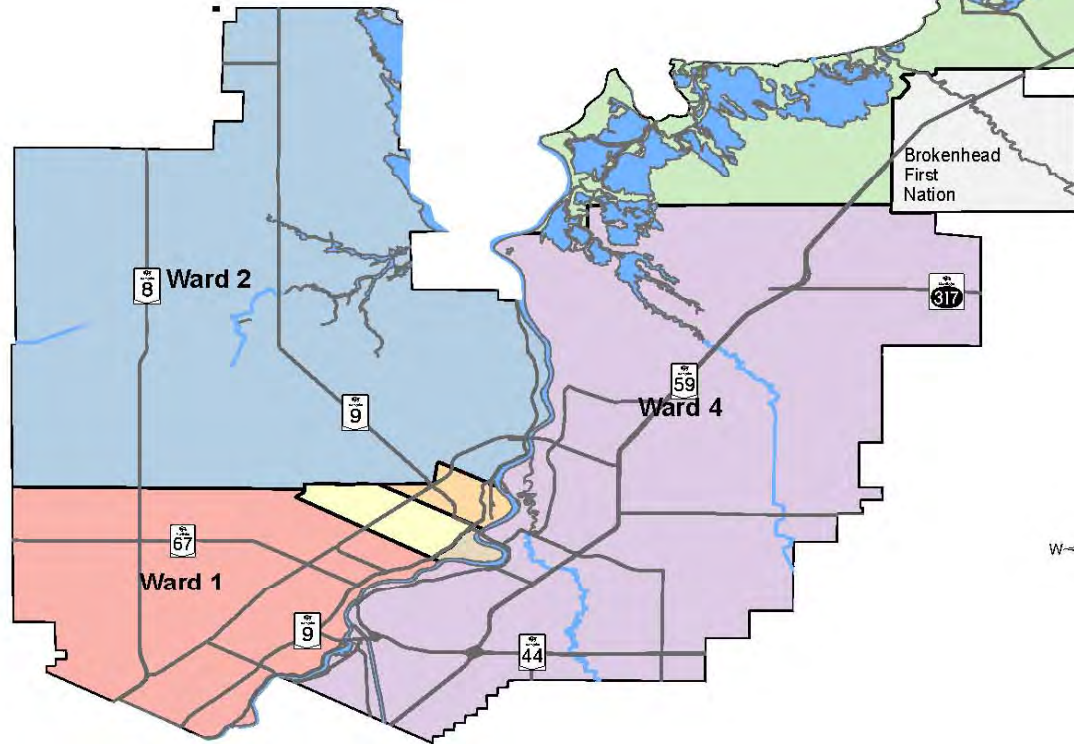
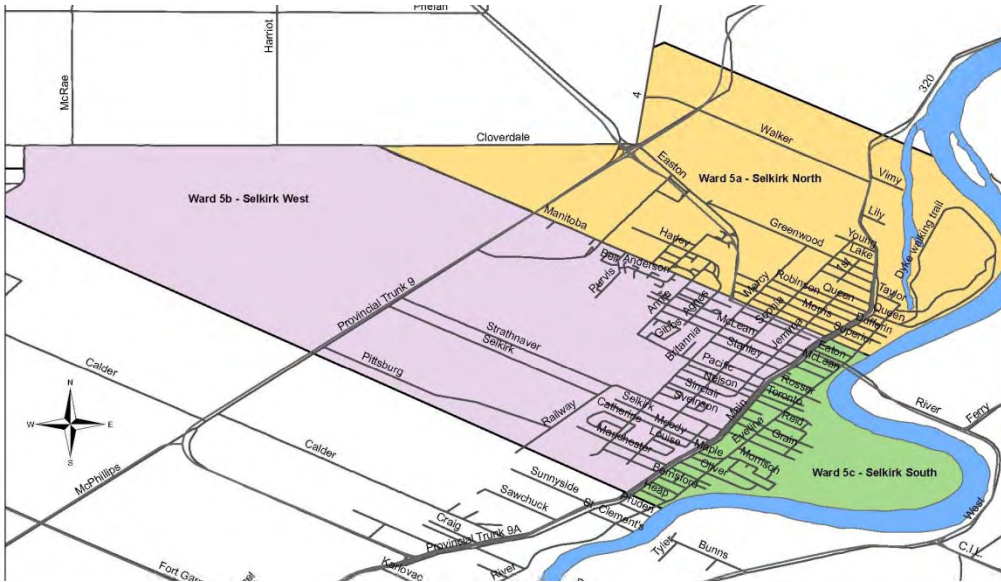




Working in Rural Communities with Population Level Data

The Early Development Imperative Conference
Winnipeg, Manitoba

November 17, 2009





Reflecting on Rural Challenges

Challenges	Benefits
▪ Isolation	▪ Connectedness
▪ Distance	▪ Less mobile families
▪ Services concentrated in an urban-type area	▪ Sense of community
▪ Gathering resources into a significant amount	▪ Smaller community units
▪ Perceived embarrassment or criticism when accessing services	▪ Knowing each other



How have we used the EDI Data?

- Lord Selkirk School Division
 - Participated in EDI collection since 2002-03
- Southeast Interlake Early Childhood Development Coalition (SEI-ECDC)
- Understanding the Early Years (UEY) initiative
- Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI)



Lord Selkirk School Division

- EDI newsletters to schools
 - Administrators, kindergarten teachers, resource teachers, clinicians
- Family Programs at Ruth Hooker School
 - Alphabet Soup
 - Rock n' Read
 - Rhyme and Reason
 - Wiggle, Giggle, & Munch
- Kinderstart
- Happy Tots



Southeast Interlake Early Childhood Development Coalition

- Rhyming and Reading Groups
 - Baby Talk Rhyme Time
 - Baby Time & Story Time at the Library
 - Rhyme @ Night
 - Rhyming Circle
- Bag a Book
- Community Kitchen
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- Family Fun Day



Southeast Interlake Early Childhood Development Coalition con't

- Gymkids
- National Child Day event
- Nutrition / Parenting for the Family
- Robert Smith Neighbours
- Wiggle, Giggle & Munch
- Schools Cool
- Triple P



Understanding the Early Years (UEY)

- UEY newsletters (monthly)
- EDI posters
- Family Friendly Facilities Brief
- Dr. Rob Santos – community presentation

Getting Your Child Ready for School... Physically



Physical Health and Well-Being include:

- Being curious and eager to try new things
- Being properly dressed for the weather
- Getting enough sleep
- Having energy to play throughout the day
- Having enough good foods to eat
- Being able to use the washroom independently
- Being able to hold a pencil or crayon properly
- Missing only a few days of school due to illness
- Being able to pick up small objects

How do I help my child be physically healthy?

- Play jumping and running games with older children, rolling and crawling games with younger ones
- Make sure to get enough sleep - most children need between 11 and 14 hours a day
- Play with paper, crayon and paints (fingers make good brushes)
- Practice climbing on stairs and playground structures
- Try picking up small objects like Cheerios
- Give infants items to hold and bang together
- Play catch with a soft ball
- Eat a variety of food from the four food groups

Children who are physically healthy are independent, rested, and have good gross and fine motor skills. They start school ready to succeed.



UEY Selkirk-Interlake

Phone: 482-4521

Fax: 785-2872

Email: akinden@lssd.ca

www.lssd.ca/ueyselkirkinterlake



Our Children, Our Community, Our Future

Getting Your Child Ready for School... Socially



Social Skills Include:

- Beginning to get along with other children
- Beginning to follow rules and instructions
- Playing with a variety of children
- Having some self-control
- Being able to solve problems by themselves
- Adjusting to changes in routine
- Begin tolerant of someone who makes a mistake
- Beginning to take care of their belongings
- Beginning to show respect for others
- Eager to try new activities and play with new toys

How do I help my child learn social skills?

- Practice decision making by choosing between 2 items
- Prepare for a change in routine - "It's 5 minutes to bedtime."
- Laugh when you make silly, obvious mistakes
- Pretend you are in different situations and play "What would you do?"
- Make an "I'm special" book
- Play games that show teamwork
- Plan play times with other children
- Play games like *Simon Says*

Children with good social skills play and get along with others, share, and show self-confidence. They start school ready to succeed.



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Our Children, Our Community, Our Future

Getting Your Child Ready for School... Emotionally



Emotional maturity means:

- Helping other children if they are hurt
- Offering to help other children on a task
- Trying to stop a quarrel or dispute
- Inviting others to join in a game or activity
- Beginning to show empathy for others - showing some understanding of other people's feelings.

How do I help prepare my child emotionally for school?

- Practice describing feelings to your child - "I think your friend might be sad today... she is not smiling."
- Model caring behaviour with other people. Children learn from you and will follow your example - you are your child's first teacher
- Encourage children to include others in their play
- Praise children when they help others - "I like the way you helped your little sister."
- Talk to your child about upcoming events or changes in routines so he can be prepared
- Show helping, kind, and caring behaviours
- Sing the song "If You're Happy and You Know It" and use exaggerated expressions.

Children who are emotionally mature are able to concentrate on tasks, help others, show patience, and are not often aggressive or angry. They start school ready to succeed.



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Phone: 482-4521 Fax: 785-2872 E-mail: akinden@lssd.ca www.lssd.ca/ueyselkirkinterlake



Our Children, Our Community, Our Future

Getting Your Child Ready for School... Language and Thinking Skills



Language and thinking skills mean:

- Being able to remember things easily
- Being interested in books, turning the pages
- Familiarity with some letters and numbers
- Recognizing his or her printed name
- Recognizing some signs in the neighbourhood
- Playing with pens, crayons, pencils
- Knowing shapes and colours
- Beginning to rhyme words

How do I help prepare my child's language and thinking skills?

- 'Play' with language - sing songs and rhymes to your child in your own first language
- Play sorting games - anything works (spoons and forks, buttons, blocks, pots and lids). Sort by item, colour, etc.
- Read and tell stories to your child encourage your child to tell or read you stories
- Count things - how many stairs, shoes, trees, cars, etc.
- Talk about the signs in the neighbourhood - "This sign means we have to stop."
- Play memory games and number games - have your child invent a game to play

Children who have language and thinking skills are interested in reading and writing, can count and recognize shapes, colours, etc. They start school ready to succeed.



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Our Children, Our Community, Our Future

Getting Your Child Ready for School... Communication and General Knowledge



Communication and general knowledge means:

- Telling stories
- Using imaginative play
- Understanding requests and responding to them
- Communicates with adults and other children in a way that is understandable
- Listening when someone is talking to you
- Able to talk about things happening in their life

How do I help prepare my child learn communication and general knowledge?

- Read to your child and talk about what you have read
- Go for a walk outside. Talk about what you see - "There is a fire truck, a red fire truck."
- Make connections between experiences, ideas, and books - "That dog on the street looks just like "Clifford" from the book we read today."
- Have your child retell the story to you as your child turns the pages
- Play games of pretend and imagination
- Talk together to practice verbal skills
- Talk about what is happening in pictures you see

Children who have communication and general knowledge can tell a story and communicate with adults and peers. They start school ready to succeed.



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Our Children, Our Community, Our Future



Understanding the Early Years (UEY)

- UEY newsletters
- EDI posters
- Family Friendly Facilities Brief
- Dr. Rob Santos – community presentation

Is your facility “Family Friendly”?

UEY Understanding the Early Years (UEY) Selkirk-Interlake

April 2009

What is UEY?

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a research initiative that provides information to help strengthen the capacity of communities to make informed decisions about the best policies and most appropriate programs to offer families with young children. It gathers information about kindergarten children, their families, and their communities. Communities will use the information to build programs and services to help children reach their full potential in life.

The UEY Selkirk-Interlake area encompasses all communities within the Lord Selkirk School Division boundaries. It includes the City of Selkirk, Lockport, St. Andrew's, Clandeboye, Petersfield, East Selkirk, Libau, Grand Marais and Victoria Beach.

UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY YEARS

Arlene Kinden
UEY Selkirk-Interlake
Lord Selkirk School Division

Phone: 204-482-4521
Fax: 204-785-2872
E-mail: akinden@lssd.ca

www.lssd.ca/ueyselkirinterlake



Families in UEY Selkirk-Interlake

- Population = 27 705
- There are 8365 families in UEY Selkirk-Interlake, 4910 (58.7%) of those families have children at home.
- There are 1875 children aged 6 and under living in UEY Selkirk-Interlake.
- There are 305 licensed child care spaces in UEY Selkirk-Interlake.
- 22.5% of adults age 25 and over do not have a high school diploma.
- Percentage of Children under the age of six living in Low Income:
 - City of Selkirk - **26.1%**
 - Surrounding Areas - **4%**
 - UEY Selkirk-Interlake - **13.4%**
 - Manitoba - **20%**
 - Canada - **14.5%**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006



Check List for “Family Friendly Places”

How Family Friendly is your place?

This self-assessment checklist is designed to evaluate indoor places that are open to the public and help you to identify improvements you can make to help welcome families into your organization.

Check the boxes that apply or that indicate your child-friendly practices:

- Special parking designated for new and expectant mothers (if applicable)
- Clear signage to restrooms
- Public or private restroom made available to children (with/without purchasing other service)
- Clean and safe changing table in restrooms
- Flip-down child's toilet seat installed on one or more toilets
- Sink installed at child's height or sturdy step stool provided
- Towels and soap dispensers installed within child's reach
- Quiet, clean, comfortable area provided for breast-feeding mothers (not in restroom or bathroom)
- Play area equipped with clean, safe toys and books for children, including school-age children
- Easy stroller access and/or stroller parking area provided
- Give-away item (stickers, balloons, small toothbrush) offered to children
- Staff regularly greet children and make an effort to help them feel welcome
- Staff offer assistance to parents (folding strollers, carrying bags, reaching items)
- Things at children's level for them to see
- Photos of neighbourhood children or artwork
- Unsafe objects out of children's reach
- Seating for (expectant) moms

Retail Shops, Government Offices & Service Businesses:

- Children's play area adjacent to area where parents conduct business
- Special line-ups for families with children offered during busy/peak times
- Candy and other temptations out of reach of children
- Working safety mechanisms on shopping carts (if applicable)
- Handy-wipes at store entrance to wipe off bars of shopping carts (if applicable)

Restaurants:

- Children's menu or child-sized portions available
- Healthy food choices available
- Crayons with appropriate pictures to colour or other toys offered at table
- Straws and/or plastic cups available
- Child size utensils available
- Waiting staff friendly to children
- Crackers or other appetizers offered to hungry children who must wait
- Care is taken when serving hot foods
- High chairs available

You don't have to check every box to call yourself “Family Friendly”. Pat yourself on the back for doing what you can and challenge yourself to try one more thing! What counts is that our community is doing its best to welcome families and children.

Source:

Welcoming Children and Families in our Community Spaces and Places. Family Friendly Spaces and Places Toolkit. UEY Sunshine Coast

Investing in a Child Builds a Community

Investment in a child's early years pays dividends for the future of our communities and our province. Economic research shows that for every dollar invested in quality child care, at least two dollars are saved in later social costs. For children in high risk situations, this pay back can be as high as seven to one.

There are 1875 children age six and under living in UEY Selkirk-Interlake today. Research shows that up to 16% (1 in 6) of UEY Selkirk-Interlake's kindergarten students are not ready for in school.

What is our need?

- Quality childcare spaces to help parents who are balancing work and family responsibilities
- Culturally relevant programs for Aboriginal children
- Improved access, including outreach services to isolated families and to children with special needs.
- Before and After School Programs
- Earmark charitable funds for early childhood development projects (Donate equipment, space, or funding grants)

Society pays in many ways for failing to take full advantage of the learning potential of all its children, from lost economic productivity and tax revenues to higher crime rates to diminished participation in the civic and cultural life of the nation.

- Research and Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development

Low Literacy rates have cost us billions of dollars – one estimate is around \$6 billion

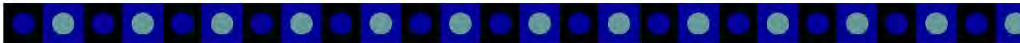
- Frank McKenna, 2008

When it comes to a company's long-term productivity, investments in human capital bring 3 times a greater return associated with capital investments.

- Charles Coffey, 2008

Labour is the main cost in childcare: 83 percent of centre expenditures go to wages and benefits. Low levels of funding mean just 7.5 percent of centre budgets can be spent directly on children's programming.

- Rural Childcare: Childcare as Economic and Social Development in Parkland.



What Can Communities and Citizens Do?

- Be a positive role model for our children
- Provide a variety of sports, recreation, arts & cultural programs
- Provide opportunities for community participation in service & community planning
- Create an innovative early childhood environment in UEY Selkirk-Interlake
- Fund early identification programs
- Ensure that UEY Selkirk-Interlake children have a "Love of Learning"
- Provide quality child care and pre-school programs
- Assist communities in becoming environments that support readiness for school
- Provide outdoor spaces for children to play (and keep spaces maintained)
- Organize and support multi-generational events in which all family members can participate.
- Support the initiative of the Early Childhood Development Coalition
- Make connections with children and families in your neighbourhood
- At election time, make sure the candidates you vote for have a clear, supportive position on issues such as child care, family friendly community development, and accessible public transportation
- Get involved in community events/activities. When you build community, you strengthen the web of social relationships that supports all of us, including families and children



Did you Know?

- 90% of brain growth occurs from birth to five years of age
- A child develops the ability to reason by the age of five
- By the age of three, children's brains are twice as active as those of adults
- Over a lifetime, high school graduate earn \$200,000 more than non-graduates

There is a sense that parents should just do the job until grade school, and then [our society] will have an interest in supporting that child.

Why do we think that children under the age of five – and their parents – don't need any support before then?

- Dr. Ray D. Peters, Queen's University

Canadian taxpayers pay \$2.5 billion every year for remedial education due to delayed interventions and/or negative early years experiences.

- Charles Coffey, 2002

Never underestimate your ability to make a difference in the life of a child.

- Fred Penner



Understanding the Early Years (UEY)

- UEY newsletters
- EDI posters
- Family Friendly Facilities Brief
- Dr. Rob Santos – community presentation



Community Collaboration

- No preschool programs in schools 8 years ago
- Parent Conferences (Step by Step)
- Preschool programs now occurring:
 - Many schools
 - Growing Years Family Resource Centre
 - Red River North Regional Library
 - Public Health
 - Selkirk Rhyme and Reading Circle



Community Collaboration con't

- Southeast Interlake Early Childhood Development Coalition
- Expanded school thinking and community thinking
- School division is sponsor for Understanding the Early Years Initiative
- Link between Pre-K services / Families / School
 - Partnerships, collaborations and programs



Contact information:

Arlene Kinden
Community Coordinator
Understanding the Early Years
UEY Selkirk Interlake

Ph: 204-482-4521
Email: akinden@lssd.ca

UEY Website: www.lssd.ca/ueyselkirkinterlake