults, 2 Children: ~\$45 000)₍₁₎

Over one third of recent immigrant children₍₁₎

Environment(2-6):











Outcomes: Stress dysregulation_(3,4); Cognitive deficits (ex. reading/language) _(5–9); Depression₍₁₀₋₁₂₎; Anxiety_(13,14); Antisocial behaviour₍₁₅₎ and more...

Poverty Timing

- Consistent, earlier poverty → Worse outcomes(16,17)
- Transitions out of poverty → Better outcomes(16,18)

LITERATURE GAPS

1. Lack consideration of immigration characteristics (10,13,17)

- Newcomer challenges: discrimination, social exclusion(19)
- Health decline and barriers to access(20,21)

2. Scope of poverty observation

Household or neighbourhood poverty; lack poverty transitions(22–26)

Goal of Project: Address gaps

DATA SOURCES AND VARIABLES

Study Participants

- Linked database, children in 10 selected BC school districts (lower mainland)
- Birth cohort of children born within 1990-2006 (>480,000)
- Latest data entry: March 2017

Linked Data Sources*

- Poverty Exposure:
 - Household Income: Medical Services Plan Insurance (MSP) Subsidy Registration₍₂₇₎
 - Neighbourhood Income: Postal Codes and Census Records₍₂₈₎
- Immigration Records: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)₍₂₉₎
- Birth/Parent Characteristics: BC Vital Statistics Agency₍₃₀₎

Outcome Data:

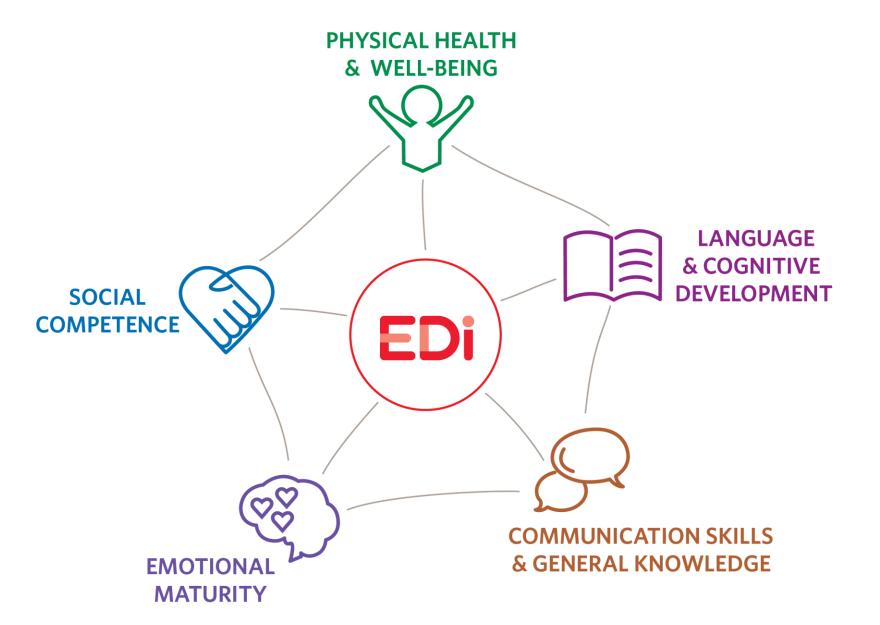
• School Readiness at KG: Early Development Instrument (EDI; from HELP)₍₃₁₎



^{*}The requested data was linked by Population Data BC, a center in BC specializing in population-level data linkage, using a probabilistic-deterministic approach (32)



The Early Development Instrument (EDI)



DATA SOURCES AND VARIABLES

Exposure of Interest: Poverty (4 Categories)

- Household Poverty (HH): MSP subsidy due to low income (ex. 2014: <\$30,000) From MSP reg.
- Neighbourhood Poverty (NH): Lowest income-quintile for NH From Census
- "Combined" Poverty: Having both HH and NH poverty concurrently
- No Poverty: Neither household or neighbourhood poverty

Immigration Background: Immigrant Generation Status

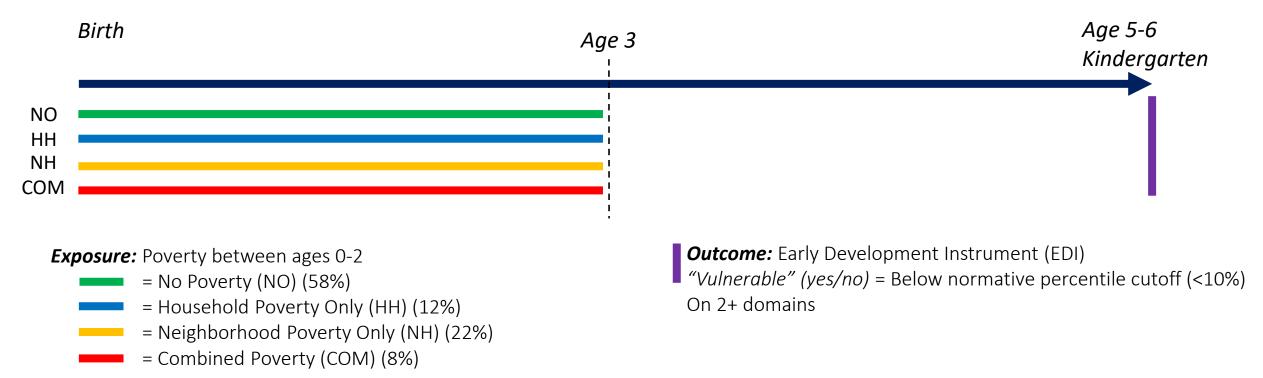
- "Non-immigrant" Neither child or parents migrated to Canada
- "Second-generation immigrant" At least one parent migrated to Canada

Outcome: School Readiness

- Vulnerability in 2+ EDI school readiness domains at KG
- Inclusion Requirement: Children born in BC and present from birth to age 5; linked to EDI
 - Sample of >15 000



School Readiness: Poverty Experience Analyses



Analysis 1: Poverty Experience; Logistic Regression

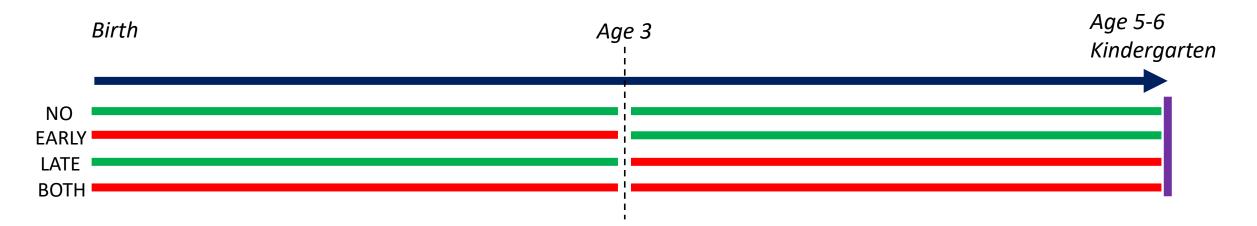
Adjusted Variables: Child's Sex, Birthweight adjusted for gestational period, Parental marital status at childbirth; Maternal age at childbirth; Age at EDI assessment

Analysis 2: Poverty Experience stratified by Immigrant Generation (Non-Imm.; 2nd-gen)

Adjusted Variables: Same as analysis 1



School Readiness: Poverty Timing Analysis



Exposure: Combined Poverty between age 0-2 and/or 3-5

4 Groups:

NO: No Poverty 0-2 <u>OR</u> 3-5

EARLY: Poverty 0-2 BUT NOT 3-5

LATE: No Poverty 0-2 <u>BUT</u> Poverty 3-5

BOTH: Poverty 0-2 <u>AND</u> 3-5

Outcome: Early Development Instrument (EDI)

"Vulnerable" (yes/no) = Below normative percentile cutoff (<10%)

On 2+ domains

Analysis 3: Timing Category Analysis; Logistic Regression **Adjusted Variables:** Same as analysis 1 and 2

School Readiness: Findings(35)

Analysis 1

- Combined poverty at age 0-2 was associated with 107% higher odds of vulnerability in 2+ more EDI domains at kindergarten in comparison to no poverty group
- Association of combined poverty with vulnerability was larger than household only poverty or neighborhood only poverty

Adjusted odds ratios (aOR) describing the association between poverty exposures and vulnerability on Early Development Instrument (EDI) domains.

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·				
Characteristic	Group	Vulnerable on 2+		
_ <u></u>		Domains aOR [95% CI]		
Poverty Exposure	No Poverty	Ref		
Between Age 0 to 2	Combined	2.07 [1.74;2.47]***		
	Household Only	1.54 [1.31;1.82]***		
	Neighbourhood Only	1.49 [1.30;1.70]***		

Gill et al. (2024)

School Readiness: Findings

Analysis 2 (Stratified Analysis)

- Poverty was associated with higher vulnerability in school readiness for both non-immigrants and 2nd gen. immigrants
- Combined poverty association larger for non-immigrants than for 2nd gen. immigrants

Adjusted odds ratios (aOR) describing the association between poverty exposures and vulnerability on Early Development Instrument (EDI) domains, stratified by immigrant generation status.

Characteristic	Group	Vulnerable on 2+ Domains aOR [95% CI]	
Non-immigrants Analyses			
Poverty Exposure Between Age 0 to 2	No Poverty Combined Household Only Neighbourhood Only	Ref 2.40 [1.92;3.00]*** 1.50 [1.22;1.84]*** 1.58 [1.35;1.85]***	
Second Generation Immigrants Analyses			
Poverty Exposure Between Age 0 to 2	No Poverty Combined Household Only Neighbourhood Only	Ref 1.63 [1.22;2.17]*** 1.54 [1.16;2.04]** 1.26 [0.98;1.63]	

p < 0.05, p < 0.01, p < 0.001

School Readiness: Findings

Analysis 3 (Timing Analysis)

 Combined poverty at any timepoint (Age 0-2, 3-5 or both) was associated with similarly higher odds of vulnerability in 2+ domain outcomes, regardless of timing

Adjusted odds ratios (aOR) describing the associations between poverty exposure timing with vulnerability on Early Development Instrument (EDI) domains.

Characteristic	Group	Vulnerable on 2+ Domains
		aOR [95% CI]
Combined Poverty Timing Category	No Poverty	Ref
	0-2 and 3-5	2.50 [1.97;3.17]***
	0-2 Only	2.35 [1.84;3.01]***
	3-5 Only	2.58 [1.97;3.38]***

p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

School Readiness: Discussion

Strengths

- Population-based, linked dataset
- High participation: >80% children in participating SDs in EDI
- Consider both HH + NH poverty separately and together; immigrant + birth factors

Limitations

- MSP subsidy as proxy for HH income; Opt-in program
 - Most vulnerable children possibly excluded (possible underestimation of effect)
- Inclusion required birth in BC First generation immigrants excluded

School Readiness: Discussion

Conclusion and Implications

- Policy: Timing + Targeting of interventions (ex. Child benefits)
 - Combined poverty impact (most vulnerable)
 - Early and consistent supports; reduce barriers

Future Directions

- Examine expansion of income interventions (e.g., Canada Child Benefit; COVID Benefits)
- Further explore mechanisms from poverty to developmental domains for intervention
 - e.g. Access to opportunities, material supports, social supports
- Qualitative inquiry into association of poverty and outcomes; Immigration background



UBC School of Population and Public Health

Questions?

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@HELP_UBC



@Human Early Learning Partnership



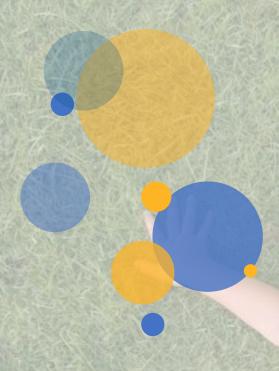
@HumanEarlyLearning

Data Disclaimer:

Access to data provided by the Data Steward(s) is subject to approval, but can be requested for research projects through the Data Steward(s) or their designated service providers.

All inferences, opinions, and conclusions drawn in this publication are those of the author(s), and do not reflect the opinions or policies of the Data Steward(s).

The UBC Vancouver campus is situated within the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the $x^w m \partial k^w \partial y \partial m$ (Musqueam) People.







The Study

Aim

To investigate the developmental well-being of children from refugee backgrounds in BC.

Part 1

Quantitatively examined Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores for refugee children in BC (with immigrant and non-immigrant reference groups).

Part 2

Explore (corroborate, expand, and elaborate on) the EDI results through focus groups with BC educators and settlement workers who work with children from refugee backgrounds.



The Method

Part 1 (quantitative)

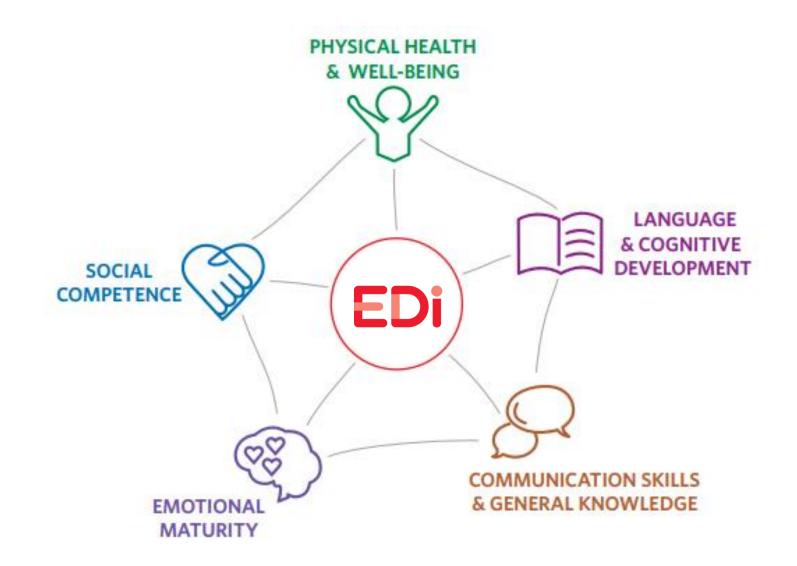
- \circ EDI data were linked to migration records (Immigration, Refugees, & Citizenship Canada)
- Children with an EDI record in BC between 2005 and 2018 (N = 233,813)
- N_{refugee}=899; N_{immigrant}=9037

Part 2 (qualitative)

- Semi-structured focus groups with educators and settlement workers (7 participants; zoom)
- For each domain: Do the EDI results surprise you? What is your experience with the [EDI domain] of refugee children?
- Data were transcribed, coded, and grouped to identify common patterns/themes within and across the EDI domains.



The Early Development Instrument

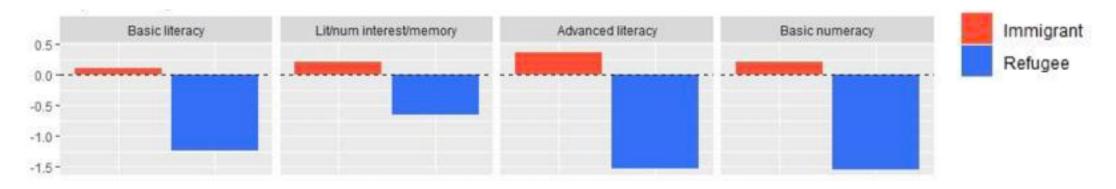






Language and Cognitive Development : EDI results

Adjusted regression coefficients*:



^{*(}Adjusted to age, sex, ELL status). The dotted (0) line represents the non-migrant children reference group.

Overall, refugee children had lower EDI scores across all language & cognitive development subdomains (vs. reference group).



Language and Cognitive Development : Undefined/undiagnosed struggles to learn

- Participants shared examples of children from refugee backgrounds struggling to learn or retain information despite their enthusiasm, in what they described as something beyond an English language barrier.
- Children's struggles to learn or retain knowledge are often written off as an English language competency issue with learning assessment and diagnosis being passed on to later years.

"they [refugee students] have a high interest. Like, they want to learn, but...there's something else going on that's preventing that from happening, and not just language" (Educator, A, FG1).



Language and Cognitive Development : Impacts of trauma

- Educator and settlement worker participants reflected on and had unanswered questions about perceived impacts of trauma in refugee children's language and cognitive development competencies, particularly memory and retention.
- Participants expressed concern over the misuse of the "trauma" term in the school system as an explanation for any learning/memory retention issues, and a justification to not further explore an official learning diagnosis.

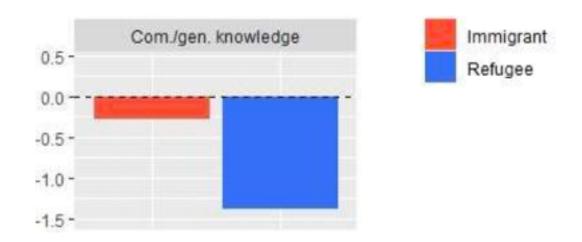
"I got told this year — because I'm just advocating and fighting and complaining, and you know, whatever I can do to be that squeaky wheel: ... Well, they have trauma brain, so deal with it...there's no designation for them, and so you're not going to get any help anyways" (Educator, A, FG1).





Communication & General Knowledge : EDI results

Adjusted regression coefficients*:



^{*(}Adjusted to age, sex, ELL status). The dotted (0) line represents the non-migrant children reference group.

Refugee children had a **significantly lower** EDI score in the communication & general knowledge domain (vs. reference).



Communication & General Knowledge : Cultural/Western contexts

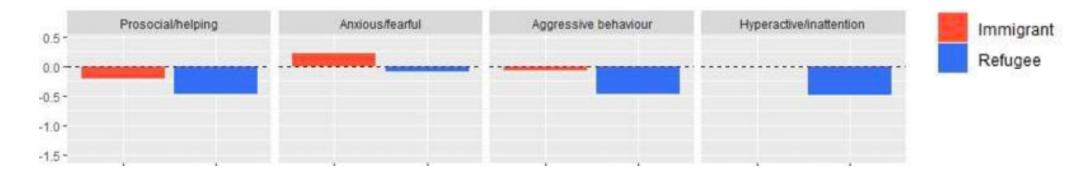
- Participants underscored that refugee children were not lacking knowledge, but the unfamiliar environmental context, materials, and knowledge of formal Canadian schooling all impact communication and demonstration of general knowledge within a Canadian context.
- Refugee children oftentimes have not had exposure to learning/play-based materials that are common in Canadian classrooms (e.g., readers or the images in the readers, like a hippopotamus).

"we all have knowledge, but their knowledge is different, right?...They're coming in a different setting and knowledge changes, what is regarded as knowledge. So, I think that's the hardest piece for them." (Educator, B, FG1).





Adjusted regression coefficients*:



^{*(}Adjusted to age, sex, ELL status). The dotted (0) line represents the non-migrant children reference group.

Overall, refugee children had **significantly lower EDI scores** across emotional maturity subscales, except 'anxious and fearful' (vs. reference).

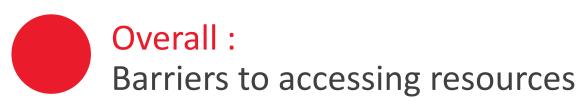


Emotional Maturity: Contextually maladaptive/adaptive behaviour responses

- Reframing low/high emotional maturity to contextually maladaptive/adaptive behaviours.
- They described behaviours they saw as maladaptive in a Canadian classroom (e.g., taking a pencil from the person next to you) that were likely very adaptive in previous refugee contexts (e.g., gathering supplies in a context of scarcity for your family).
- Participants also described witnessing refugee children's exceptionally caring and protective behaviours with friends/family.

Educator B (FG1) shared her experiences of a child who struggled with verbally communicating frustration, often using physical responses (i.e., pushing) when in conflict with a peer. Yet, when that child was "with the other girls that she is fond of, she takes care of them so beautifully. That is where you see that emotional maturity part... they are very responsible."





 Focus group participants outlined a myriad of barriers to accessing resources.

- Participants described early intervention/assessment systems that are not responsive to the needs of refugee children (e.g., requiring children to have solid command of English prior to assessing learning or cognitive delays).
- Overlooked barriers families experience in accessing available supports (e.g., lack of awareness of resources, programs or subsidies, cost barriers, transportation barriers).

"the system is made to diagnose kids who either grew up in Canada or are fluent in English and are really comfortable with the English language. However, that is not really the reality in a lot of our schools." (Educator, C, FG1)

"...when you phone [people running programs/services] and they speak fluent English, and I'm a refugee mom, what will be my...reaction, right?...Of course, I'm not comfortable talking to you, right? And then, also, if I go to your website, it's all, like, medical terms, you know, go here, link here, click here, it's a little bit difficult to navigate, especially if you're not tech savvy, right? Especially for refugee families, who maybe they don't have internet, they don't have laptop..." (Settlement, B, FG2)



Overall:

Proactive/responsive systems and people

- Participants repeatedly highlighted the importance of early assessment and intervention upon settlement in Canada, for children to receive supports as soon as possible and to limit the chances of children simply being passed on from grade to grade.
- A reliance on the creativity and responsiveness of support staff who are "on the ball, even if nothing can officially happen" (Educator, C, FG1).
- Recommendations for a 'basic orientation' to introduce concepts, school rules, and expectations in an introductory and safe way (for parents and children).

"I've got one of my teachers, she's like, "You know, if I could just take... if I could just have, like, a Somali/Syrian class, just for the morning, for two hours, and do all of the things around calendar, and how to play, and build all that basic foundational coping language, just in their own little bubble, in a nice little safe place", then...just imagine, how impactful that would be for them in terms of being able to move on in their learning." (Settlement, J, FG2)





- The importance of understanding children's behaviour and development in context
- The depth of the impact of cultural understandings and nuances
- How can our school system be more proactive and responsive to the needs of refugee children?
 (early, low-barrier assessments and supports)



Acknowledgements and Disclaimers

Data stewards

We are grateful to Population Data BC and the data stewards for facilitating access to data for this project. The study uses data from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP). Additionally, linkage was facilitated by Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Child Care data). Access to data provided by the Data Steward(s) is subject to approval, but can be requested for research projects through the Data Steward(s) or their designated service providers. All inferences, opinions, and conclusions drawn in this publication are those of the author(s), and do not reflect the opinions or policies of the Data Steward(s).

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Thank you to the study team

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Committee members

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Dr. Gillian Hanley

My colleagues and peers at SPPH, Sunny Hill Health Centre, the BC Autism Assessment Network, and the Division of Developmental Pediatrics at UBC and the BC Children's Hospital



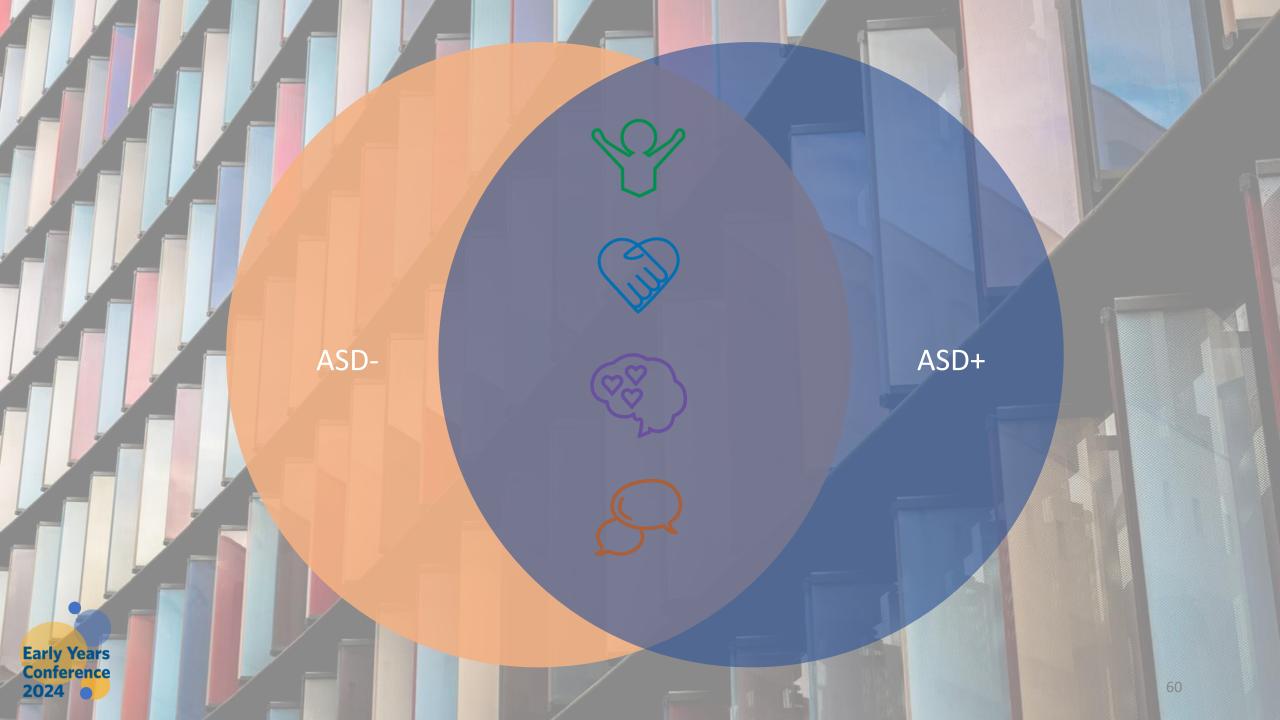


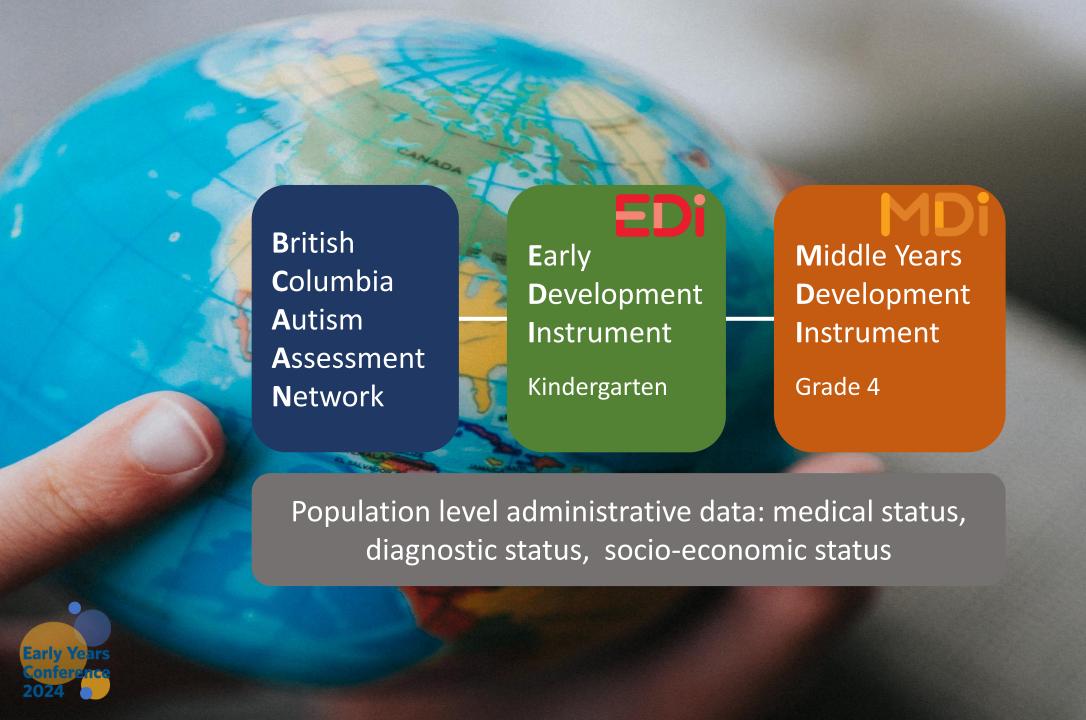






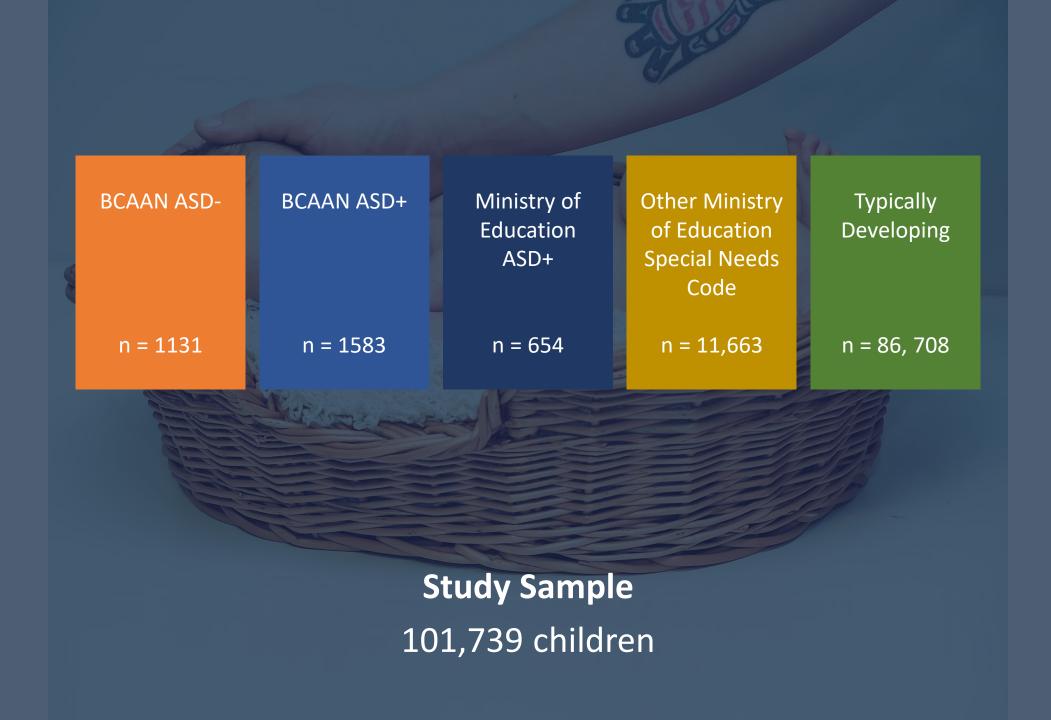
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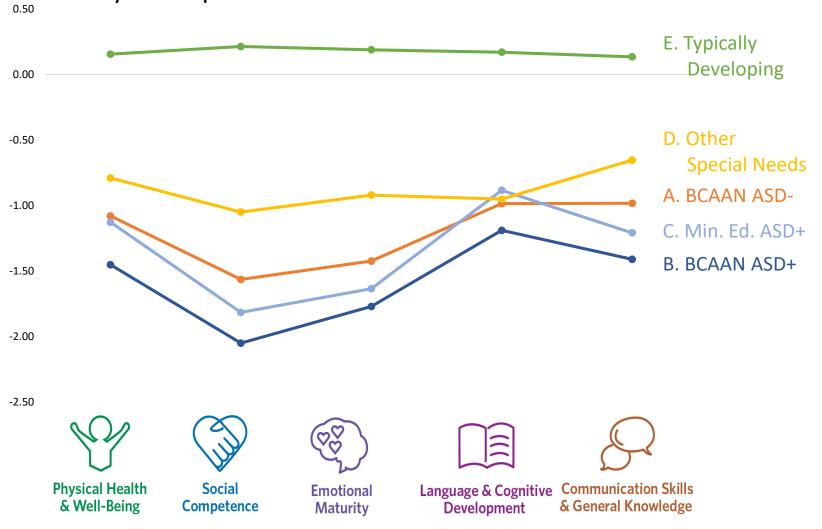


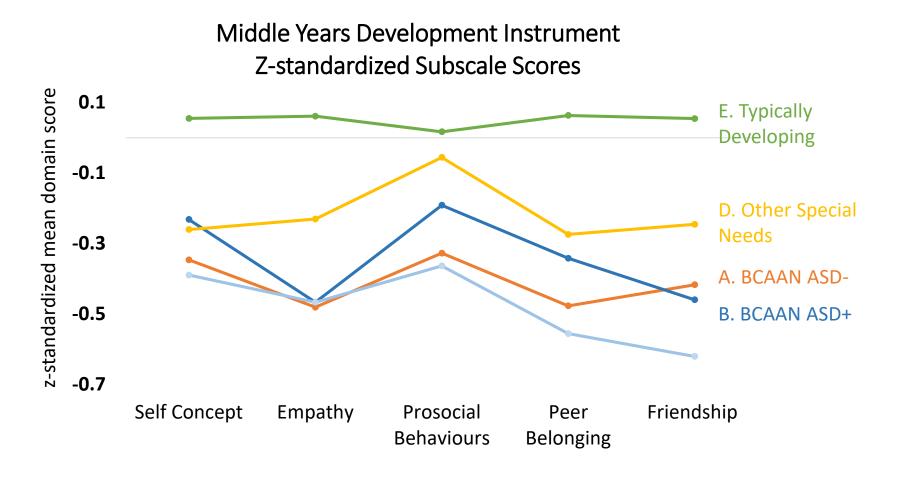






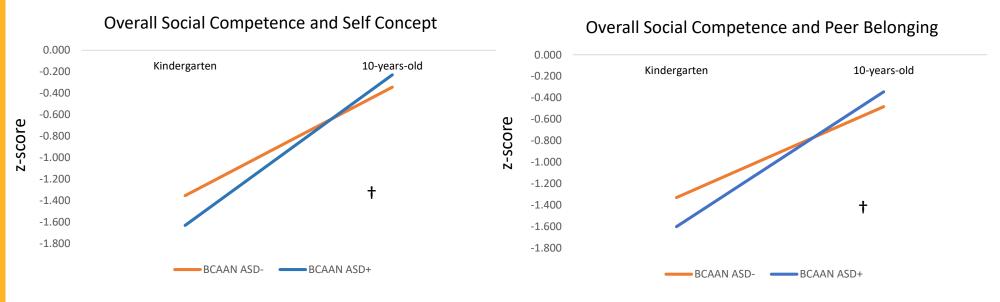
Early Development Instrument Z-Standardized Mean Scores



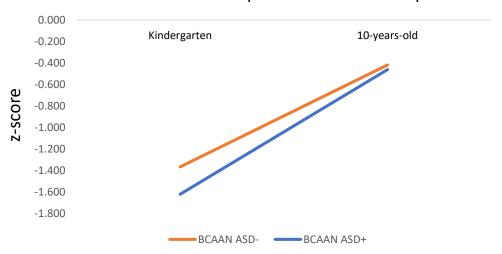


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EDI Overall Social Competence and MDI Self Concept, Peer Belonging, and Friendship

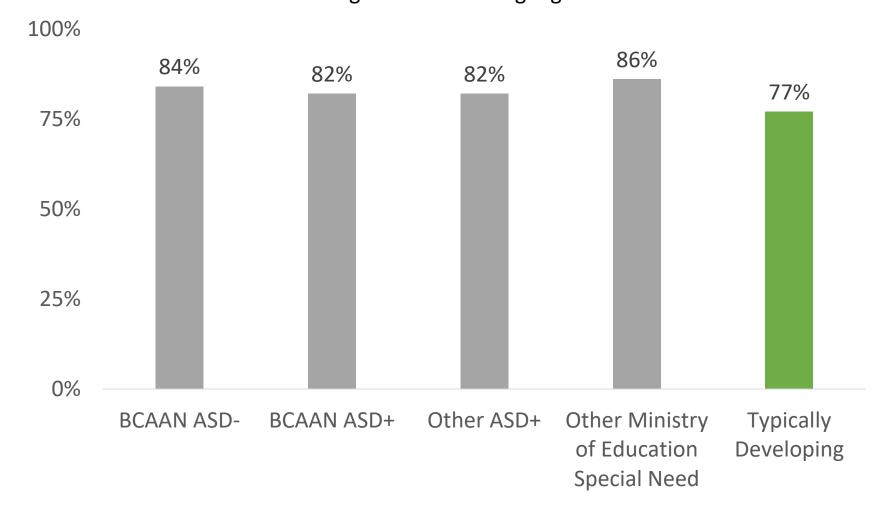


Overall Social Competence and Friendship

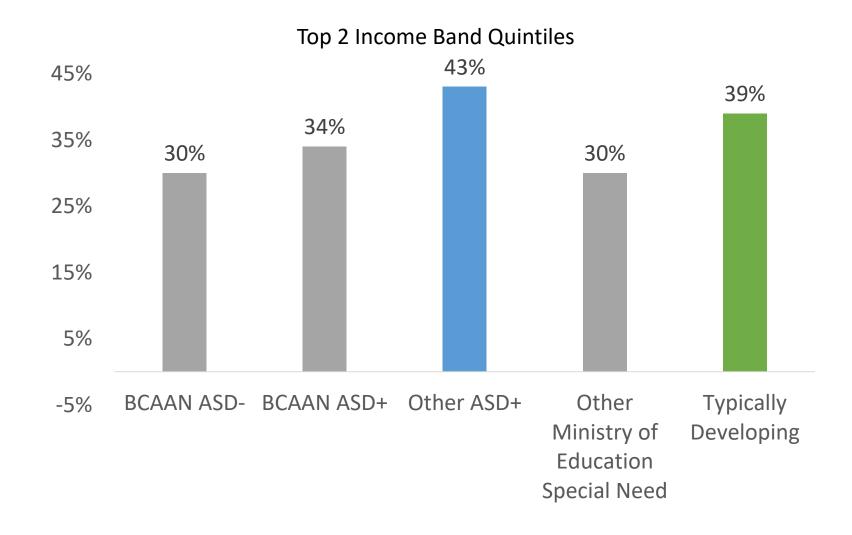


Language

English as a first language

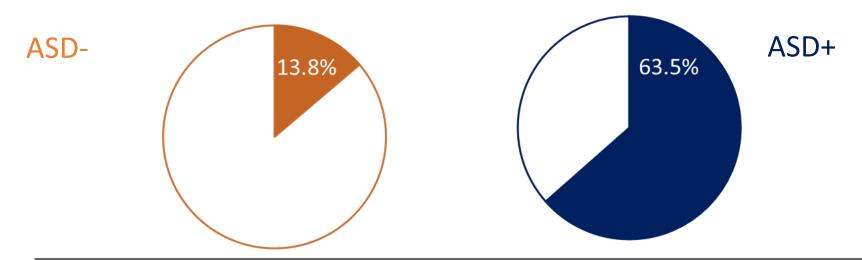


Household Income

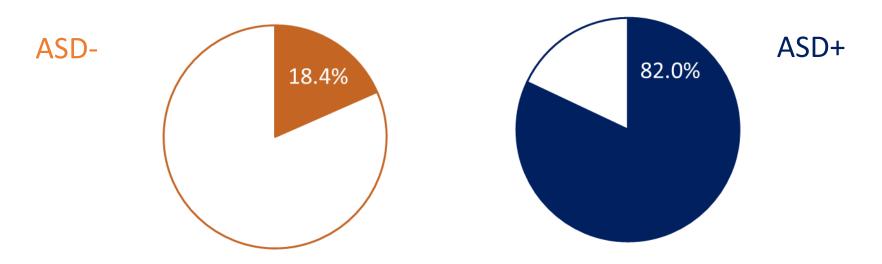


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Educational Funding at Kindergarten

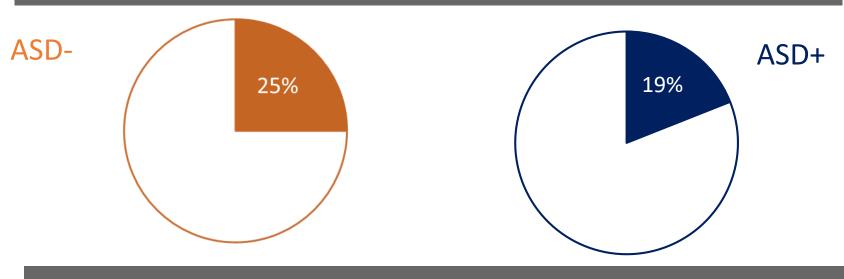


Educational Funding at Grade 4

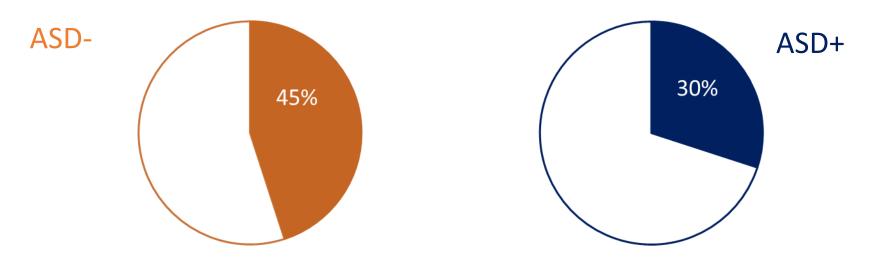


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Antidepressant Prescription



Stimulant Prescription



Conclusions Education Interventions Social Diagnostic labels Subgroup of children Less educational Socio-economic funding or with ADHD recognition of factors symptoms Access to Potential ongoing impairments assessment and challenging Less progress in social skills from behaviours and diagnosis difficulties without kindergarten to grade 4 adequate supports Increased prescription of psychotropic medications

Implications and Future Directions

1

2

3

Data:
Development of children with unmet or unidentified needs



Equity and Access:
Barriers and
facilitators to access
to assessments and
supports



Right supports for the right child at the right time: Needs and functionbased community and educational supports









