

MANAGEMENT REPORT



Date: February 18, 2016
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Meeting date: Febraury 18, 2016
To: Library Board
From: Jacqueline van Dyk

Subject: **COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS - FOR INFORMATION**

SUMMARY

As a result of our partnership with North Shore Community Resources, NVDPL has been involved with a successful application to the Ministry of Child and Family Development for an Early Years Centre.

NVDPL is a member of the Early Years Planning Table, and the steering committee that commissioned a report to look further into the results of the Early Development Index (survey of school readiness in kindergarteners) on the North Shore. There is now an implementation plan in place to address concerns raised in the report's findings.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

ATTACHMENTS

- *Increasing Vulnerability in the Early Years: A Closer Look at Five North Shore Neighbourhoods* – Executive Summary [Appendix A](#)
- *Increasing Vulnerability in the Early Years: A Closer Look at Five North Shore Neighbourhoods* – Draft Implementation Plan [Appendix B](#)

RECOMMENDATION

In October 2015, the North Shore Early Years Planning Table submitted an application to the Ministry of Child and Family Development for Early Years Centers on the North Shore.

THAT the Board receives this report for information.

BACKGROUND

The Early Development Index

In British Columbia, children who are in kindergarten are assessed by their teacher through the completion of the Early Development Index (EDI), an initiative of UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP). This assessment process reflects children's experiences and opportunities prior to coming to kindergarten. The data are used to provide communities with a profile of how well their children are doing in various areas of development, which in turn informs which services and supports are meeting the needs of children and where more attention is needed.

In general, children on the North Shore are doing well, but there has been a noticeable increase in vulnerability in specific neighbourhoods.

Collaboration with Community Partners

NVDPL actively participates at The Early Years Planning Table (WECAN), which is primarily funded through United Way of the Lower Mainland, and is hosted at North Shore Community Resources. Participation on this table represents approximately 30 North Shore agencies and organization. Its mandate is to increase the capacity of the North Shore community to collaboratively provide inclusive programs, information and resources for children 0-6 and their families that support cognitive, physical, social and emotional health, safety and responsible engagement.

In 2015, a steering committee (including NVDPL) was formed to commission a study to seek to understand possible causes of rising rates of developmental vulnerability among kindergarten children in five North Shore neighbourhoods, as indicated by results from the Early Development Index (EDI).

After the report, *Increasing Vulnerability in the Early Years: A Closer Look at Five North Shore Neighbourhoods*, was accepted, an Implementation Coordinator was hired to organize how the recommendations would be carried out in 2016. The main initiatives include: being a pilot "universal offer" of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ, a developmental checklist for parents of 3-year-olds); staff training for My Dad Matters toolkit; neighbourhood grant writing as community building; and community outreach programs in co-op and subsidized housing.

Working with the other North Shore libraries, NVDPL has already prepared a booklist to be included in the ASQ package, and will be involved in the other initiatives.

BC Early Years Centres

BC Early Years Centres provide B.C. families with access to a range of early years services and supports, information and referrals in a one-stop, convenient location. With a focus on improving child outcomes, a significant task of BC Early Years Centres is working within an integrated service delivery model to make it easier for families with young children to access what they need.

In October 2015, the North Shore Early Years Planning Table submitted an application to the Ministry of Child and Family Development for Early Years Centres on the North Shore.

The over-arching goal for the North Shore Early Years Centres (NSEYCs) is to screen children in five of the region's most vulnerable neighbourhoods to:

- 1) Identify what additional services and programs are needed
- 2) Coordinate, integrate and expand existing services
- 3) Provide parents with information and education to address their children's needs when enhanced services are not immediately available

Specifically, the application proposed to enhance service delivery in five areas of the North Shore and on Bowen Island that have been identified as having experienced critical differences in vulnerability in the most recent wave of the EDI.

DISCUSSION

One of the goals for NVDPL's Youth Services team in supporting the strategic direction of "fostering a culture of community collaboration" is to demonstrate expertise and leadership in the development of community initiatives for families and youth.

The ultimate goal of our collective efforts will be move the services provided by the member agencies of the North Shore Early Years Planning Table from coordinated service delivery, to joint service delivery and ultimately to integrated service delivery.

The library's role in such a model will be to provide expertise, share and distribute information, and perform outreach programs, much in the same way we visit the Strong Start Centres.

On February 10, 2016, it was announced that the application for North Shore Early Years Centres has been successful. Implementation will begin shortly, and the library will continue to be an active partner.

FINAL REMARKS

Many communities in BC use the EDI results to help shape social services to young families. There has been a lot of interest on what has been done on the North Shore, and how we have looked deeper into the reasons behind the changes in vulnerability. United Way, the funding agency, has been very supportive.

NVDPL is proud to be a partner with other organizations in working towards community goals that can only be achieved with collective effort.

Executive Summary

2015

Increasing Vulnerability in the Early Years: A Closer Look at Five North Shore Neighbourhoods



Arbor Educational & Clinical Consulting

www.arboreducational.com

9/4/2015

Executive Summary

Project Goal

This study seeks to understand possible causes of rising rates of developmental vulnerability among kindergarten children in five middle/upper-middle class North Shore neighbourhoods. With this increased understanding, recommended strategies and approaches for addressing perceived contributors to this rise in vulnerability will be outlined, with the ultimate goal that the current trend can be positively influenced through action. Over time, it is hoped that with community efforts, these neighbourhoods will see a decrease in the number of children deemed vulnerable in one or more areas of development.

Assessment of Vulnerability

In British Columbia, children who are in kindergarten are assessed by their teacher through the completion of the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The assessment process happens approximately every two years in each School District. The EDI assessment has taken place province-wide for the last ten years. To date, school districts have participated in two to six data collection time-points, known as 'waves'. This teacher-completed questionnaire assesses children's development in five key areas. These areas include:

1. Social and emotional competence
2. Emotional health and maturity
3. Language and cognitive development
4. General knowledge and communication skills
5. Physical health and well-being

The assessment process reflects children's experiences and opportunities *prior to* coming to kindergarten and this, in turn, reflects children's readiness for kindergarten. These data are used to provide schools and communities with a profile of how well their young children are doing in these five areas of development. With these data, schools and communities can examine areas in which services and supports are meeting the needs of young children as well as those areas which require further attention.

The Five North Shore Neighbourhoods

The five neighbourhoods of focus in this study are: Bowen Island, British Properties, Upper Capilano/Edgemont, Grand Boulevard/Moodyville and Deep Cover/Dollarton. Four of the five neighbourhoods had vulnerability rates on one or more EDI scales that hovered around 20% in Waves 3 and 4 but then a steep increase in vulnerability occurred from Wave 4 to 5. The remaining neighbourhood, British Properties, had relatively high rates of vulnerability in Wave 3, a notable drop in Wave 4, and then a steep rise again in Wave 5. Note that Wave 6 data is not considered in this study as it was not available at the time of this report.

Project Method

For this study, North Shore EDI data was examined in depth through additional analyses completed by the Human Early Learning Partnership at the University of British Columbia, the organization that leads the EDI work across British Columbia. In addition to extensive EDI data analysis, several other data sources as well as community consultation with early childhood-related service providers, school staff and parents were included in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the five neighbourhoods of concern.

Findings

In examining all available data, several possible drivers of vulnerability were identified in the five neighbourhoods. Some of these drivers are relevant for all neighbourhoods while others play more or less of a role; however, there are key drivers that are present across the five neighbourhoods. These common drivers that are critical across the North Shore include:

- **Limited access to programs and services by working parents.** This is an issue that is growing among families, given that most households are led by working parents. At the same time, programs and services have not adapted rapidly enough to adequately meet the needs of working parents. One particular group that is particularly under-served is fathers of young children.
- **Fewer opportunities for play.** With the increased choices in programming for very young children (e.g., academic-oriented classes, music lessons, structured sports) and increased sedentary activities (e.g. screen time), children are losing out on the tremendous developmental benefits of play. The importance of play for all areas of children's development appears to be inadequately understood and increasingly seen as less valuable than structured learning settings. As a result, some children are struggling to develop essential motor, social, emotional and communication skills that are best learned through unstructured play.
- **Increased technology use among parents and young children.** It has only been in the last few years that there has been an explosion of technology use. With the creation of smart phones and tablets, people are connected to technology more than ever. This trend is clearly seen among parents who are increasingly tied to technology use throughout the day and children who are engaging in excessive screen time. In this study, excessive technology use was cited numerous times as having a negative impact on parent-child relationships and child development in a number of areas (e.g., poorer self-regulation, increased anxiety, poorer communication skills, and poorer physical health).
- **Lower levels of social and emotional skills.** Service providers and some parents have noticed that children do not have adequate levels of skill in order to self-regulate and manage challenging states such as stress, frustration and disappointment. At the same time, there is a noticeable increase in pressure among parents to step in to do more things for their children (e.g., problem-solving tasks that are developmentally appropriate for young children) as opposed to doing things with their children (e.g., teaching them how to get ready to go outside, using coaching strategies to gain skills to solve conflicts, co-regulating emotions to help children learn to self-soothe etc.).
- **Increased number of children with special needs coupled with inadequate supports.** There has been a notable increase in children who are struggling with behavioural challenges as well as children who have been diagnosed with developmental delays. In order to adequately support

children with exceptional needs, resources and training for service providers (ECD staff, teachers) have not kept pace.

In addition to the above areas of concern, key neighbourhood-issues are considered.

Bowen Island has two areas of critical difference^a from waves 4 to 5: a 10% increase in overall vulnerability and a 12% increase in vulnerability in the communication domain. Neighbourhood-specific factors that appear to be influencing vulnerability include:

- Limited outdoor play spaces and recreational programming for young children where children have opportunities to play with others and learn new skills.
- Lack of health services (e.g., medical, speech and language) located on Bowen Island, requiring parents to travel to services off-island (challenge for working parents and cost of ferry transportation are barriers).

British Properties has three areas of critical difference from waves 4 to 5: a 12% increase in overall vulnerability; an 8% increase in the physical domain; and a 10% increase in the social competence domain. Neighbourhood-specific factors that appear to be influencing vulnerability include:

- Limited neighbourhood resources to support young children and families.
- High proportion of children who are English language learners but may not have adequate access to early learning environments to strengthen language and social competence.
- Isolation of some families due to neighbourhood layout, language and cultural differences.
- Higher levels of stress experienced by some newcomer families as they struggle with gaining meaningful employment, improving their English language skills, finding appropriate services and/or understanding the Canadian culture.
- Poorer nutrition among some children as a result of child preference for nutrient-poor foods.
- Inadequate sleep for young children.

Upper Capilano/Edgemont has three areas of critical difference from waves 4 to 5: a 15% increase in overall vulnerability; a 10% increase in the emotional maturity domain; and an 8% increase in the communication domain. Neighbourhood-specific factors that appear to be influencing vulnerability include:

- Limited neighbourhood resources to support young children and families.
- Geographical location of the neighbourhood making it challenging to access the limited resources (e.g., Library, Strong Start) that do exist.

Grand Boulevard/Moodyville has three areas of critical difference from waves 4 to 5: a 14% increase in overall vulnerability; a 10% increase in the physical domain; and a 7% increase in the social competence domain. Neighbourhood-specific factors that appear to be influencing vulnerability include:

- Limited availability of outdoor and indoor play spaces for young children.

^a The Critical Difference is the amount of difference in a neighbourhood's EDI vulnerability rate, on one or more scales, that is large enough to be considered a significant change from one time point to another.

- The impact of poverty on families with young children.
- Poorer nutrition among some children as a result of limited access to healthy foods and child preference for nutrient-poor foods.

Deep Cove/Dollarton has five areas of critical difference from waves 4 to 5: a 16% increase in overall vulnerability; an 11% increase in the social competence domain; a 9% increase in the emotional maturity domain; and a 10% increase in the communication domain. There was however a 10% decrease in vulnerability in the language domain. Neighbourhood-specific factors that appear to be influencing vulnerability include:

- The impact of poverty on some families with young children. In particular access to nutrition and early learning activities were noted in relation to poverty.

Broad Systems-Level Opportunities

In order to facilitate and sustain meaningful change, several opportunities at the systems-level have been identified. This systems-level work can help strengthen the overall infrastructure for young children and families. These include:

- **Development of a cross-sectoral strategic plan for information dissemination.** The North Shore has a variety of high quality resources and supports for families as well as several different mechanisms to get information out to the community. Despite this, there continues to be gaps in knowledge dissemination. This is particularly true in the case of information reaching families who may not be likely to engage in services for a variety of reasons. The development of a cross-sectoral strategy can address ways for partners to work together to ensure that as many families as possible are being reached with information about supports and services on the North Shore.
- **Enhancing the shared understanding of factors related to healthy early childhood development.** Just like all individuals, parents benefit from hearing key health and development messages several times and in different ways. In order to move toward a shared understanding of what these important messages should entail, increased collaboration among all those who work with young children and families is needed. Through dialogue, professional development activities and networking, similar messages for families can be developed in order to support healthy child development.
- **Early childhood screening.** Currently there is not a system in place to offer families screening in the preschool years; however, population-based screening systems for toddlers and pre-school-aged children are in the process of being developed by the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at the University of British Columbia; however, this will take some time to roll out into communities. In order to increase community readiness for such a system, beginning a pilot of such a system would be highly instructive. This pilot of a screening system would provide greater insights into strengths and challenges experienced by young children in the early years; assess the actual level of intervention needs; as well as create earlier opportunities to implement intervention and supports.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forth as strategies to address rising rates of vulnerability. Although all recommendations are designed to make an impact across the five neighbourhoods, specific recommendations are suggested as priorities for certain neighbourhoods (noted in brackets).

Service Level

1. Increase the number of programs for parents and young children that are offered in the evenings and on weekends so that working parents can attend with their children. These programs would ideally be neighbourhood-based and low-cost to allow for greater access.
2. Increase support for fathers raising young children. This includes engaging more fathers in parent-child activities and providing specialized supports for fathers who are experiencing challenges in their role as the primary caregiver.
3. Increase supports for grandparents co-raising grandchildren. (Priority: British Properties)
4. Increase opportunities for families to engage in indoor and outdoor physical free-play activities. (Priority: British Properties)
5. Inventory parent education events on the North Shore in order to determine which events have been highly successful. Build off these events and generate additional ways to provide innovative parent education opportunities. (Priority: British Properties)

Systems Level

6. Develop a strategic plan that is cross-sectoral, coordinated and tailored that would address the dissemination of information to specific groups who may be more challenging to reach with the goal of increasing engagement in early childhood programming and services.
7. Encourage increased cross-sectoral ECD professional development activities, coordination and networking that continue to strengthen a shared understanding, language and messaging related to healthy early childhood development.
8. Develop a coordinated cross-sectoral public awareness campaign and education opportunities about the impact of technology use in the early years.
9. Pilot a comprehensive population-based child screening and monitoring system for the early years in one community. (Priority: Bowen Island)
10. Create an inventory of all possible no-cost/low-cost space rentals that can be used for free or low-cost ECD programming with a focus on evening and weekend times. (Priority: Upper Capilano/Edgemont)
11. Continue coordinated advocacy for the following:
 - Available, accessible and affordable childcare
 - Increased resources for early childhood intervention services
 - Increased resources for child and family mental health

North Shore Early Year Vulnerability Project: Draft Implementation Plan Presented to Connect for Kids (Early Years), November 17, 2015

ASQ "Universal Offer" Initiative Pilot: Bowen Island		
Activities	Timeline	Recommendations Addressed
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research developmental assessment and screening tools 2. Consultations with VCH and Bowen Stakeholders 3. Coordinate initial ASQ-3 Training for providers 4. Prepare community and age specific ASQ packages & resource kits 5. Launch pilot with parent info night 6. ASQ packages and resource kits to all providers 7. Coordinate bi-monthly ASQ Clinic/Family Play nights 8. Coordinate roll-out of Phase 2 (Upper Cap/Edgemont) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASQ training for Bowen Family Service providers: Jan 2016 - Postering and compilation of ASQ packages/kits: Dec/Jan 2016 - Launch of pilot & Parent Info Night: Feb 2016 - Daytime Bowen ASQ Clinic: Feb 2016 - Bowen ASQ/Health Clinic and Family Play Nights: March, May 2016 - Provider focus group and Bowen Pilot Evaluation: May/June 2016 - ASQ training for Upper Cap/Edgemont Family Service Providers: Oct 2016 - Phase 2 launch: Jan 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase knowledge of and access to parent education resources/events - Cross-sectoral ECD Pro-D opportunities - Increase opportunities for families to engage in indoor and outdoor physical free-play activities - Increase access to programs for working parents - Increase access to programs for fathers - Increase support for grandparents co-raising grandchildren - Increase ability to engage hard-to-reach families

Notes:

Dads Matter: Community Father Involvement Strategy
Pilot Neighbourhoods: Upper Capilano/Edgemont; Deep Cove/Dollarton; Grand Boulevard/Moodyville

Activities	Timeline	Recommendations Addressed
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation with service providers currently running father-focused programs 2. C4K introduction to the My Dad Matters toolkit w/ organizational assessments 3. Agency/community specific service-level trainings in the MDM toolkit 4. Support/resource funding to help implement MDM action plans 5. Identification of Community Leaders and "first followers" to spearhead father-led groups/meet-ups 6. 6 month evaluation of Phase 1 MDM action plans; roll-out of Phase 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial C4K mini-training and info session: Feb 2016 - agency/neighbourhood specific trainings: Feb/March 2016 - Implementation of MDM action plans: Spring 2016 through Fall 2016 - evaluation & planning for phase 2: Fall 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase supports/programming for fathers - Increase programs for working parents - Cross-sectoral ECD Pro-D opportunities

Notes:

**Neighbourhood Grant-writing/Community Building events:
Pilot: British Properties**

Activities	Timeline	Recommendations Addressed
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation with Community Leaders/Service Providers 2. Identify community needs and priorities through parent/community consultation & focus groups 3. Coordinate Small Neighbourhood Grant writing workshop/community engagement event 4. Support implementation of successful grant projects and other grassroots-led community events 5. Ongoing consultation with community partners, families, and other stakeholder around increased programming at Properties Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community consultation: Winter 2015 - Grant writing workshop: early Spring 2016 - Implementation of community-led grant projects: Spring/Summer 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase supports/programming for fathers - Increase programs for working parents - Increase opportunities for families to engage in indoor and outdoor physical free-play activities - Increase knowledge of and access to parent education resources/events - Increase ability to engage hard-to-reach families

Notes:

**Community outreach programs
Pilot Neighbourhoods: All target neighbourhoods**

Activities	Timeline	Recommendations Addressed
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact all coop, subsidized housing complexes in target neighbourhoods to learn about space availability, existing programming 2. Create database of space availability and distribute to C4K partners 3. Provide support/funding to launch 3 to 5 play-based outreach programs in local housing complexes 4. Work with housing managers & C4K partners to coordinate, promote and implement programs 1. Evaluation and possible roll-out of future programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - housing map/connections: Nov/Dec 2015 - CFP for programs: Jan 2016 - implementation of programs: Winter/Spring 2016- evaluation: Summer 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase access to programs for working parents - Increase access to programs for fathers - Increase support for grandparents co-raising grandchildren - Increase opportunities for families to engage in indoor and outdoor physical free-play activities - Increase knowledge of and access to parent education resources/events - Increase ability to engage hard-to-reach families

Notes:

Looking forward:

- Partnership with Tsleil-Waututh Nation
 - *Programming on reserve*
 - *Professional development/training for family service providers*
- Mobile directory North Shore family services, programs, resources?
 - www.NSYouth.ca
- Strategic planning for C4K Campaign on technology use
 - *Committee?*
 - *Messaging and media*

Other opportunities/ideas:

- Get out and PLAY days
 - Seasonal neighbourhood-specific events centred around child-led play
- Inter-agency peer mentoring training/support program (Richmond model)
- Dalai Lama Centre – Heart-Mind Parenting Pilot