



The Early Development Instrument (EDI) and how it's being used in Alberta

The first five years of a child's life are the most critical period in development and have a lifelong impact on learning, health, work, relationships and well-being. The Early Development Instrument (EDI) gauges how populations of young children are developing. The EDI is being used by Alberta Education as part of the five-year Early Child Development (ECD) Mapping Initiative, which will help Albertans to understand better how well their young children are doing and to work together to give them a good start in life.

What is the EDI?

The EDI is a questionnaire completed by kindergarten teachers that collects information on children's development.

- It's a scientifically validated survey, developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.
- It's a measure of the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of children from birth to age five.
- It provides group information, much like a census; it's not a diagnostic tool.
- It is widely used across Canada and in other countries.

What does the EDI tell us?

The EDI covers five main areas of development:

Social Competence:
Child plays and gets along with others, is curious and likes to explore, respects adult authority and is able to control own behavior.

Language & Thinking Skills:
Child is interested in reading and writing, and can count and recognize some shapes and colours.



Physical Health & Well-being:

Child is well-rested, well-nourished and can sustain energy levels during kindergarten activities; is physically independent (can look after own basic needs), has gross motor skills (e.g., able to catch and throw a ball) and fine motor skills (e.g., able to handle crayons and pencils).

Emotional Maturity:

Child is able to express emotions at an age-appropriate level and empathize with others.

Communication Skills & General Knowledge:

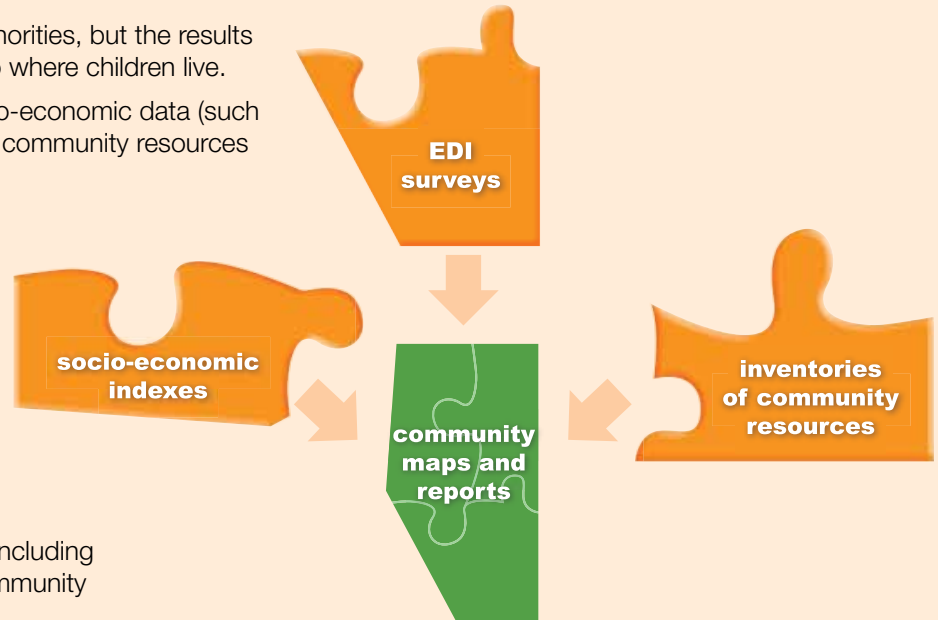
Child is able to communicate needs and wants in socially appropriate ways, can tell stories and has general knowledge about the outside world that is age appropriate.

How is EDI information collected?

- The EDI is administered by school authorities across Alberta on a voluntary basis.
- Parents give consent for their children to be included.
- Children are not tested directly. Kindergarten teachers fill out a questionnaire for each child in February or March once they've had a chance to get to know their children.
- **Children are not individually identified in EDI results.**

How are EDI results reported and interpreted in Alberta?

- EDI information is collected by school authorities, but the results are grouped by postal codes according to where children live.
- EDI results are analyzed in relation to socio-economic data (such as household income) and information on community resources (such as parks, libraries, preschool programs and informal support systems). This provides a greater understanding of early development and the factors that may affect development.
- EDI results and other information on early childhood development are put together for communities and for the province as a whole through easy-to-read maps and reports.
- Results will be shared with communities, including parents, service providers, educators, community members and policy-makers.



How will this be helpful?

- Communities will learn more about their children's development, and be able to compare their development with other communities, the province and nationally.
- Communities will be able to identify their strengths and needs, and make informed decisions on how to best support young children and families.
- This information will also be useful for local and provincial policy development.

For further information, please go to www.ecdmapping.alberta.ca

Mapping a bright future for Alberta's young children