



# MOVING FORWARD REPORT

Our area's youngest children and their families

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A community snapshot of 5 year old children  
and their families in the city of Kawartha Lakes  
and Haliburton County, Ontario

Results of the 2012 Early Development Instrument  
and Kindergarten Parents Surveys



Ontario Early Years Centre  
Haliburton Victoria Brock Inc.

December 2012

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# About the Moving Forward Report

**The early years last a lifetime. This report paints a picture of how well Senior Kindergarten children (5 year olds) are doing in the city of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) and the county of Haliburton using two tools: the Early Development Instrument and the Kindergarten Parent Survey, developed at the Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University, Ontario.**

**Information was collected using the Early Development Instrument (EDI) in the spring of 2012.**

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All senior kindergarten (SK) teachers participated in completing the EDI, telling us about the developmental skills of an estimated 99% of the population of senior kindergarten (SK) students who attended publicly-funded schools in CKL and Haliburton County (n= 652 without identified special needs).

For the first time in our area, local parents were asked to complete the Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) in the spring of 2012. With the support of SK teachers (who distributed and collected the anonymous KPS on behalf of the Ontario Early Years Centre Haliburton Victoria Brock), more than 450 CKL and Haliburton County parents or guardians of SK students completed the survey. This is an estimated return rate of more than 70% of children for whom an EDI was completed. In other areas of Ontario, the KPS return rate is more commonly in the 50% range.

**EDI EXPLAINED** The EDI is an outcome measure of early childhood development. Where you live makes a difference in your life. That is especially true for young children in the first five years of their life. What is it like to grow up here in the years from babyhood to kindergarten? How do young children fare here compared to the rest of Ontario? How well have we, as a community, supported young children (and their parents) through the years leading up to entering school?

Using EDI data, we can compare ourselves to the rest of Ontario (how well local children have been supported in their preschool years compared to the rest of the province). We can also compare ourselves to ourselves - monitoring local scores over time to look for patterns of change. The current report compares 2012 EDI results to those of the EDI in 2006.

When used in combination with other information (such as the KPS data and Statistics Canada demographics), EDI results can be used to:

- show what we need to work on as a community;
- suggest what types of intervention programs are needed, and where;
- monitor change over time;
- highlight neighbourhoods that are most in need of a particular type of program (such as libraries, childcare, playgrounds and recreational programs);
- show our progress as a family-friendly community, and;
- as a mobilization tool for agencies as well as city and county councils.

School board administrators also use EDI data for planning. “The data derived from the collection of the EDI facilitates and encourages community, provincial, national and international monitoring of the developmental health of our young learners.” (*Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University*).

**KPS EXPLAINED** EDI results tell us how well young children are developing; however there was a need for background information about the experiences of local children and their families before entering school. The KPS gathers parents’ perspective. This provides contextual information to add to our knowledge of the strengths and vulnerabilities of groups of local children.

The EDI provides part of the picture of developmental health in our community and the KPS fills in the picture to help us understand reasons why.

Like the EDI, Dr. Magdalena Janus and her team at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario developed the KPS and it is now being used across the province as companion data to the EDI.

This year, 2012, was the first time the KPS was undertaken in CKL and Haliburton County. More than 70% of parents or guardians of local SK children completed the KPS, an excellent return rate especially when the Offord Centre reports that KPS return rates are more commonly in the 55% range.

**FUNDING** The Ontario government's Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Research and Outcome Measurement Branch) provided funding to the Ontario Early Years Centre Haliburton Victoria Brock (Lindsay office) for both the EDI and the KPS data collections in CKL and the county of Haliburton. We are grateful for the enthusiastic participation of the wonderful kindergarten teachers of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) and the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington (PVNC) Catholic District School Board who shared their professional observations with us, and to Stephanie Vohra, early years program consultant at TLDSB, and Joan Ruf, early years student achievement consultant for PVNC.

## **TWO ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRES:**

### **EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT (EDI)**

- 8 page questionnaire completed by SK teachers across Canada
- measures children's development in the five areas of development (domains): physical health & well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language & cognitive development, and communication & general knowledge
- the EDI is a population-level outcome measure of how well a community, agencies and policy-makers have supported children as they develop in the years before they start school

### **KINDERGARTEN PARENT SURVEY (KPS)**

- 8 page survey completed by parents or guardians of SK children across Ontario
- gathers group-level data on demographics (such as household income), experiences in the preschool years (such as child care), young children's participation in community activities (such as sports teams, dance, library), parenting practices and neighbourhood characteristics.

## **EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT (EDI) COMPONENTS:**

### **1. Physical health and well-being**

- gross and fine motor skills
- holding a pencil
- running on the playground
- motor coordination
- adequate energy levels for classroom activities
- independence in looking after own needs
- daily living skills

### **2. Social Competence**

- curiosity about the world
- eagerness to try new experiences
- knowledge of standards of acceptable behaviour in a public place
- ability to control own behaviour
- appropriate respect for adult authority
- cooperation with others
- following rules
- ability to play and work with other children

### **3. Emotional Maturity**

- ability to reflect before acting
- a balance between too fearful and too impulsive
- ability to deal with feelings at the age-appropriate level
- empathic response to other people's feelings

### **4. Language and cognitive development**

- reading awareness
- age-appropriate reading and writing skills
- age-appropriate numeracy skills
- board games
- ability to understand similarities and differences
- ability to recite back specific pieces of information from memory

### **5. Communication skills and general knowledge**

- skills to communicate needs and wants in socially appropriate ways
- symbolic use of language
- story telling
- age-appropriate knowledge about the life and world around

Two additional EDI indicators will be discussed in a separate report:

**Special skills** - literacy, numeracy, dance, music, etc.

**Special problems** - health problems, learning problems, behaviour problems

# EDI: Physical Health and Well-being

## How do we compare to the rest of Ontario in this type of development? How do local 2012 results compare to 2006 edi results?

Overall, the development of Physical Health & Well-being skills in city of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) and Haliburton County is below the Ontario normative. This indicates that children growing up in CKL and Haliburton County have not developed their physical motor skills, independence and skills at preparing for the school day as well as children in the rest of Ontario by the time they reach senior kindergarten. Over time, local Physical Health and Well-being scores have significantly decreased, on average, in the six years between 2006 and 2012.

## Compared to the rest of Ontario, what percentage of senior kindergarten children in our area have difficulty with Physical Health & Well-being skills that make them vulnerable to poorer outcomes in the future?

The proportion and number of local children with very low scores (below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile) has significantly increased from 12% in 2006 to 18% in 2012. There are 6% more children in the city of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County who are vulnerable in Physical Health and Well-being developmental expectations by the time they reach kindergarten than there were six years ago. The percentage of local SK children scoring in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile is significantly higher in CKL and Haliburton County compared to SK children across Ontario.

## Which particular developmental areas of Physical Health & Well-being are most challenging for local children?

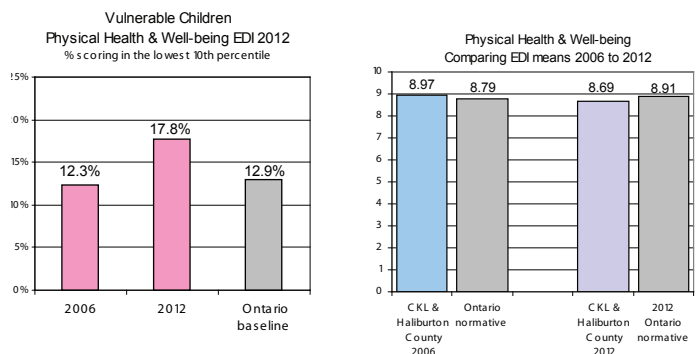
The percentages of SK children of CKL and Haliburton County (without identified special needs) who are demonstrating skills 'at or above' developmental expectations are shown in the graphs for the sub-categories of the development of Physical Health & Well-being. Communities and community agencies might consider ways they can support the development of skills for local children in the preschool years before they reach school entry age. These are indicated by 'few or none' or 'some' expected age-appropriate skills still developing.

Of the three sub-categories of Physical Health & Well-being, Physical Readiness for the School Day has the highest percentage of children at or above the expected skill level (95%), followed by Physical Independence (87%). More support is needed for the 48% of local SK children who have not yet developed age-appropriate Gross motor and Fine motor Skills.

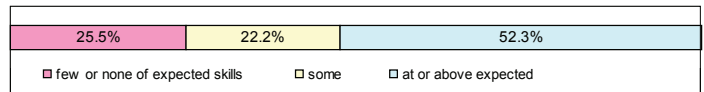
**GROSS MOTOR AND FINE MOTOR SKILLS** Only 52% of local children have age-appropriate large muscle skills (like running and climbing) and the small muscle skills commonly used in school (such as controlling a pencil and turning pages without tearing the page). One quarter have few or none of the gross motor and fine motor skills expected at their age. Next to Communication & General Knowledge, this is the highest percentage of local SK children with 'few or none' of the expected skills of a sub-category. They have not had enough experience with gross motor skills in order to be well coordinated, or with small muscle skills like controlling a pencil or brush. They may also have poor overall energy levels and physical skills.

**PHYSICAL INDEPENDENCE** 87% of local SK children look after their own needs independently, have an established hand preference, are well-coordinated and do not suck a thumb or finger, whereas 13% are not developing as expected in their independence, handedness, and/or coordination.

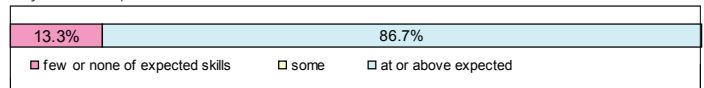
**PHYSICAL READINESS FOR THE SCHOOL DAY** 95% of local SK children arrive at school well rested and appropriately dressed for school activities. They rarely arrive late or hungry. 5% arrive at school tired, late or hungry at least sometimes. They may be under-dressed or over-dressed for school activities.



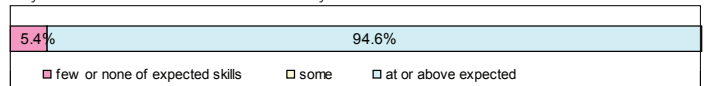
### Gross Motor and Fine Motor Skills



### Physical Independence



### Physical Readiness for the School Day





# EDI: Social Competence

## How do we compare to the rest of Ontario in development of Social Competence? How do local 2012 results compare to 2006 EDI results?

Overall, Social Competence scores for local children in 2012 continue to be higher than the Ontario baseline. Children growing up in CKL and Haliburton County are developing social skills better than children the same age across Ontario. The local difference in averages (means) between 2006 and 2012 was not statistically significant so SK children of CKL and Haliburton County are developing Social Competence as well as local kindergarten children of six years ago.

## What percentage of children in our area have difficulty with Social Competencies that make them vulnerable to poorer outcomes in the future?

There was a smaller percentage of senior kindergarten children in CKL and Haliburton County who scored at the lowest end of Social Competence skills on the EDI, compared to the percentage of Ontario's children who scored in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile. This indicates fewer children are vulnerable in their Social Competence skills in CKL and Haliburton County than might be statistically expected. Over time, the percentage of vulnerable children in CKL and Haliburton County decreased in 2012 (8.4%) compared to 2006 (9.9%).

## Which particular developmental areas of Social Competence are most challenging for local children?

The percentages of SK children of CKL and Haliburton County (without identified special needs) who are demonstrating skills 'at or above' those expected are shown below for the sub-categories of the development of Social Competence.

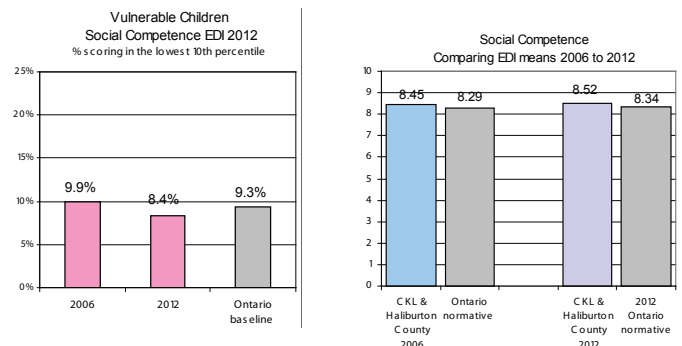
Communities and community agencies might consider ways they can support the development of skills for local children in the preschool years before they reach school entry age. These are indicated by 'few or none' or 'some' expected age-appropriate skills still developing. Of the four sub-categories of Social Competence, 'Overall Social Competence' has the highest percentage of children who show 'few or none' of the expected skills, followed by 'Approaches to Learning', according to kindergarten teachers.

**READINESS TO EXPLORE NEW THINGS** Teachers reported that more than 8 out of 10 local SK children are curious about the surrounding world, and they are eager to explore new books, toys and games.

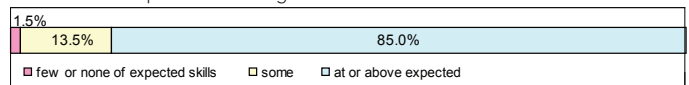
**APPROACHES TO LEARNING** Two thirds of SK children listen well, work independently, and solve problems. They follow instructions and class routines and easily adjust to changes. But almost 34% of local children are rarely able to solve their problems without help or to follow class routines and they do not easily adjust to changes in routines. They are still learning to work neatly and independently appropriate to their age.

**RESPONSIBILITY AND RESPECT** According to teacher reports of individual children, more than 81% always (or most of the time) show respect for others and property, follow rules and take care of materials, accept responsibility for actions and show self-control.

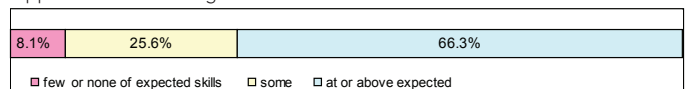
**OVERALL SOCIAL COMPETENCE** Local families with young children need help from the community and local agencies to support their children's development of overall age-appropriate social competence before school entry age. Almost half have low self-confidence, poor overall social skills, and/or trouble playing with a variety of children or interacting cooperatively.



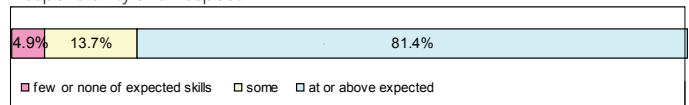
### Readiness to Explore New Things



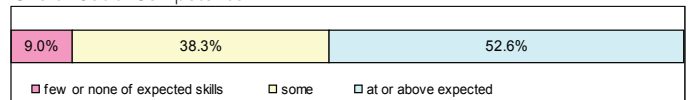
### Approaches to Learning



### Responsibility and Respect



### Overall Social Competence



# EDI: Emotional Maturity

## How do we compare to the rest of Ontario in the development of Emotional Maturity? How do local 2012 results compare to 2006 EDI results?

Overall, Emotional Maturity scores for local children in 2012 are higher than the Ontario baseline. That means that children growing up in CKL and Haliburton County are developing their Emotional Maturity skills better than children the same age in the rest of Ontario by the time they reach senior kindergarten. The local difference in means between 2006 and 2012 was not statistically significant so SK children of CKL and Haliburton County are developing age-appropriate Emotional Maturity as well as local kindergarten children of six years ago were.

## What percentage of children in our area have difficulty with Emotional Maturity competencies that make them vulnerable to poorer outcomes in the future?

There was about the same percentage of vulnerable SK children on the Emotional Maturity scale in 2012 as there was six years ago in CKL and Haliburton County compared to the percentage of Ontario's children who scored in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile. The percentage of vulnerable children in CKL and Haliburton County increased slightly in 2012 (10.0%) compared to 2006 (9.3%).

## Which particular developmental areas of Emotional Maturity are most challenging for local children?

The percentages of SK children of CKL and Haliburton County (without identified special needs) who are demonstrating skills 'at or above' those expected by the time they reach senior kindergarten are shown below for the sub-categories of the development of Emotional Maturity.

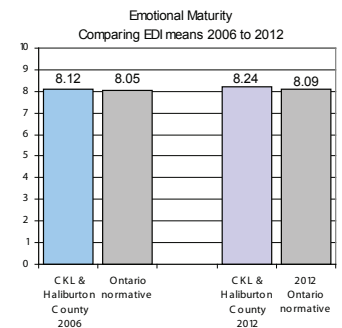
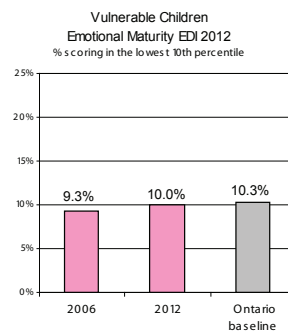
Communities and community agencies might consider ways they can support the development of skills for local children in the preschool years before they reach school entry age. These are indicated by 'few or none' or 'some' expected skills still developing. Of the four sub-categories of Emotional Maturity, 'Prosocial and Helping Behaviour' has the highest percentage of children who show 'few or none' of the expected skills according to kindergarten teachers.

**HYPERACTIVITY AND INATTENTION** Three quarters of local children almost never show most of the hyperactive behaviours. They are able to concentrate, settle to chosen activities, wait their turn, and most of the time think before doing something.

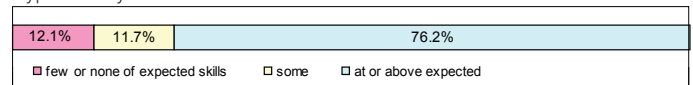
**AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR** Teachers report that 85% of local SK children are kind to others, almost never have temper tantrums, and they find ways to solve conflicts other than with aggression. They rarely or never show most of the aggressive behaviours.

**ANXIOUS AND FEARFUL BEHAVIOUR** Most local SK children are happy and able to enjoy school. By January they are comfortable being left at school by caregivers and they rarely or never show anxious behaviours.

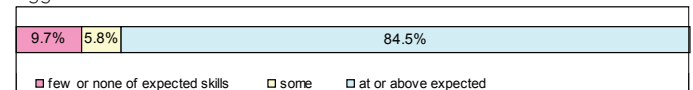
**PROSOCIAL AND HELPING BEHAVIOUR** Less than half of local SK children are starting school with the social and helping skills they need at 5 years old. 53% 'never' or 'almost never' show most of the helping behaviours appropriate for their age. They are not likely to spontaneously offer to help others, to help someone who is hurt, sick or upset, and they haven't yet learned to invite bystanders into games or activities.



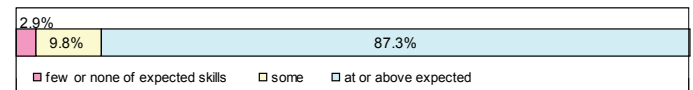
### Hyperactivity and Inattention



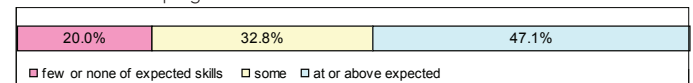
### Aggressive Behaviour



### Anxious and Fearful Behaviour



### Prosocial and Helping Behaviour



# EDI: Language and Cognitive Development

## How do we compare to the rest of Ontario in the development of Language and Cognitive Development? How do local 2012 results compare to 2006 EDI results?

Language and Cognitive Development scores for local children in 2012 continue to be higher, on average, than the Ontario baseline. That means that children growing up in CKL and Haliburton County are developing their Language and Cognitive Development skills better than children the same age in the rest of Ontario by the time they reach SK. The local difference in averages (means) between 2006 and 2012 was also significant which indicates that the SK children of CKL and Haliburton County are developing their Language and Cognitive skills better than the local kindergarten children of six years ago.

## What percentage of children in our area have difficulty with Language and Cognitive competencies that make them vulnerable to poorer outcomes in the future?

As expected with the significantly raised average scores, the percentage of vulnerable SK children on the Language and Cognitive Development scale was significantly lower than the percentage of Ontario's children who scored in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile. There was a decrease over time as well. Between 2006 and 2012, the percentage of vulnerable children in CKL and Haliburton County decreased from 7.1% to 6.0%.

## Which particular developmental areas of Language & Cognitive Development are most challenging for local children?

The percentages of SK children of CKL and Haliburton County (without identified special needs) who are demonstrating skills 'at or above' those expected by the time they reach senior kindergarten are shown below for the sub-categories of the development of Language and Cognitive Development.

Communities and community agencies might consider ways they can support the development of skills for local children in the preschool years before they reach school entry age. These are indicated by 'few or none' or 'some' expected skills still developing. Of the four sub-categories of Language and Cognitive Development, 'Interest in numeracy, literacy and memory' has the highest percentage of children who show 'few or none' of the expected skills (11%) according to kindergarten teachers.

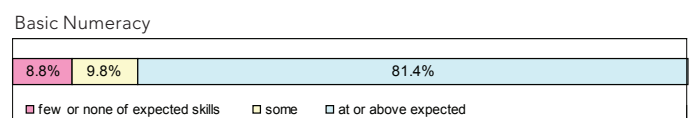
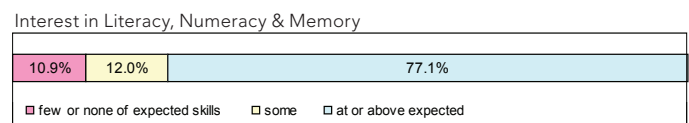
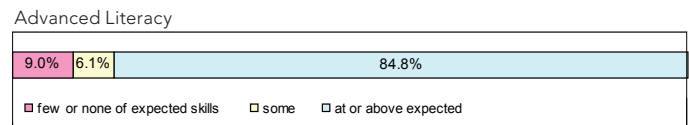
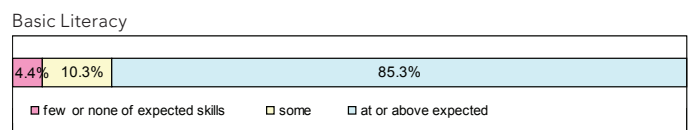
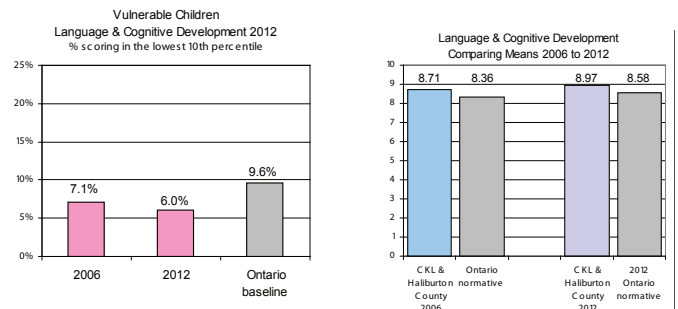
**BASIC LITERACY** According to teachers' reports most children (85%) have all the basic literacy skills appropriate to their age.

They know how to handle a book, identify letters and associate sounds to some letters. They show awareness of rhyming words, know that printing goes from top to bottom and left to right, and are able to print their own name. The percentage of children who are have 'few or none' of expected basic literacy skills has decreased since 2006.

**ADVANCED LITERACY** 85% of SK children demonstrate at least half of the advanced literacy skills such as reading simple words & sentences, printing simple words & sentences and printing voluntarily.

**INTEREST IN LITERACY, NUMERACY & MEMORY** About three quarters of SK children show interest in books & reading, math & numbers, and have no difficulty with remembering things. They are interested in games involving memory or numbers whereas 23% are still developing these interests and their memory.

**BASIC NUMERACY** More than 81% of local children entering SK have all the basic numeracy skills: they can count to 20, recognize shapes & numbers, compare numbers, sort & classify, use one to one correspondence, and they understand time concepts such as today and summer.



# EDI: Communication and General Knowledge

## How do we compare to the rest of Ontario in the development of Communication and General Knowledge? How do local 2012 results compare to 2006 EDI results?

Overall on the 2012 EDI, the average (mean) scores of children in CKL and Haliburton County on the Communication and General Knowledge measure did not differ significantly from those of kindergarten children in the rest of the province. This indicates that children growing up in CKL and Haliburton County are developing their abilities to communicate and their general knowledge of the world as well as children the same age in the rest of Ontario by the time they reach senior kindergarten.

Over time, averages (means) for Communication and General Knowledge skills have not significantly changed for children in the city of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County in the six years between 2006 and 2012.

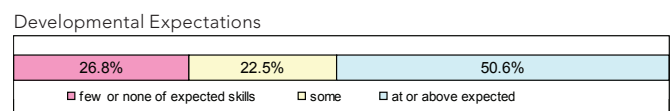
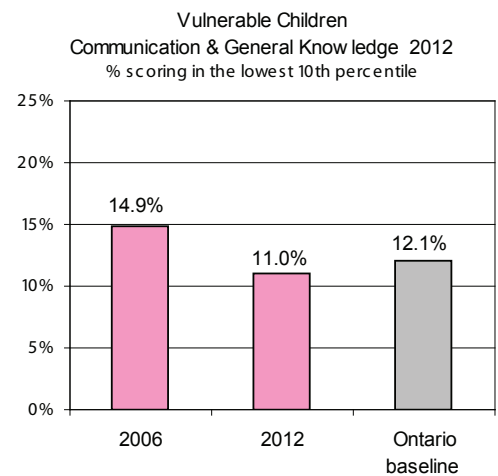
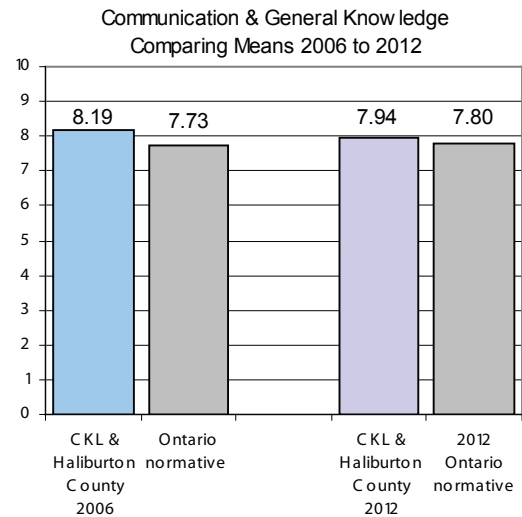
## What percentage of children in our area have difficulties in the development of Communication and General Knowledge competencies that make them vulnerable to poorer outcomes in the future?

Although the overall average stayed the same, the proportion and number of local children who scored very low (below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile) in Communication & General Knowledge skills significantly decreased in the six years from 2006 (15%) to 2012 (11%). There are fewer children with low Communication & General Knowledge skills than would be expected compared to other children in Ontario at the same age.

## What percentage of local children have all or almost all of the expected developmental skills of Communication and General Knowledge?

Only 51% of the SK children in CKL and Haliburton County have reached all or almost all of the developmental expectations in Communication and General Knowledge. As in 2006, this domain has the highest percentage of SK children who demonstrate 'few or none' of the expected skills (27%). More support is needed from families, the community and community agencies to help local SK children to be able to communicate easily and effectively, and to be comfortable with activities that involve a lot of talking & listening (such as telling a story, show & tell, and imaginative play).

Young children need to be able to effectively communicate their ideas, their wishes & feelings, even to their peers, and to have a good general knowledge of the world around them before they reach kindergarten age. This developmental domain does not have any sub-categories on the EDI.





# KPS: Family Demographics

**The kindergarten parent survey was completed in the spring of 2012 by the parents of more than two thirds of Senior Kindergarten (SK) children in publicly-funded schools of the city of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) and Haliburton County, Ontario, which was a 70% return rate. (N= 472).**

**WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEYS?** Most respondents were the SK child's mother (93%), 4% were the father, 1.6% (n=8) were a grandparent (1% of respondents listed their employment status as 'retired' with 2% of their partners as retired), and the remaining 1% were 'other' (such as foster parents). (Note: for the purposes of this report, all respondents will be referred to as 'parents').

- 48% of the SK children were girls and 52% were boys; 97% would be turning 6 years old in 2012
- 95% of the children in the sample had previously attended Junior Kindergarten (JK)

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT** 74% of respondents had post-secondary education such as a degree (26%), diploma or trade certificate. 20% had a high-school diploma as their highest level of formal education, and 5% had not completed high-school. When local SK parents were last surveyed in 2006 for the Understanding the Early Years Mapping Report (2007), 5% of mothers and 10% of fathers in CKL and Haliburton County had not completed high-school.

**IMMIGRATION** 97% of respondents have always lived in Canada, more than 2% have lived here more than 10 years and less than 1% have lived here less than 5 years.

**LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME** 98% of respondents speak English to their child at home, less than 1% speak French and 1% speak other languages (such as Dutch, German, Greek, Russian & Tamil, equally). There are small Mennonite and Amish communities in CKL, where German is the first language spoken at home, but they did not participate in the KPS or EDI as the children do not attend publicly-funded schools.

**ABOUT THE FAMILIES OF LOCAL YOUNG CHILDREN**

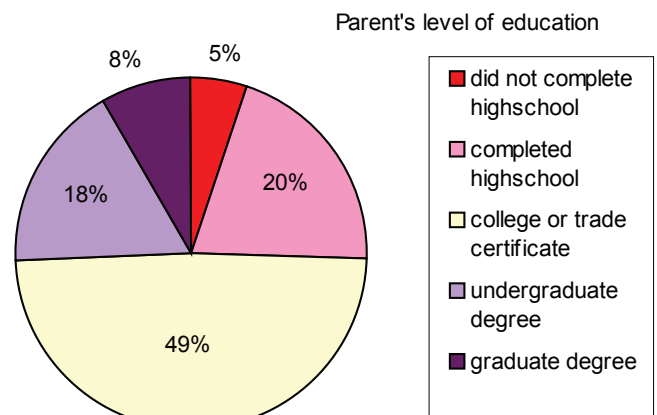
- **Family Structure:** 83% of SK children have two parents at home, the parents of 9% of SKs are sharing custody and 9% live with one parent
- **Siblings:** 50% of SKs had one sibling, 12% of SKs were the only child and 15% came from big families with three or more siblings

- **Extended family:** 11% of SK children have extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles etc.) living in their home (for more than 6 months)

**SOCIOECONOMIC STRUCTURE**

- 66% of respondents (and 88% of their partners) work for pay
- **Income:**
  - most local children lived in families that had a household income between \$50,001 and \$75,000 (23%)
  - 43% of SK families had an income of over \$75,000 annually (before taxes)
  - 17% of SK families had a before-tax income of less than \$30,000 annually
- **Food security:** 13% of families with a child in SK in CKL and Haliburton County accessed community food services (such as a food bank or school nutrition programs) at least once in the previous year
- in the 2006 study of local families with an SK child published by the Government of Canada in 2010\*, 13% of families with an SK child reported that their annual household income was below \$30,000 before taxes. By 2012, 6 years later, that percentage has increased to 17%

**COMPARISONS TO 2011 CENSUS FIGURES** It would have been interesting to compare the average income of the families of SK children, for instance, with that of the general population to add context, however education levels, income, mobility, immigration and employment rates are no longer available from the census profiles due to the elimination of the compulsory long-form for the census last year. We would have to rely on figures from the 2006 Census for comparison.



\* Willms, J. Douglas, (2010). *Understanding the Early Years: Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County, Ontario. A Community Research Report.* Prepared for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Government of Canada and KSI Research International, Inc. with R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

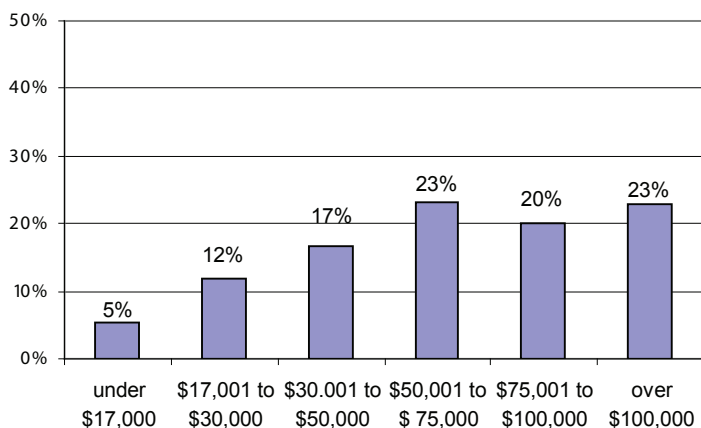


# KPS: Child Health and Development

**“Children who participate in organized activities outside of school such as sports, music, the arts or clubs tend to have higher self-esteem, interact better with friends and perform somewhat better in school, according to data from the National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth (NLSCY). Data from the third collection cycle of the NLSCY show an estimated 87% of Canadian children aged 4 to 15 participated in organized activities outside of school, leaving about 13% of children who rarely or never participated.” National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth: (1998/99)**

— [WWW.STATCAN.GC.CA/DAILY-QUOTIDIEN/010530/DQ010530A-ENG.HTM](http://WWW.STATCAN.GC.CA/DAILY-QUOTIDIEN/010530/DQ010530A-ENG.HTM)

Annual Household Income of SK families before taxes



## MORE QUICK FACTS

- respondents indicated that just over 2 % of SK children identified themselves as an Aboriginal, Métis, Inuit or First Nations person (n = 10) (4% chose not to answer this question)
- 49 % of SK children had never moved, whereas 3% had moved 4 or more times in the past 5 years (How often has your child lived in a different house?)
- 88% of SK children had attended one school for their JK and SK years; 10% had attended two schools, and 1% had attended three different schools, including their current one.

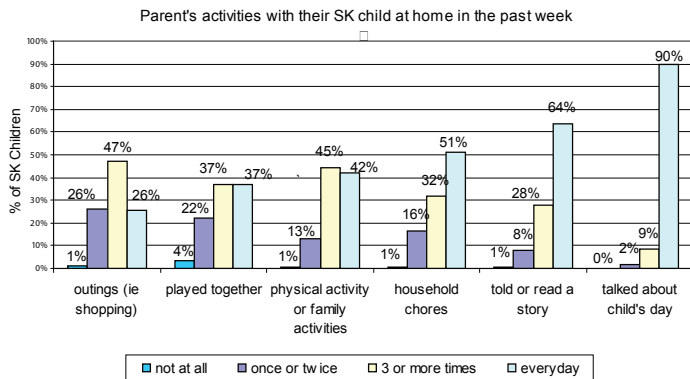
## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- coached sports: almost 80% of local SK students participated in a sport with a coach in the past 12 months (of these, 58% participated weekly, 4% only once in the year)
- 1 out of 5 SK students were not on any team with a coach in the past year
- without coach: 98% participated in a sport at least once in the last 12 months without a coach (of these, 85% participated weekly), and 2% not at all or only once in the year
- getting to school: 62 % took the bus or taxi to school. Just over 14 % walk to school; 25% are driven or take public transit
- 63 % of SK parents indicated that they, themselves, are able to get 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (such as walking or a sport) at least three times per week
- only 5% of parents said it was a challenge getting their SK child to be active (see KPS- Parenting Practices).

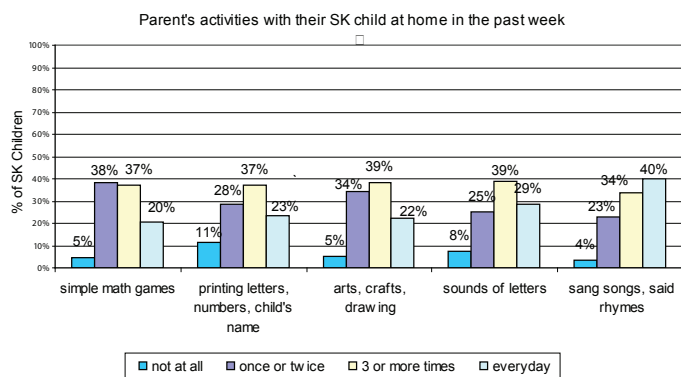
## ACTIVITIES AT HOME

- (See graph) On a typical school day, local SK children spend 1.7 hours watching TV, using the computer, or playing video games at home. In 2007 local children typically had 1.8 hours of screen time at home on a school day.
- every day in the homes of most SK children, their parents talked to them about their day (90%)
  - over two thirds of parents said they read or told a story to their child every day (64%), an additional 28% did so 3 or more times in the past week
  - 83% of SK children did a household chore together with a parent 3 or more times in the past week
  - 89% participated in physical activity by themselves or with their family (like a walk, bike ride or playing outside) at least 3 times in the past week
  - 74% played together (such as hide & seek, tag, dress-up or tea party) in the past week (at least 3 times)

In the past 7 days, have you or someone close to your child done the following things with your child?



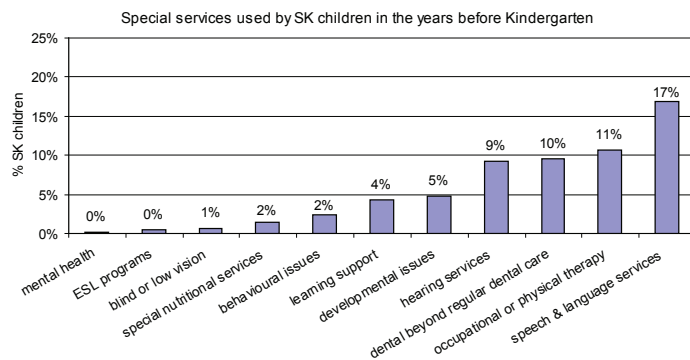
- the most common daily activity with parents was singing songs or saying rhymes (40%)
- more than a half of parents played simple math games like cards, counting, puzzles or board games at least 3 times in the past week (57%)
- 68% worked on the sounds of letters at home at least 3 times in the past week
- 60% of parents helped with printing letters, numbers and/or their child's name at least 3 times in the past week, but 11% didn't at all.



## SPECIAL NEEDS

- the most commonly accessed special service for local SK students before they started school were speech and language services (17%, n= 78), with another 1% on waitlists
- the second most commonly used special service were occupational or physical therapies (11%, n= 50) with a further 1% (n=4) on wait lists
- one in 10 children had required dental care beyond regular dental care (n= 44)
- 1% needed blind or low vision services and 9% needed hearing services
- unidentified special need: 5 % of parents felt their child had a special need that had not been recognized in the school system yet
- less than 1% of SK children had accessed mental health services, but 1.5% are still on a wait list for mental health services (n=7)
- 1.5% of SK children accessed special nutrition services, with a further half percent on wait lists for this service.

In the years before your child started Kindergarten, did your child get help from any of the following services?



## MORE QUICK FACTS

- 98 % of SK families have a regular family doctor
- state of health: more than 90% of SKs were considered to be in very good or excellent health according to their parent, almost 9% in good health, and less than 1 % in fair health (none in poor health)
- 13% of local families with a child in SK needed food from a community food service at least once in the last year (such as a food bank or school nutrition program)
- 6% of parents report that someone regularly smokes inside the SK child's home

# KPS: Parenting Practices

**Research at the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University found that parental engagement expressed through a) volunteering in their child’s school and b) child’s participation in community activities had a stronger association with positive EDI outcomes than other forms of parental involvement.**

– [WWW.OFFORDCENTRE.COM/READINESS/FILES/2008\\_KPS\\_POSTER.PDF](http://WWW.OFFORDCENTRE.COM/READINESS/FILES/2008_KPS_POSTER.PDF)

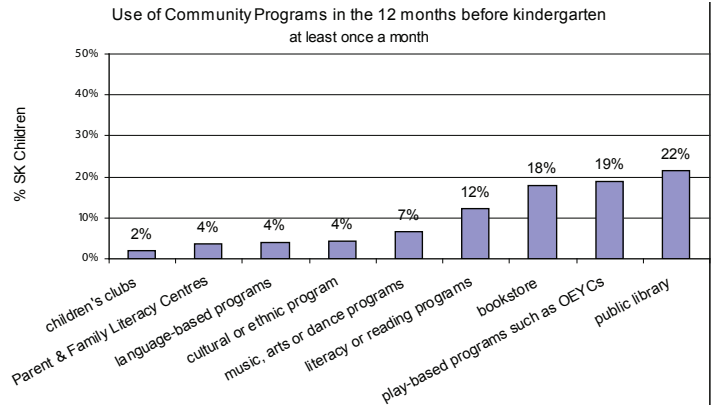
## VOLUNTEERING IN CHILD’S CLASSROOM / SCHOOL: FREQUENCY

Most SK parents did directly participate in their child’s classroom or school: 93% had attended a school or class event during the school year, 85% attended parent-teacher meetings, 60% had attended a general event at the school (such as an open house or parent council meeting), 47% had volunteered in their child’s school or SK classroom at least once in the school year.

**WHY NOT?** There were barriers to being involved in school activities (such as volunteering in the classroom or school, attending school or class events, parent-teacher conference or attending school council meetings.) By far the most frequently mentioned barrier was the difficulty of getting child care for their younger children (24%). Of the seven options, the second most common barrier to volunteering at their child’s school was obtaining a police check (7%). Of the 8% who said ‘other’, being told they weren’t needed as volunteers (1%), working during school hours, and cost of school trip/gas were written in by a number of parents.

**PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY** Use of community resources with their children is a measure of a parents’ community engagement as they are the ones who find, register, schedule, transport and sometimes pay for their children’s community activities. KPS asked about children’s participation in community activities before the SK year through Use of Community programs (see graph).

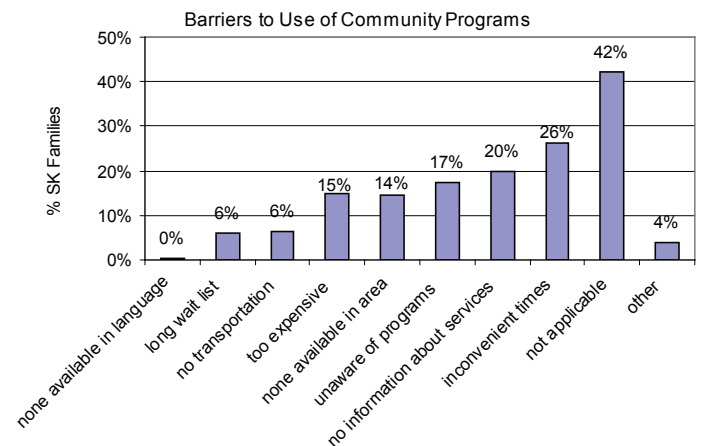
The community program that was most likely to be attended by young children in the 12 months before they started kindergarten was the public library where 22% of local children had visited at least once a month (see graph for monthly visits, other frequencies are available). Libraries were also the most frequently attended community program with 77% of SK children having visited a public library at least once in the year before starting kindergarten; 21% had been to a bookstore.



“Play-based children’s programs (eg drop-ins, Moms & Tots, Ontario Early Years Centres, playgroups)” were also very popular with 67% of children attending at least once in their preschool year and ¼ of SK children visiting a local OEYC or similar program weekly with their parent or caregiver.

Just over 17% indicated they had attended ‘Parent & Family Literacy Centres’ at least once in the previous year. There are no PFLCs (sponsored by school boards) in our region (in fact none in Ontario that are east of the Toronto area), so it is difficult to analyze what type of program parents had in mind when they answered this question. Some may be referring to OEYC programs.

Only 40% of children had taken part in a music, arts or dance program at least once in the year before kindergarten. For clarification of the chart names, the KPS questions give the following examples: “Children’s clubs eg. Beavers, Boys & Girls Club; Literacy”, and “reading programs such as story time, Cozy Reading or Parent Child Mother Goose etc.”





**BARRIERS TO ACCESSING PROGRAMS OR SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY** (see graph).

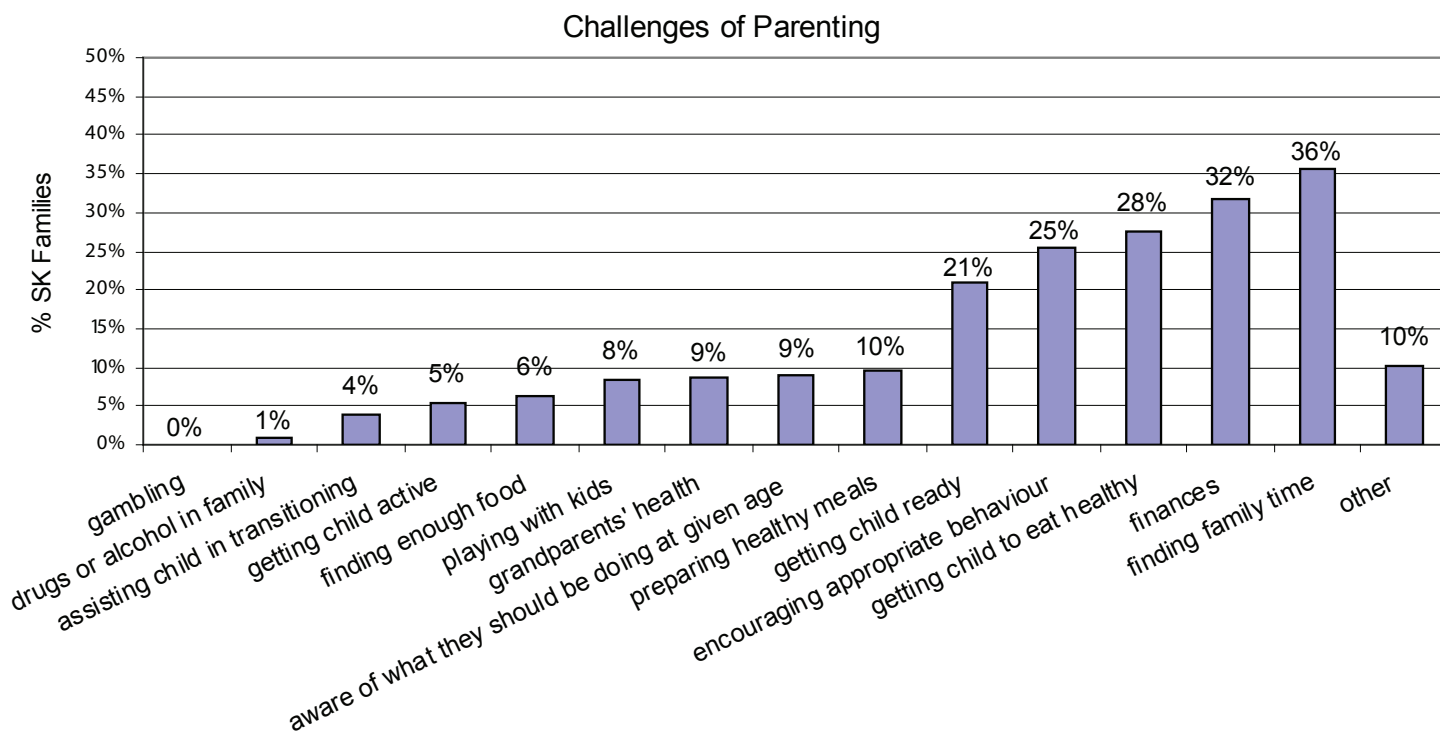
In the 12 months before your child started Kindergarten, were you unable to use services to help your child because of any of the following reasons?

Most parents said barriers did not apply to them (42%). Of those that did experience barriers, inconvenient times (26%) was mentioned more often than long wait lists (6%) or transportation issues (6%).

**CHALLENGES OF PARENTING** Finding ‘family time’ topped the list that SK parents mentioned most often as parenting

challenges. Almost one third of SK parents said they find it difficult to make ends meet (finances). Getting their child to eat healthy meals and snacks (28%) and encouraging appropriate behaviour/discouraging inappropriate behaviour (25%) were also significant challenges. Parents were mostly able to find time to play with their children (6% mentioned this as a challenge). Of the 10% that marked ‘other’, separation and divorce, juggling family and work, and having a number of young children were most often noted.

Mark the statements that you as a parent find challenging. Check all that apply.







# KPS: Child Care

Type of child care accessed, by age category

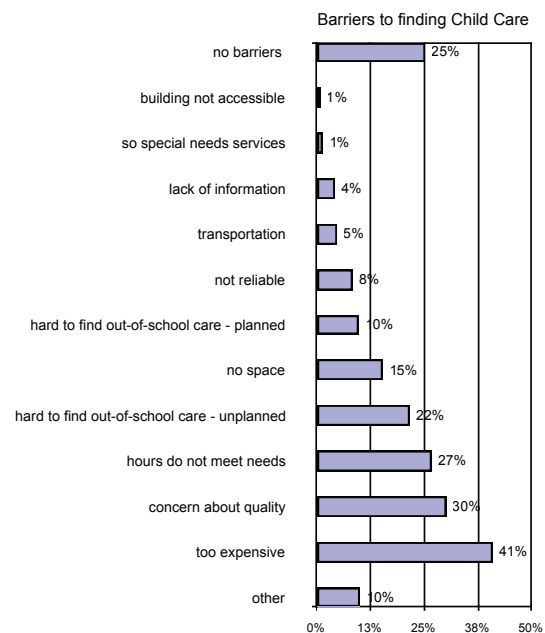
**At all ages, children in the CKL and Haliburton County planning area were cared for most often by a parent as the main type of child care from birth to 6 years old. The second most common type of preschool education and care between 1 and 4 years old was unlicensed (either unpaid by a relative or friend, or paid), followed by licensed care in a home or centre. The percentage of stay-at-home parents decreased as the child got older from almost half at age 1 ½ to just over a third at age 4 (34.7%). In Canada, 35.6% of women with a child 3 years old or younger are not employed elsewhere (Mother's Day report 2012, StatsCan).**

## MORE QUICK FACTS

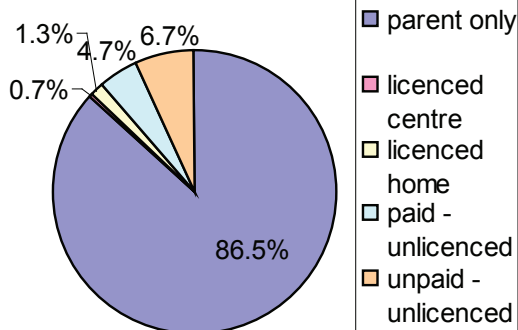
- almost 36% of SK respondents said they had attended a class, workshop, program or event meant to help them in their role as a parent
- 85% of parents had attended a parent-teacher conference in the SK year
- 6% of SK parents in CKL and Haliburton County found it challenging to find enough food for their family
- 2 out of 3 local children had attended a play-based program (such as an Ontario Early Years Centre, Moms & Tots, playgroup or drop-in) at least one time in the 12 months before they started kindergarten (25% of children had been to an OEYC or similar program once a week or more)
- public library: 77% of local SK children had visited a library at least once in the year before they began kindergarten (16% had been to the public library weekly)
- 46% parents reported that they and their spouses or partners agree all the time on parenting decisions (such as rules to be set, child misbehaving or school decisions); another 45% said they agree more than half the time
- 37% of SK parents felt they never have problems managing their SK child's in general, and 55% said they have problems managing their child 'less than half the time'

The factors that most influenced parents' choice of childcare were quality and reputation (94% each), followed by cost, location and hours. Parents felt that choosing care where staff are professional ECEs was very important (56%), 26% felt it was somewhat important and 17% felt it was not an important factor.

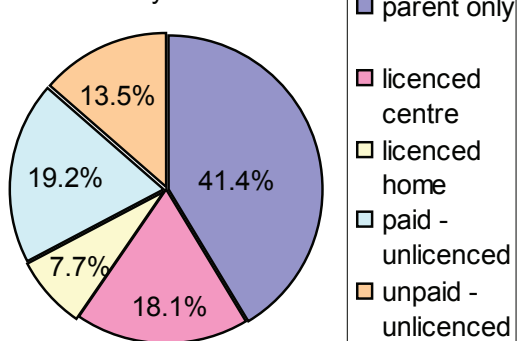
Cost was the biggest barrier to child care for parents (41%), followed by concerns about quality (30%). About 85% felt that child care spaces were available in their area. Finding care during unplanned sickness or emergencies was difficult for 22% of SK parents, and 10% said finding care for planned times such as summer, PD days and after school was a challenge. In their comments about challenges, a parent noted that childcare centres close during school bus cancellations. Others noted that infant care, licensed care and care for a child with allergies were difficult to find in rural locations.



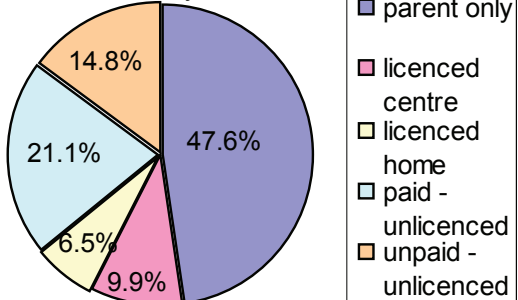
MAIN type of Child care 0-12 months old



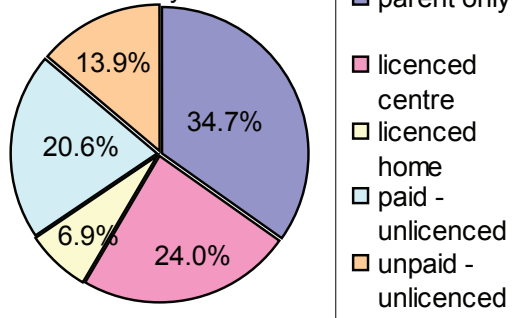
MAIN type of Child care 1.5 to 2.5 years old



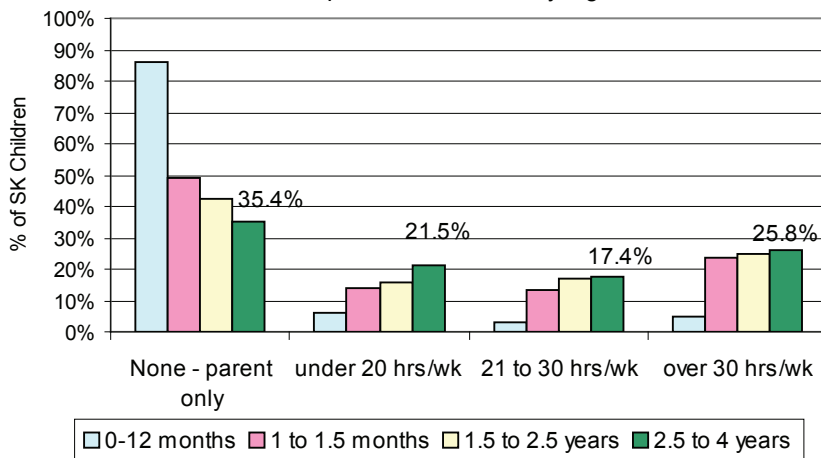
MAIN type of Child care 1 to 1.5 yrs old



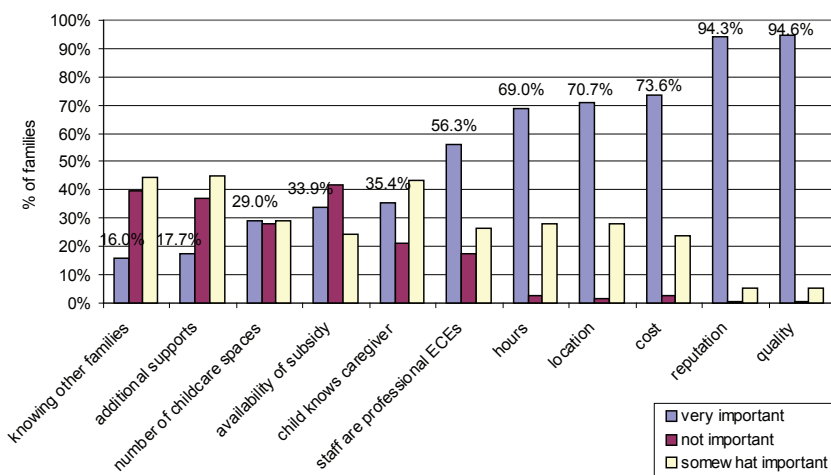
MAIN type of Child care 2.5 to 4 yrs old



Hours spent in Child care, by Age



Factors influencing parents' choice of Child care



**MORE QUICK FACTS** (for CKL & Haliburton County, 2012)

- more than a third of preschoolers 2.5 to 4 years old had a stay-at-home parent
- 26% were in licenced or unlicenced child care full time by age 2.5 to 4 yrs (over 30 hrs/wk)
- 22% of that age group were in part time child care (under 20 hrs/wk)
- 14% of local children have been in 3 or more different childcare places by SK
- 22% of SK families, neither parent had taken any parental leave when their child was born
- 69% of mothers and 3% of fathers used parental leave, and in 7% of families both parents had taken leave.

# KPS: Neighbourhood Characteristics

**In general, local parents of young children felt that the neighbourhoods where they are raising their children are safe, that they have the community resources that they need nearby, and that they have the social support of their neighbours.**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD COHESION** Most families with an SK-aged child felt they know their neighbours, their neighbours are child-friendly, good role models for their children and that their neighbours watch for trouble when they're away from home, but most didn't go so far as to say that their neighbours get together to deal with a problem if arises (43%).

Percentage of SK families that felt the statements were true:

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY INDEX** Young families felt it is safe for children to play in their neighbourhoods during the daytime (90%) and 3 out of 4 parents that there are safe parks and playgrounds where their children can play.

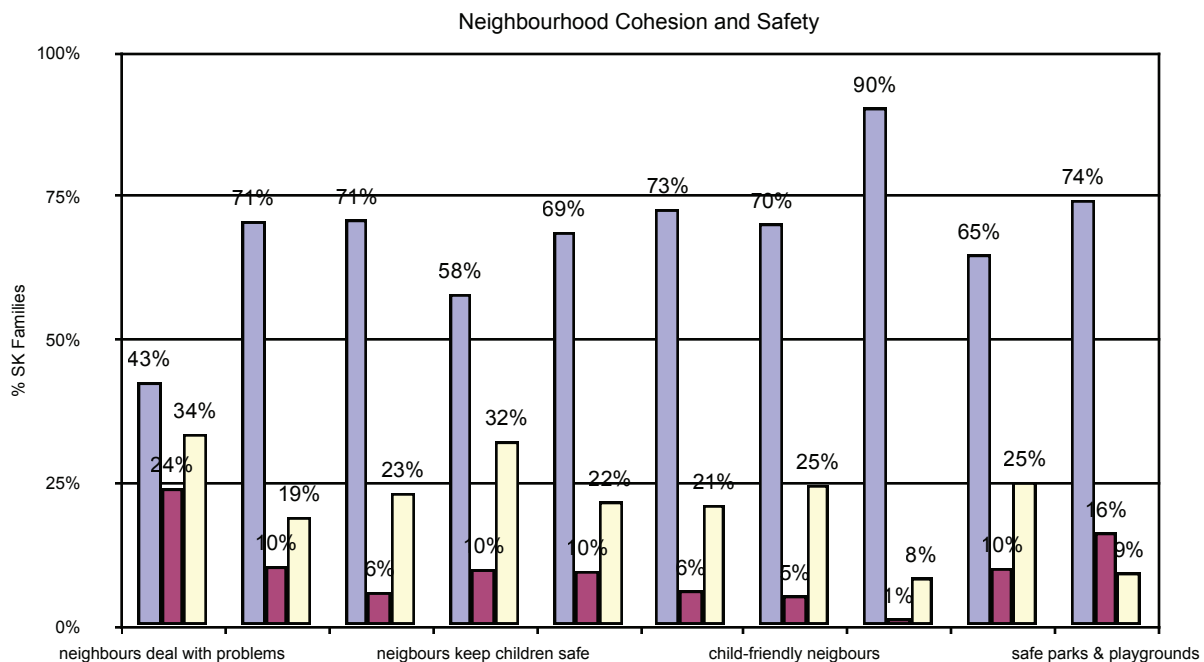
**BEARS, NOT CRIME** Not surprisingly, only about 65% felt that it's safe to walk alone in their neighbourhoods at night. Since our area is rural, this should not be interpreted as a perception that neighbourhoods are high-crime areas, but rather that there are higher posted speed limits, no street lights and they share their neighbourhoods with abundant wildlife. During the hunting seasons, families avoid walking and keep their pets inside as gunshots can be heard outside of towns.

**ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES INDEX** Accessibility to locations (shopping, library etc.) in the neighbourhood (See also *Use of Community Programs in Parenting Practices*). Do you have access to the following places in your neighbourhood? (Access might mean walking, driving within 15 minutes or bus).

Young families find it easy to access the school, libraries, athletic fields, faith centres (such as churches) and community centres, as well as family members, in their neighbourhood. Shopping malls or plazas were considered close by 60%, and only 25% felt there was a cultural centre nearby (this question did not provide examples).

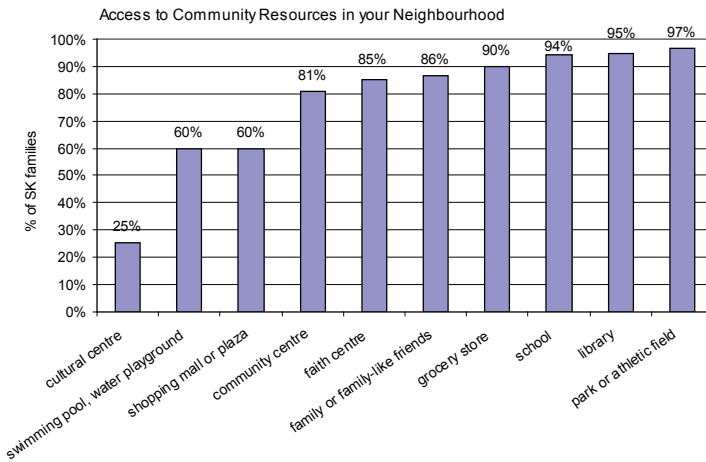
It should be noted that this question defined accessibility as a 15 minute drive from home, without reference to distance. The 15 minute drive of a rural family would cover a longer distance than the 15 minute drive of a family in a city, and it is hoped that the rural parents answering this question would still consider all the locations accessible in their view.

Similarly, there may be some affect of rurality on the question about accessibility to "swimming pools, wading pools, splashpads or water playgrounds". Many residents of CKL and Haliburton County live within a 15 minute drive of a lake or river where children can swim, but the question did not mention these as examples. If the object of the question was to know if parents felt there were swimming opportunities nearby for children, the 60% of parents agreeing may be an underestimate of accessibility.

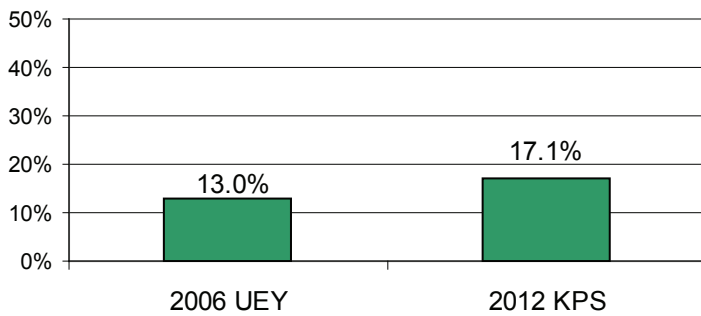


# KPS: Poverty and Young Children

In CKL and Haliburton County



## Low Income families Kindergarten Children of CKL & Haliburton County living in families with income less than \$30,000 (before taxes)



\* Willms, J. Douglas, (2010). *Understanding the Early Years: Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County, Ontario. A Community Research Report.* Prepared for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Government of Canada and KSI Research International, Inc. with R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.

- almost one third of parents of Senior Kindergarten (SK) children in our area noted that 'making ends meet' is a challenge of parenting for them (finances), 32%
- **Employment:** 3% of SK parents who responded to the survey (and 2% of their partners) were unemployed and looking for work; 66% of respondents work (and 88% of their partners); the remainder were recovering from illness or disability, stay-at-home parents or students
- 3% of SK children have moved four or more times in the past 5 years
- **Child care:** 74% said child care cost was a very important consideration for them in choosing care for their children
  - one third (34%) of families with a child in SK indicated that the availability of a child care subsidy was a very important consideration for them
- **Food security:** 13 % of SK children or their parents accessed community food services such as a food bank or school nutrition program at least once in the last year
  - 6 % needed food more than 6 times in the last year
  - 2 % of children needed to access special nutritional services in the years before kindergarten and another 1% were on waiting lists (total n=9)
  - 6% said that 'finding enough food' was a parenting challenge
- **Income:** almost 1 out of every 6 SK children in CKL and Haliburton County live in a family where the combined household income is less than \$30,000 annually, before taxes (17%)

**MORE POOR CHILDREN** According to parents' anonymous report of their own family income, the incidence of poverty for young families in CKL and Haliburton County has increased in the past six years. There are 4% more kindergarten children living in impoverished families in CKL and Haliburton County (without factoring in inflation). The percentage of senior kindergarten-aged children living in families with an income below \$30,000 annually (before taxes) increased from 13% in 2006\* to 17% in 2012. That is an increase from 58 kindergarten children to 70 in the past six years.



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# Summary of Findings

**The Moving Forward Report of your local Ontario Early Years Centre made the following observations about the development of senior Kindergarten children (mostly 5 year olds) who live in the city of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) and Haliburton County from data collected with the Early Development Instrument and the Kindergarten Parent Survey in the spring of 2012. Full details are available in the Moving Forward Report, available in hardcopy, or on-line at [www.oeyc.ca](http://www.oeyc.ca).**

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## **FAMILY LIFE** in CKL and Haliburton County:

- most parents of SK children in our area report that they agree on how to solve parenting problems, they rarely have discipline problems with their children, there are resources for them in their neighbourhood, they feel safe raising children in their neighbourhoods, and they feel a sense of cohesion with their neighbours
- 36% of SK parents or guardians have attended a class to improve their parenting skills
- 35% of SK children in CKL and Haliburton County had a stay-at-home parent when they were 2 ½ to 4 years old (no other child care)
  - another 22% had less than 20 hours per week of child care at that age (eg. part time child care)
- Household Income of families with at least one child in Senior Kindergarten (average before taxes):
  - middle income SK families: 23% (\$50,001 to \$75,000)
  - high income SK families: 20% (\$75,001 to \$100,000)
  - low income SK families: 17% (\$30,001 to \$50,000)
  - very low income: 17% of SK children in CKL and Haliburton County live in a home with an income below \$30,000 annually (before taxes)
- over two thirds of local SK parents said they read to their child every day
- 77% of SKs had visited a public library in the past 12 months

## **CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT** in CKL and Haliburton County:

- 'Language & Cognitive Development' skills are significantly above the provincial average
  - 85% of local SKs demonstrate advanced literacy skills
- 'Communication and General Knowledge' skills are not significantly different (statistically) from the average of SK children in Ontario, however 11% of local SK children are vulnerable (below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile) in these skills involving expressive language and knowledge of the world
- 'Social Competence' and 'Emotional Maturity' measures are at about the same level as other groups of children in Ontario,

81% are responsible and respectful, and 88% are happy and enjoy school

- local children need more support in learning to follow class routines and working independently, as well as developing prosocial and helping behaviours
- 'Physical Health & Well-being' skills are below the provincial average
  - scores have decreased in the 6 years since the EDI of 2006
  - there are more children locally scoring in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to the Ontario SK students population. This group shows 'few or none' of the Physical Health and Well-being skills (18% of SK students, compared to 12% in 2006)
  - local children score well on physical independence and physical readiness for the school day, however only 52% of SK students have developed large muscle and small muscles skills that children normally have at their age
  - one quarter have few or none of expected gross motor and fine motor skills
- 80% of SK children had participated in a sport with a coach in the past 12 months (58% weekly), 98% in a sport without a coach
- **Screen time:** local SK children spent significantly more time watching TV, using the computer or playing computer games (at home on school days) than the Ontario average for SK children in 2006. This trend has continued in 2012, with local children spending 1.7 hours in front of a screen at home on school days
- **Travelling to school:** 87% of SK students get to school by vehicle (bus, taxi or car) and 14% walk
- 89% of SK children participated in a physical activity alone or with their family (such as a walk, bike ride or playing outside) 3 or more times in the previous week
- 6% of SK children have someone who smokes regularly inside their home
- 13% of families with a child in SK in CKL and Haliburton County said they accessed community food services at least once in the previous month
- 98% of families with an SK child have a family doctor

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## **How do local children compare to the Ontario average? How have local children's EDI scores changed between 2006 and 2012?**

In 2006, the average scores (means) in Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton County were significantly HIGHER than the averages for the normative sample in Physical Health & Well-Being, Social



Competence, Language & Cognitive Development and Communication & General Knowledge. Emotional Maturity local mean was about the same as the normative.

In 2012, the average scores (means) in Social Competence, Emotional Maturity and Communication & General Knowledge were about the same in 2012 as they were in 2006 (although the numbers have changed, there is no significant statistical difference).

Physical Health & Well-being scores were significantly LOWER in 2012 than they were, on average, in 2006.

Language & Cognitive Development were significantly HIGHER in 2012 on average than they were in 2006.

\* indicates statistical significance

'Vulnerable' children are the group whose scores fall below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile cut-off of the Ontario population of SK children. In CKL and Haliburton County more than 1 out of every 4 children

# 28%

of children in CKL and Haliburton County are vulnerable in at least one aspect of their development (EDI 2012) when they enter kindergarten.

entering kindergarten are vulnerable in at least one aspect of their development (see graph). Research indicates that kindergarten vulnerability predicts ongoing vulnerability in the school system.

### Who completed the Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) in the city of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County?

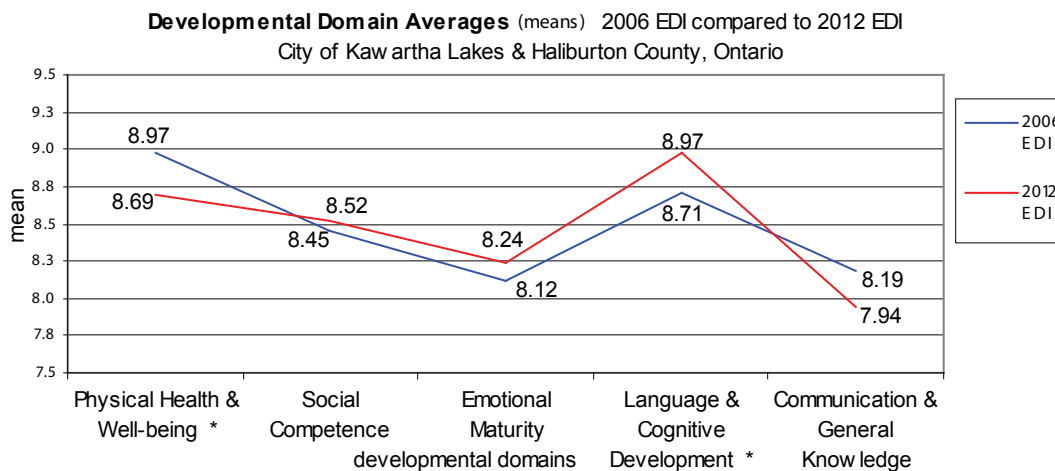
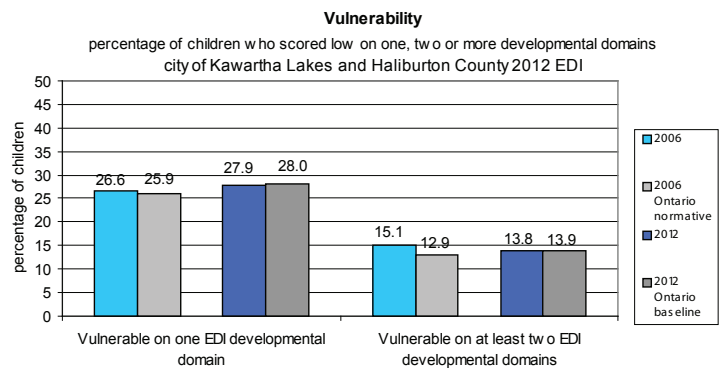
More than 70% of parents or guardians of local SK children in publicly-funded schools in CKL and Haliburton County (n = 472) completed the KPS.

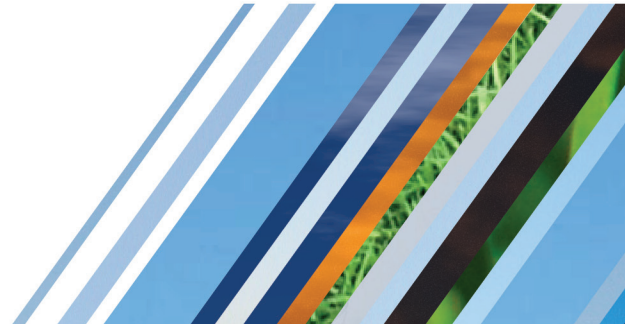
— 93% of respondents were the SK child's mother and 4% were the father

— 2.6% were 'other' (of these, 1.6% were grandparents and the rest were aunts or foster parents, for example)

### Who completed the EDI in CKL and Haliburton County?

The EDI was completed by 100% of local Senior Kindergarten teachers, in publicly-funded schools, for an estimated 99% of SK children (n= 652 without identified special needs).





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This report was produced by Catharine Tozer, the Data Analysis Coordinator at the Ontario Early Years Centre (Lindsay head office) with many thanks to Judith Tripp, Executive Director of the Ontario Early Years Centre Haliburton Victoria Brock, Inc. Collection of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) data was only possible because of the enthusiastic participation of Senior Kindergarten teachers at the Trillium Lakelands District School Board and the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic District School Board. This project was entirely funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS). The Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario, supported the project with analysis and Ontario baseline statistics which made it possible to compare the city of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County to the province. Special thanks to the parents of Senior Kindergarten children who completed the KPS, endowing our community with knowledge of their experiences with our area's young children.

