



## 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:**

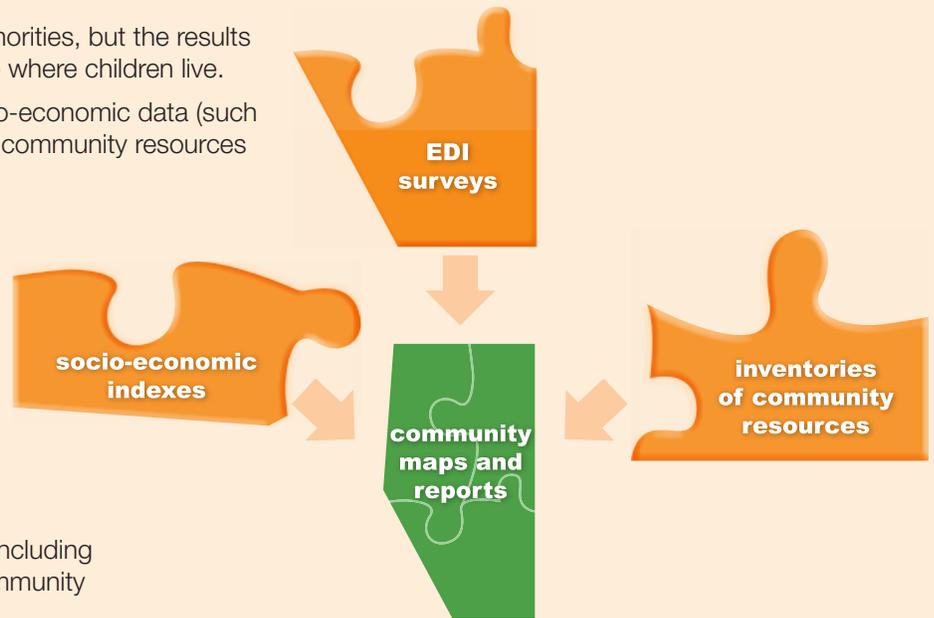
Child is able to communicate needs and wants in socially appropriate ways, can tell stories and has general knowledge about the outside world that is age appropriate.

## 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](http://www.ecdmapping.alberta.ca)*