

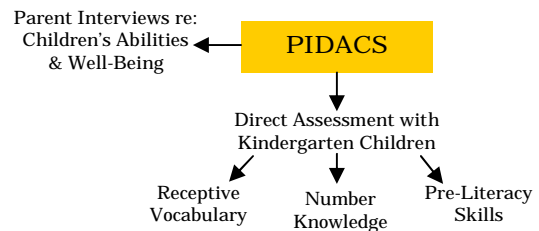
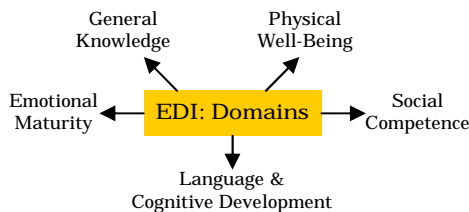
Literacy Brief



Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a 3-year national research initiative which allows communities to gather data around 3 important questions: 1) Are our children ready for school?; 2) What family & community factors influence our children's development?; and 3) Are current programs & services properly supporting young families in our area?

Kindergarten teachers completed "readiness to learn" surveys called the Early Development Instrument (EDI) for each student in the class .

Parent Interviews and Direct Assessments of Children Survey (or PIDACS): parents of kindergarten children were interviewed, while their children were directly tested in the classroom.



This brief reports on UEY research conducted with children, parents and teachers in the Greater Saint John area, concentrating on issues relating to children's literacy.

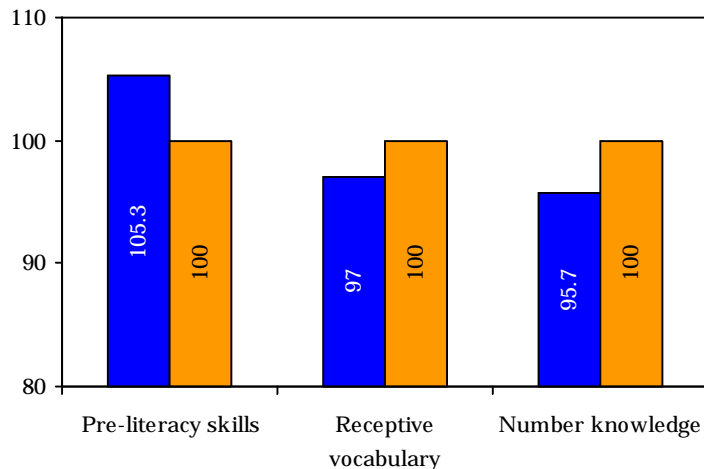
In Greater Saint John, children's literacy is a complex issue...

Compared to a national sample, kindergarten-aged children in Greater Saint John had significantly higher scores on the EDI language and cognitive development domain. This domain measures skills such as reading, and reciting information from memory. We also have fewer "vulnerable" children (11%) than the national sample (15%).

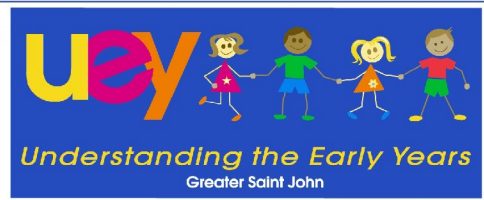
However, despite these EDI scores, the PIDACS direct assessments indicate that we still have room for improvement:

- Pre-literacy skills (e.g., copying/ writing letters and numbers): our children performed significantly higher than the national average.
- Receptive vocabulary (e.g., understanding of spoken words): scores were significantly lower than the national average.
- Number knowledge (e.g., ability to do simple math): scores were significantly lower than the national average.

Fig. 1. PIDACS: Direct Assessment of Children
 ■ District 8 ■ National Sample



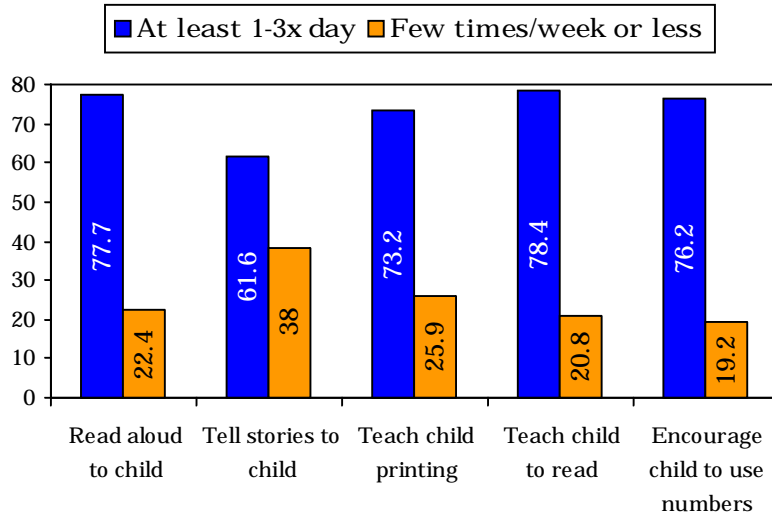
Literacy Brief



Parents and children: Working together to learn!

As parents, we are the first and most important influences on our children's reading, writing and numeracy skills. Fig. 2 shows that about three-quarters of parents in Greater Saint John promote literacy-related activities with their kindergarten children on at least a daily basis. Well done! And in Greater Saint John, our parents and children make use of book clubs and reading programs at a rate similar to the national average.

Fig. 2. Literacy Activities in the Home



Greater Saint John children on their own: on a daily basis...

- ...approximately 80% of children practice real or pretend writing.
- ...approximately 80% of children read or make attempts to read.
- ...two-thirds of children look at books, magazines, and other reading materials.
- ...roughly half of the children will discuss a book with friends or family.

So, what does all this mean?

As parents and teachers, we are doing a good job encouraging our children's growing literacy — as demonstrated by the pre-literacy scores and the number of parents engaging their children to learn. However, the data also shows that other literacy-related skills are weaker than our national counterparts', and that one-fourth of parents are not promoting literacy on a daily basis with their children.

Spending at least 15 minutes a day can improve children's literacy—that's all it takes!

For more information about literacy and what we can do for our children:

- Literacy Coalition of NB: www.nb.literacy.ca
- Saint John Free Public Library: www.saintjohnlibrary.com (click on 'For Kids' section)

For more information, visit www.uey-sj.org!



Human Resources and Social Development Canada

Ressources humaines et Développement social Canada