



## FAQs about community early childhood development results

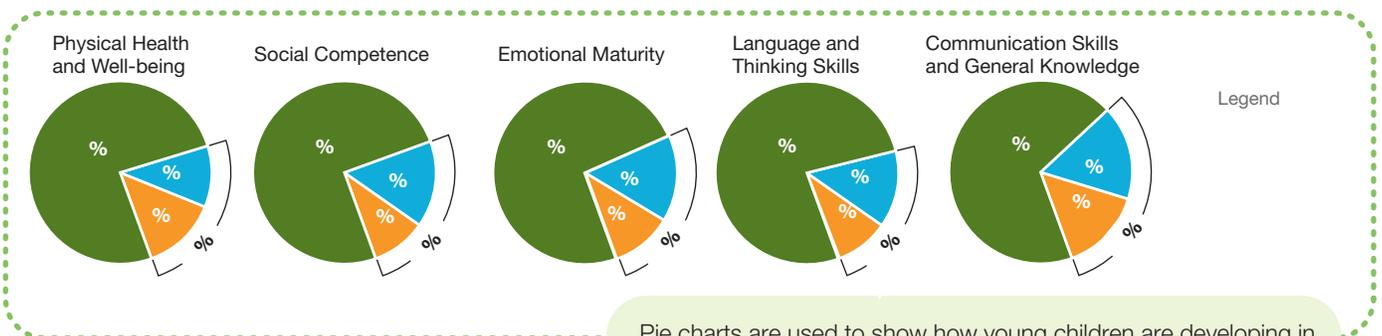
This fact sheet deals with questions that have come up in response to community early development results first released in April 2014. It supplements information that was provided in the Introduction to the *How are our young children doing? Community profiles of early childhood development in Alberta* report (<https://www.ecmap.ca/Findings-Maps/Community-Results/complete2014/Pages/default.aspx>). The questions are grouped by category.

### Early Development Instrument (EDI)

#### ? Interpreting EDI results

**Q:** Why is the percentage of children developing appropriately in all areas of development different from the percentage of children developing appropriately in each of the five areas of development (the green area in the pie charts) in our community?

**A:** These are two different kinds of results. Children who are developing appropriately **in one area** of development may not be developing appropriately in other areas of development. Each pie chart shows how children are developing in one particular area of development. Children who are developing appropriately (green in the pie chart) in the area of physical health and well-being, for example, may not be developing appropriately in the area of social competence. Children who are developing appropriately **in all five areas** of development would show up in the green section of **all five** pie charts.



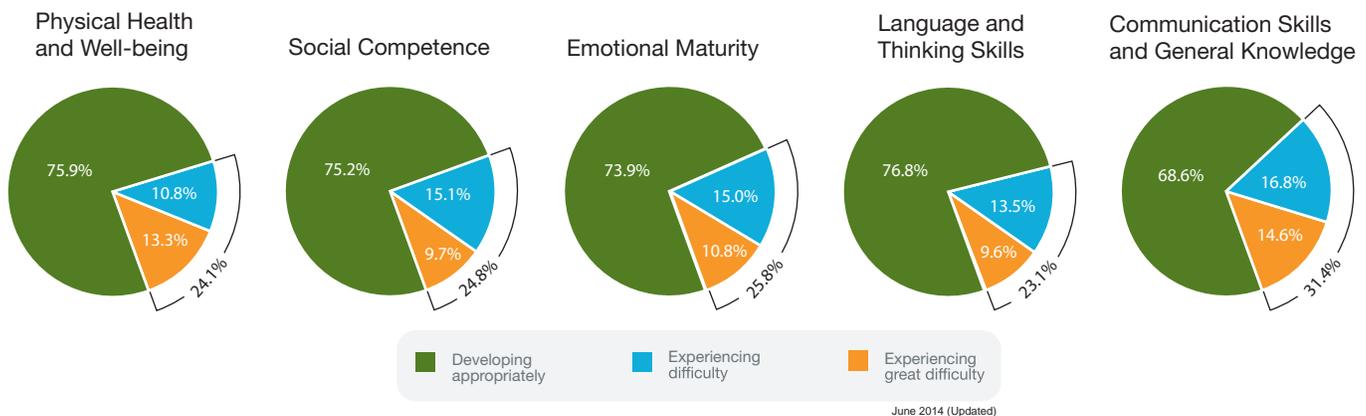
Pie charts are used to show how young children are developing in each of the areas of development measured by the EDI

## ? Updated EDI results

**Q:** Why are the EDI results for the five areas of development for Alberta different in the printed April 2014 version of the Introduction to the *Community profiles* report and in the electronic June 2014 (Updated) version that is posted on the website?

**A:** The EDI results for the five areas of development for Alberta that appear in the printed April 2014 version of the report have been updated. The updated version appears in the electronic version of the report posted on our website (<https://www.ecmap.ca/Findings-Maps/Community-Results/complete2014/Pages/default.aspx>) and on other pages of our website where Alberta results are reported. The results have also been updated in the June 2014 version of the fact sheet *Baseline EDI results set for Alberta*.

The updated Alberta EDI results are shown below. You will notice a slight difference in the results for social competence and communications skills and general knowledge.



Please note: percentages may not always add up to exactly 100 per cent due to missing data and rounding.

## ? Comparing EDI results to previous years

**Q:** Can EDI results be compared by year?

**A:** EDI results cannot be compared by year because information on kindergarten children was collected in different years by different school authorities (for example, public school boards, Catholic school boards, charter schools) in different parts of the province. School authorities were invited by Alberta Education to collect EDI data twice between 2009 and 2013. They were given the option of choosing which years to participate. This means that each community has a mixture of years in which data was collected by the various school authorities.

**Q:** How do the CIP (Community Information Package) results for our community compare to our community profile report results?

**A:** EDI results in the CIPs were intended to provide communities with **preliminary** information about their young children's development. When enough data was collected in a community, EDI results were analyzed and compiled by EMap into a CIP, to give communities information that they could begin to work with as part of Alberta's Early Child Development Mapping Initiative.

EDI results in the community profiles represent **all** the data that was collected in each community between 2009 and 2013, including data that was used in the CIPs. The combined data offers a **complete** picture of early development in communities across Alberta and provides a baseline for future comparison. That's why it's known as baseline data.

## *Children with special needs*

**Q:** Why are children with special needs not included in EDI results?

**A:** Children with special needs are not included because Alberta follows the same methods for analyzing EDI data used by the Offord Centre (at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario), which developed the EDI and established the Canadian norm. This makes it possible to compare Alberta EDI results with Canadian norms.

**Q:** Why were children experiencing language delays not removed from EDI analysis?

**A:** Children with language delays were included in EDI analysis because they are included by the Offord Centre. This makes it possible to compare Alberta EDI results with the Canadian norm.

**Q:** How are children with special needs categorized?

**A:** Children with special needs in Alberta are children who have been diagnosed with severe physical, cognitive and/or emotional disabilities and have been assigned a special education code of 41 to 46. (Students are coded to ensure they receive the special education programming and funding they require for their particular disabilities.) Children can be diagnosed at any time before or once they start school.

**Q:** Why is there such a difference in the percentage of children with diagnosed severe disabilities in our CIP and our community profile?

**A:** The percentages may differ as a result of additional EDI information collected by school authorities in your community and data cleaning by ECMap analysts.

## *First Nations children*

**Q:** Are First Nations children included in EDI results?

**A:** First Nations children who live on reserve and attend reserve schools are not included in EDI results, because reserve schools fall under federal, not provincial jurisdiction, and did not collect EDI data.

## *EDI reliability*

**Q:** How objective are teachers' responses on EDI questionnaires?

**A:** The Offord Centre tested the EDI for bias during the development of the tool. EDI questionnaires were designed to make them as objective as possible. Teachers' answers to questions are based primarily on their observations of children's behaviour, rather than on teachers' opinions. Teachers receive training in using the EDI and are supplied with manuals on how to fill out questionnaires.

**Q:** Is the EDI an effective tool for measuring early development?

**A:** The EDI has proven to be a useful tool for gathering population data on children's early development in five areas and tracking development over time. That's what the EDI was designed to do. The EDI is not effective as a diagnostic or screening tool for children individually. Other tools have been designed specifically for that purpose.

## EDI-related results

**Q:** How does Alberta compare to other provinces?

**A:** It is difficult to compare Alberta with other provinces because provinces use the EDI and report results differently. Provinces also have different policies in regards to, for example, children with special needs and the starting age for kindergarten. British Columbia includes children with special needs in its EDI results, for example. Children who start kindergarten later and are older tend to do better on EDI results. Alberta does fall below Canadian EDI norms, however. Nearly 29 per cent of kindergarten-aged children in Alberta are experiencing great difficulty in one or more areas of development as compared to the national norm of 25.4 per cent. Nearly fifteen percent are experiencing great difficulty in two or more areas of development as compared to 12.4 per cent for the national norm.

**Q:** Do girls score higher than boys on the EDI? How does that relate to school success between boys and girls?

**A:** Research elsewhere suggests that there are gender differences in EDI results and in school success between boys and girls. Further analysis is needed to find out if this is the case in Alberta.

**Q:** Is there a difference in EDI results between children who attended preschool and those who didn't?

**A:** The EDI questionnaire includes questions about whether children attended preschool or received other care outside the home before they entered kindergarten. More analysis is needed to determine if there is a connection between EDI results and preschool attendance and care in Alberta.

## Socio-economic status and demographics

**Q:** Why was 2011 census data not used? Isn't 2006 data outdated?

**A:** 2011 data could not be used because the new voluntary National Household Survey that replaced the mandatory survey used in 2006 did not include socio-economic information that was as detailed. Because of its voluntary nature, the new survey underrepresented certain populations (the poor, First Nations, immigrants and the wealthy) and some geographic areas. (See page I-15 of the Introduction of the *Community profiles* report for more information.)

**Q:** What do the five factors of socio-economic status mean?

**A:** Twenty-six variables were identified from socio-economic data provided by Statistics Canada as the most likely to be related to early childhood development. The variables included income levels, employment rates, education, ethnic composition, the value of homes and the size of families. (For a complete list, please go to p. I-16 in the Introduction.) The variables were clustered together to find how they related to each other through a process called factor analysis. Five factors were identified and then labelled to approximate the variables contained in each factor. The factors are: economic stability, social mobility, cultural similarity, vulnerability and child care. Labelling factors can be a tricky business, however. The ways in which variables cluster together have to be studied carefully in order to understand how they are linked.

**Q:** Why are there differences between our community socio-economic index (SEI) and subcommunity SEIs? (For example, our community is categorized as medium high, but all our subcommunities are categorized as medium SEI.)

**A:** The SEI for each community is categorized in relationship to all other communities in Alberta. The SEI for each subcommunity is categorized in relationship to all other subcommunities in the province. This provides a more detailed picture of socio-economic status across Alberta, reveals disparities within the province and within communities and enables comparisons between like and like (apples and apples, and oranges and oranges).

## ? Community Resources

**Q:** What impact do our community resources have on our EDI results?

**A:** More analysis is needed to determine the relationship between the two.

## ? Impact

**Q:** How will EDI results affect future programming and funding decisions?

**A:** Having good information supports sound, effective decision-making. EDI data, combined with other information, such as health and socio-economic data, can contribute to evidence-based policies and programs that are responsive to community needs.

**Q:** How can we tell if what we are doing is having an impact on our EDI results?

**A:** Further EDI results would have to be collected.

**Q:** Do EDI results reflect how children will do in school?

**A:** Children who do poorly in EDI results don't necessarily do poorly in school, but other provinces have found that there is a connection between EDI results and school achievement. More research needs to be done on this in Alberta.



More information about EMap can be obtained at [www.ecmap.ca](http://www.ecmap.ca)

Mapping a bright future for Alberta's young children

