



# Understanding the Early Years North

Understanding the Early Years North (UEY North)

December 2006

## UEY Community Coalition Members

- Superior Children's Centre, Wawa ON (UEY sponsor)
- Early Years Centre North Inc., Lively ON
- Child Care Resources, Sudbury ON
- Child Care Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie ON
- Communities Together for Children, Thunder Bay ON
- Brass Bell Early Years Centre, Dorion ON
- Lake of the Woods Child Development Centre, Kenora ON

*"The EDI measures children's readiness to learn at school. The results are interpreted for groups of children. The EDI does not provide diagnostic information on individual children, neither is it designed to measure the school's performance."*

*The Offord Centre for Child Studies*

## Working Together for Children in Northern Ontario

The Understanding the Early Years (UEY) initiative for the Northern Region of Ontario is a result of a collaboration between 7 Northern Ontario Early Centres. This group forms the Community Coalition for the UEY project.

It is the **first time** that such a comprehensive study of senior kindergarten children and their families has been conducted in northern Ontario. The initiative will provide our communities with quality information on the readiness to learn of kindergarten children. We will also gather information about family and community factors that influence children's development and the availability of local resources to

support young children and their families.

Other partners in the project include 34 Boards of Education and numerous children's service providers from across the region.



The Northern Region includes Sudbury, Nickel Belt, Algoma-Manitoulin, Sault Ste. Marie, Superior North, Thunder Bay and Kenora-Rainy River.

Once a full analysis of the information has been completed,

the UEY Community Coalition will work with service providers, parents and the community to come up with an action plan to address the needs of our young children.

## Preliminary School Readiness Results are in!

In 2006, the Early Development Instrument (EDI) was implemented in over 250 schools across Northern Ontario, and 5281 Senior Kindergarten children were tested. A total of 4846 questionnaires were used to calculate the preliminary results for the Northern UEY region, as they were considered valid because they had no missing information, and were not for

children identified as having special needs. Separate analyses will be conducted for special needs children. Overall, the preliminary EDI results showed that children from the Northern UEY site scored **significantly lower than the normative sample** on 4 of the 5 domains of school readiness. (Fig 1.) However, they scored significantly higher on Language and Cognitive

Development.

Additional analyses were conducted on demographic variables to compare children within the Northern UEY Region to others across Canada. For example, the results showed that girls consistently scored better than boys, and that older children

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Preliminary Results from page 1)*

scored higher than younger children. This was true for all five domains of school readiness. Both these findings are a consistent developmental phenomenon across all sites where the EDI was implemented.

Further micro-level analyses of the EDI data will be carried out to uncover more specifically the nature of the discrepancies found, and also to look at how children from different communities are doing compared to other children within the Northern UEY site, and to the normative sample. This will help planners in their approach to support the children who are not measuring up to their peers.

*The normative sample includes EDI data collected across Canada between 2000 and 2004 from 116,860 non-special needs children with non-missing data on key categories.*

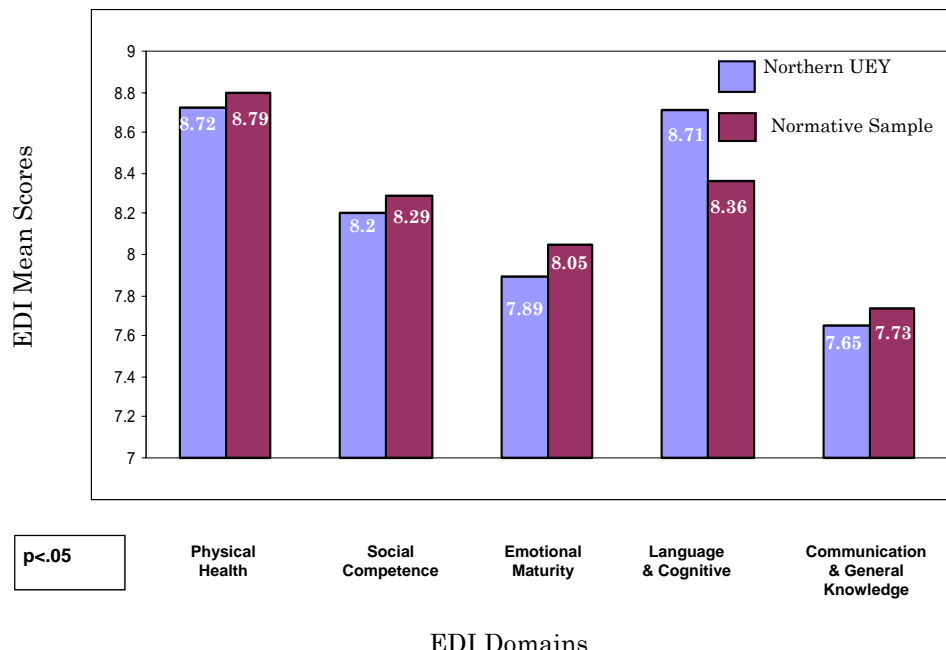
## UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY YEARS NORTH (UEY NORTH)

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**Figure 1. EDI Mean Scores For Northern Region UEY Compared to Normative Sample**



## Is Northern Ontario Ready for School?

Percentage of Vulnerable Children	UEY North	Normative Sample
SK Children Low on at least one school readiness domain	34%	25.9%
SK Children Low on at least two school readiness domains	17.7%	12.9%

*A significantly higher percentage of children from the Northern UEY region scored low on at least one or on two or more domains of school readiness when compared to the normative sample.*

## Understanding the Early Years North Project Area

