

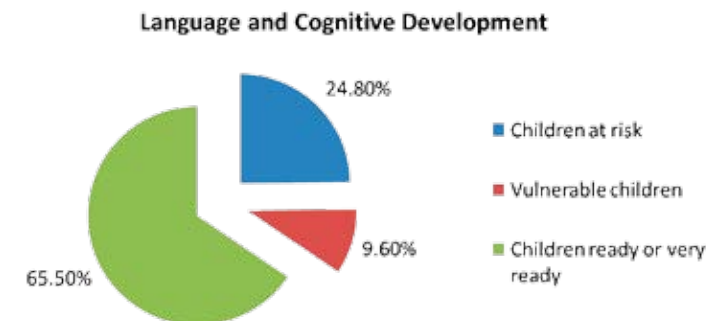
Language and Cognitive Development Identified as a Concern in Halifax West

The results of UEY Halifax's Early Development Instrument (EDI) showed that the area of development with the highest numbers of primary students rated "not on track" for school readiness was "Language and Cognitive Development." This domain includes age-appropriate reading, writing and numeracy skills.

In our research area*, 34.5% of students were rated as "Not on track" for Language and Cognitive Development. Of those, 24.8% of children fell into the "at risk" group (10th – 25th percentile) and 9.6% were rated "vulnerable" (lowest 10 percentiles). This fits with other research findings that show literacy is a significant concern in our province, with 4 out of 10 adult Nova Scotians having difficulty using print materials.



* Our research area included the communities of Fairview/Clayton Park, St. Margaret's/Hammonds Plains and Spryfield/Herring Cove.



UEY Halifax Sponsoring Organization

The Sackville-Bedford Early Intervention Program (SBEIP), established in 1983, provides support, information and education to families during the early years. The organization targets children between birth and age 5 who are developmentally delayed or at risk of delay, in two or more areas of their development. SBEIP services include home visits, resources, support and referral, a toy-lending library, playgroups and a sibling group. To learn more, visit www.sbeip.com.

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Sackville Bedford
Early Intervention Program

Read to Me! Reading Tips for Families

Here are some tips to nurture a love for reading in your family.

- Read every day.
- Read, sing and chant rhymes.
- Make it fun.
- Let your child choose the book.
- Share page-turning.
- Place books everywhere!

Why read to your child?

Reading to your child is about so much more than entertainment. Through reading, children learn new words and listening skills. They benefit from being cuddled and comforted, and they develop reading skills for the future.

Reading Tips

BABIES

- Choose books with bright pictures and rhymes.
- Read signs and labels wherever you go.
- Make stories part of the bedtime routine.



TODDLERS

- Choose simple books where ideas are repeated.
- Ask your child to join in on the words they know.
- Read the same book, song or rhyme over and over.
- Read books that are silly.

PRESCHOOLERS

- Have your child sit close or on your lap while you read.
- When you're finished reading, talk about the story.
- Let your child tell you stories.
- Play with words and make up silly stories and words.

This information was provided by Read to Me! – a provincial, hospital-based program developed to help families enrich their child's early years with books and reading. It is a practical and effective response to the province's high incidence of child poverty and low literacy levels. To learn more or to download a copy of the brochure "Reading Tips for Families," please visit: www.readtome.ca. Used with permission.



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UEY Understanding the Early Years Halifax

Winter 2008 Newsletter

Understanding the Early Years Halifax Research Update

Between 2005-2007, Understanding the Early Years Halifax gathered data on 333 Grade Primary students. Our research was carried out in 13 elementary schools scattered throughout the communities of Fairview/Clayton Park, St. Margaret's/Hammonds Plains, and Spryfield/Herring Cove.

UEY research looked at all areas of a child's development, including physical, social and emotional as well as language and communication skills. A child's readiness to learn in Grade Primary can be a useful indicator of how a community's children are doing and what supports may be needed for them in their early years.

What Have We Learned?

Preliminary results of our research show that the majority of children in our research area (defined above) were "ready" or "very ready" to start school. In fact, the children in our area scored significantly higher than the normative sample in all five areas of development (physical health and well-being; social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development and communications skills/general knowledge). However, our research also revealed areas of concern.



Early years research plays a key role in enabling communities to support early child development.

Pockets of Concern in our Region

Overall, percentages of children rated "not on track" for school readiness in our research area ranged from 24-34%, depending on area of development. This means that one-quarter to one-third of the children we studied entered school at a disadvantage – and many may never catch up.

In some neighbourhoods, however, children rated "not on track" ranged as high as 50-70% (i.e. more than half of children were entering Grade Primary at a disadvantage). Where this is the case, UEY is working with our partners to identify needs and assist in mobilizing additional supports for families, enhancing the future well-being of children and the health of our community as a whole.

What next?

The research phase for our project is now complete. We are currently working hard to present our research findings to our community, so that our data can be used to support the design of programs and services. Keep an eye on our website (www.ueyhalifax.com) for upcoming public reports and community maps through which we will highlight significant findings of our study.

It is our ultimate goal that children in our community have the best possible start. To this end, we offer a variety of resources to raise awareness of the importance of the early years and to support families in nurturing the healthy development of their little ones. UEY staff are available to present our research findings to your community group, staff team or organization, please contact us at (902)-864-8744 or e-mail us at uey@ns.aliantzinc.ca.



The early years count. Learn more.

ueyhalifax.com

"for the best possible start in life..."

