

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.46 (SUNSHINE COAST)

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT: EARLY LEARNING

Submitted by Superintendent Bocking
January 13th, 2020

-
- 1b) Our students will thrive in their **early years, and throughout their education**, within schools, families, and communities that inspire learning, respect, and connection.
-

“If kids come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families it makes our job easier. If they do not come from strong, healthy, functioning families it makes our job more important.”

- Barbara Coloroso

Background:

The early years are critical because just like language, many of the predispositions they currently experience are time limited. Brain development doesn't occur at a constant rate— there are prime times for acquiring different kinds of skills and knowledge and specific times when the brain is pruning out unused connections. Enriched environments and appropriate stimulation help ensure that a window of opportunity for developing a specific capacity will be optimized. The absence of appropriate stimulation within certain time frames may lead to the skill or ability being 'pruned out' from lack of use. (<https://www.changelearning.ca/get-informed-understanding-human-learning-born-learn-early-years.html>)

The Ministry of Education's focus includes:

- Expanded focus to children from infancy to eight years of age (previously five years of age),
- Increased focus on reconciliation and Indigenous worldviews,
- Increased focus on inclusive practices,
- Connects with new K-12 curriculum, core competencies and primary program principles,
- Focus on integrating theory with practice.

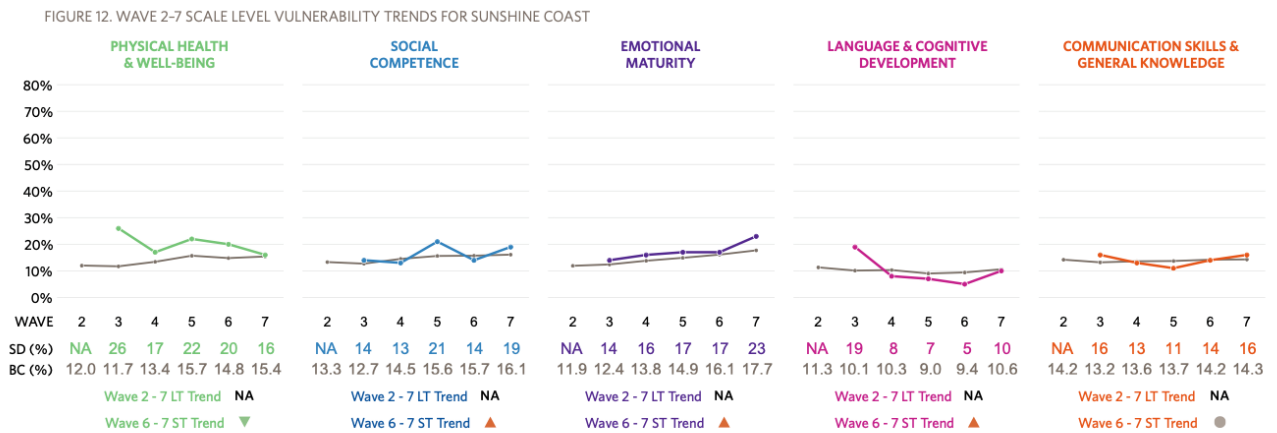
Discussion:

The district has a well-established series of programs that support children from birth through to grade 3.

- Early Development Instrument (EDI) data:
 - The Sechelt area has a higher vulnerability level than neighboring Gibsons and Pender Harbour areas.

- In comparison to the province, the district has a higher vulnerability in the area of emotional maturity and will be focusing attention in that area.
- StrongStart programs:
 - Outdoor programming for the month of October.
 - As of November, returned inside with pre-registration for programming.
 - Family navigators support families.
 - Tales & Trails programs – families meet and discover local trails with early years educators.
 - The new WonderWheels bus is complete and will continue to provide StrongStart outreach.
- Provincial grants for Changing Results for Young Children and Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten (SEY2K):
 - Compassionate Systems Leadership program with Vancouver Coastal Health and shíshálh Nation.
- SPARK! programs have been redesigned to align with indigenous elements and the early learning framework.
- Wonder Children program provides child centred, wrap-around supports with community partners.
- Child Care Centres:
 - Early Years Hub in Sechelt, will include infant/toddler and preschool age child care.
 - West Sechelt Elementary Expansion, will include infant/toddler and preschool age child care.
- Imagination Library:
 - Sunshine Coast is the longest standing Canadian affiliate with the Imagination Library.
 - Distributed 51,000 books since 2007.

Data Summary:



Note: Data are suppressed for waves when there are fewer than 35 Kindergarten children in the school district. See Appendices 1A and 1B for full tables of your school district's EDI data.

- The EDI scores above reveal that children enter Kindergarten in SD46 with strong skills in Language and Cognitive Development. We are implementing strategies to support early learners' Social and Emotional strengths in the early years.

Recent and Next Steps:

- The Early Years Framework is supported in our district in a number of areas including the Board's Affirmation statement, the value of inclusivity, the connection with Core Competencies and this goal specifically.
- KinderSPARK! facilitators and Kindergarten Teachers are working together to introduce a 'redesigned' KinderSPARK! program. This update introduces families to the redesigned curriculum, through a child-centred and personalized approach.
- The "Seamless Day" pilot project is an exciting new approach, supported by the Ministry of Education, that supports family and children in learning and social/ emotional development.
 - Early childhood educators work in the classroom alongside Kindergarten teachers.
 - Provides before and after school care, in the kindergarten classroom, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.