

## EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT (EDI): A Population-based Measure for Communities

### FACTSHEET

This instrument is an outcome measure of children's early development.

It measures children's readiness to learn in school environment in **five general domains identified in the literature: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and communication skills and general knowledge** in relation to developmental benchmarks rather than curriculum-based ones.

The *Early Development Instrument* can be applied at either junior or senior kindergarten level, i.e. for either 4 or 5-year olds. A teacher uses her/his observations after several months of classroom/school interaction with the child to complete the questionnaire.

The instrument provides information for groups of children in order to:

- 1) report on areas of strength and deficit for populations of children,
- 2) monitor populations of children over time,
- 3) predict how children will do in elementary school.

The EDI was developed by Drs. Magdalena Janus and Dan Offord at the Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University, with support of a national advisory committee. It is largely based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) and other existing developmental tests. Between 1998/99 and 2004/04 it has been implemented with over 290,000 students nation-wide.

The purpose of the instrument is to report on populations of children in different communities. It is intended to help communities assess how well they are doing in supporting young children and their families and assist in monitoring changes.

### READINESS TO LEARN CONCEPT

The EDI is based on the **readiness to learn** concept.

We know that children are born ready to learn; it means that their neurosystem is pre-programmed to develop various skills and neuropathways, depending on the experience it receives.

The EDI measures children's **readiness to learn at school** (or school readiness to learn). This term refers to the child's ability to meet the task demands of school, such as being cooperative and sitting quietly and listening to the teacher, and to benefit from the educational activities that are provided by the school.

## **FIVE DOMAINS OF SCHOOL READINESS TO LEARN**

There are five domains of school readiness to learn included in the Early Development Instrument.

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

Includes: 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 knowledge and competence***

Includes:

- 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 health/maturity***

Includes:

- 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***

Includes:

- 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***

Includes:

- 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 INDICATORS:**

### ***Special skills***

Includes: literacy, numeracy, dance, music, etc.

### ***Special problems***

Includes: health problems, learning problems, behaviour problems