

EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE ANNUAL REPORT

February 2024

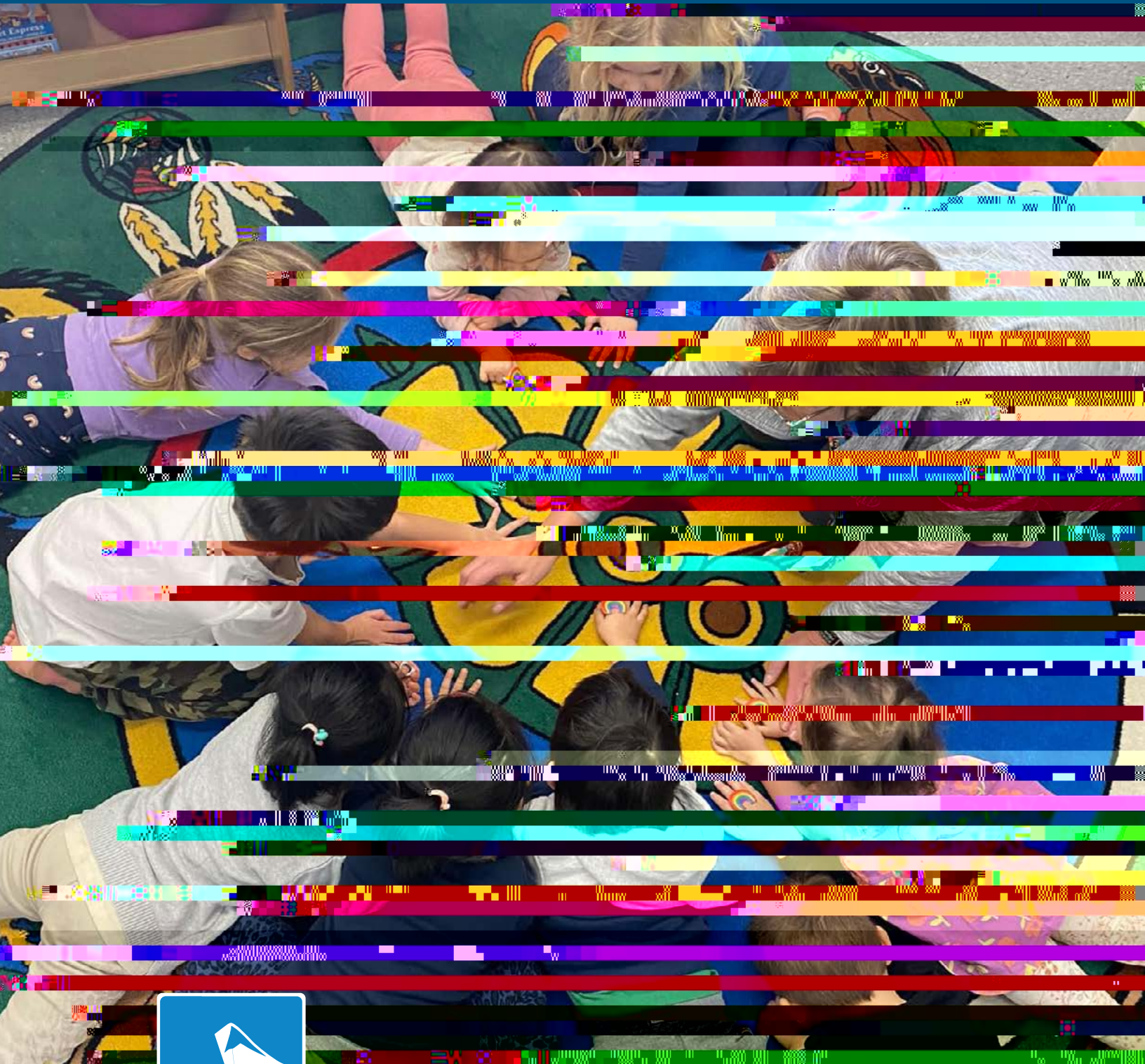
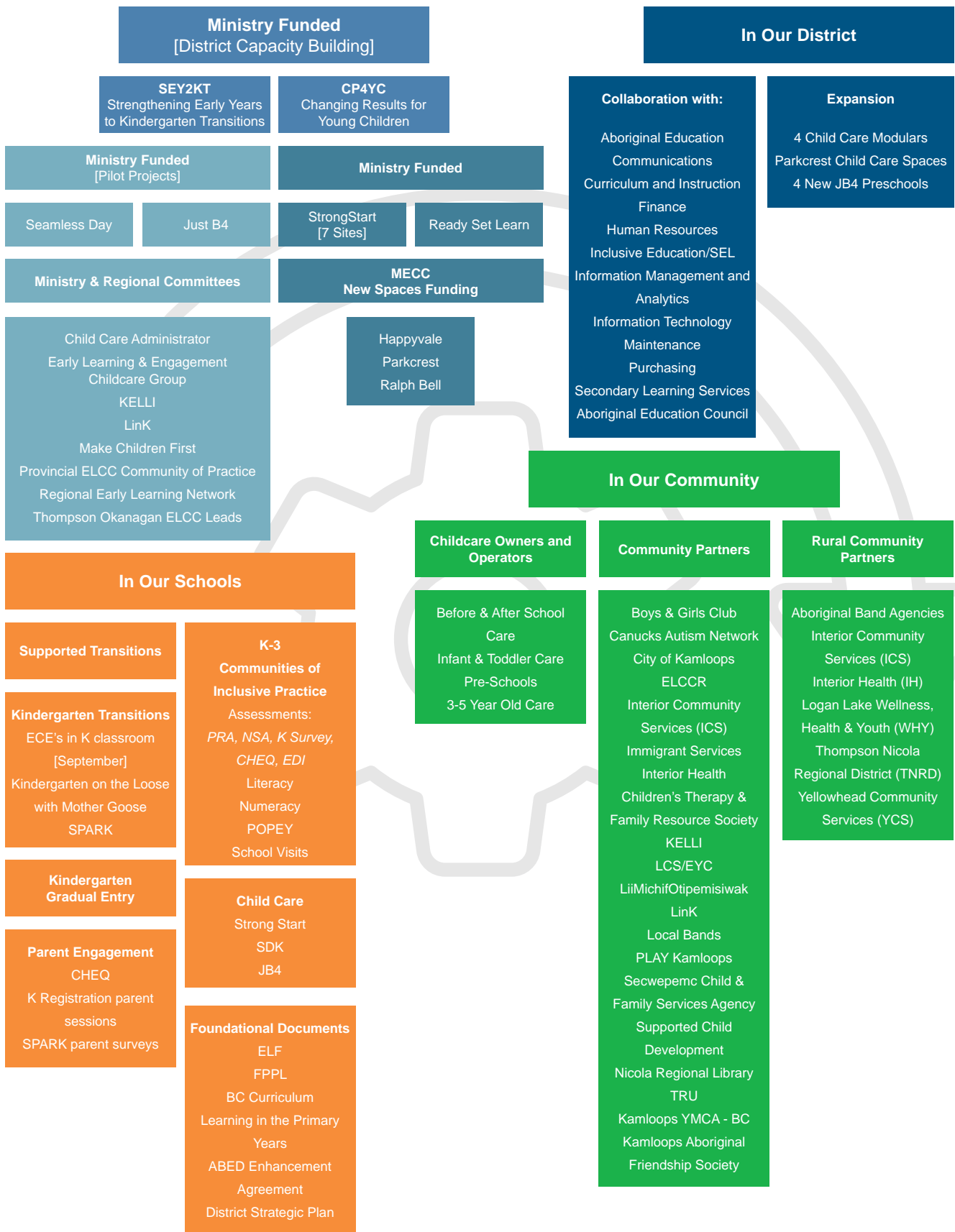







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Early Learning and Child Care







Initial provincial level EDI-Wave 9 data, which was completed in January 2023, is showing the necessity of district commitments to values such as connection, relationships, equity and well-being as 33% of kindergarten students are showing vulnerability in one or more areas that are critical to healthy development. June 2023 PRA data highlights the ongoing importance of equity in our district to close the achievement gap that exists in Grade 1 reading between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students as well as between diverse and non-diverse learners. These highlights also reinforce the necessity of the targeted work the ELCC team is doing to intervene earlier

Early Learning and Child Care is foundational in all of these priority areas as the work in the early years sets SD73 students up for greater success moving forward. *“Early learning paves the way for learning at school*

years —and how they learn it—can have long-lasting effects on their success and health as children, teens, and adults.” (Eunice Kennedy Shriver, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2021). For the purpose of this annual report, the priorities focussed on this year are: Intellectual Development, Human and Social Development/Wellbeing, and Systems Development.



ACTION ITEMS:

The following information highlights the work that has been done, which strategies and actions have been implemented and future goals to be achieved and are directly connected to the three priorities being highlighted within this report.

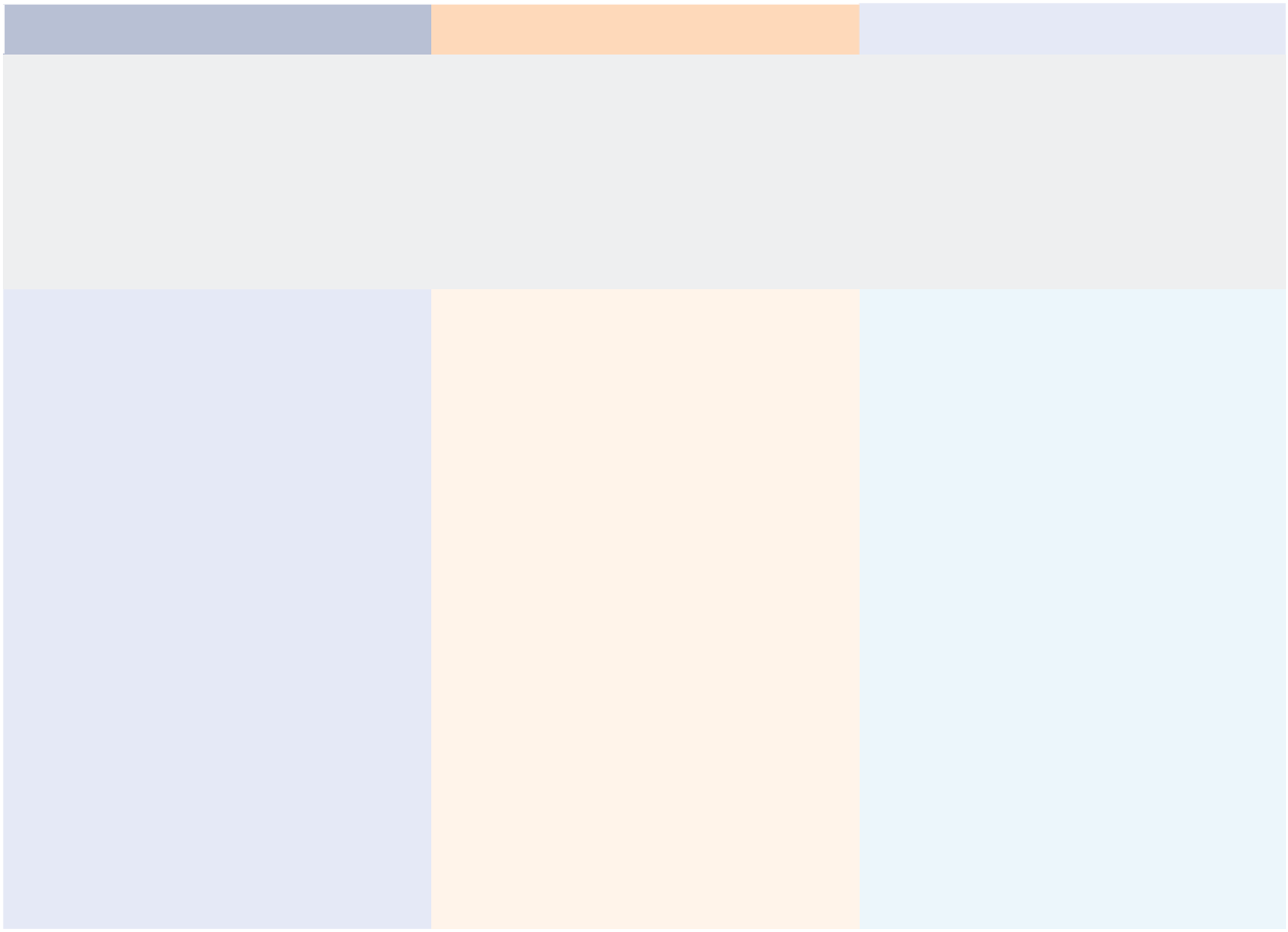
PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE

In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025
<p>ASSESSMENTS AND SURVEYS: Early Development Indicator (EDI)</p> <p>The EDI is a short questionnaire completed by Kindergarten teachers in the second half of the kindergarten school year. This instrument is used not only across SD73, but across Canada and internationally. The purpose of the questionnaire is to measure a child’s ability to meet age-appropriate developmental expectations. EDI data offers a foundation for building our understanding of the patterns and trends in children’s physical, emotional, social and cognitive development at kindergarten. While it does not point to specific solutions, this data provides a common starting point for facilitating discussion and inquiry on the status of early child development within schools, districts, and communities.</p>		
<p>SD73 participated in the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) with UBC EDI Wave 9 - February 2023. For more information on EDI, see https://edi.offordcentre.com/. Following this, near the end of the 2023 school year, the EDI Wave 8 data was released to school districts. Wave 8 represents the 20th year of collecting data provincially. These two decades of research have demonstrated</p> <p>á á</p>		



In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025

In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025
ASSESSMENTS AND SURVEYS: Number Sense Assessment (NSA)		



PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

In 2022-2023

In 2023-2024

In 2024-2025

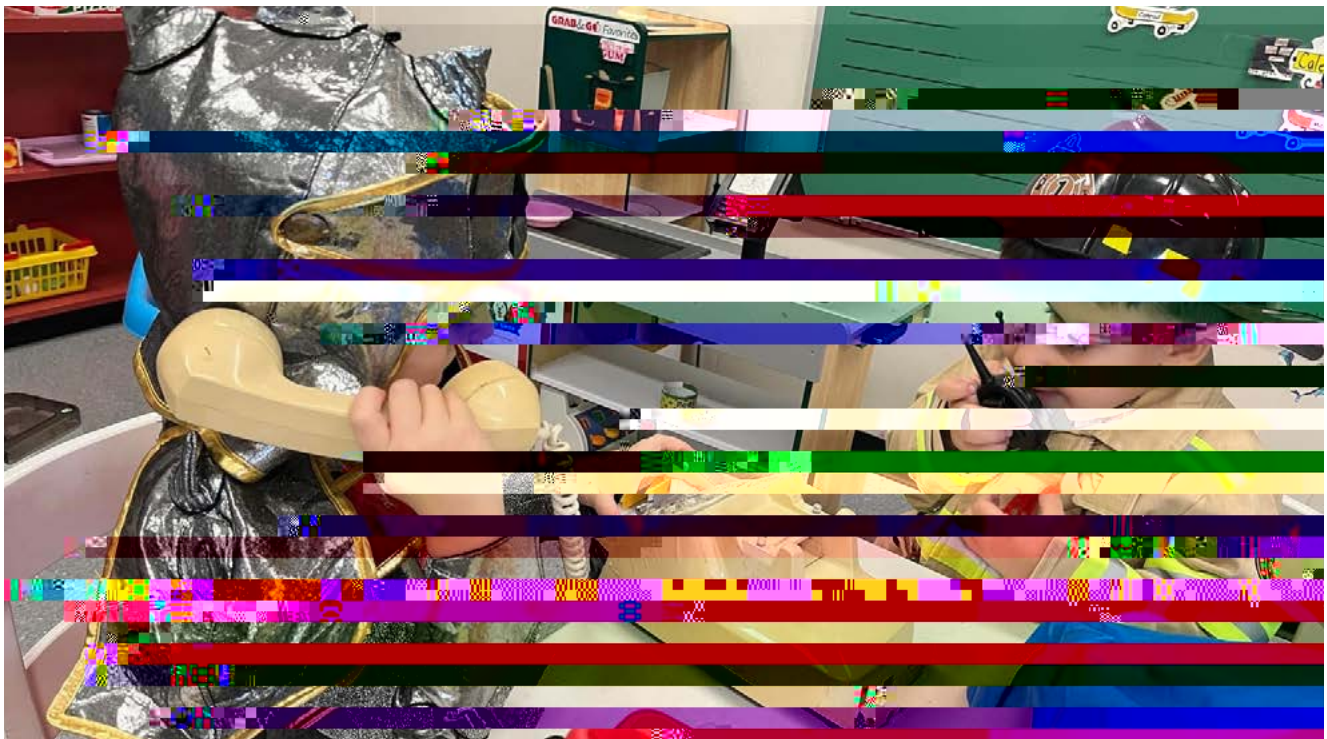
District Initiatives & Programs: Strong, Prepared and Ready for Kindergarten (SPARK) and Ready Set Learn (RSL)

RSL is the allocated funding provided by MECC intended for families and children preparing to enter kindergarten. RSL is all about fostering positive connections between families, the school system, and local community agencies. In SD73, these funds are used primarily for SPARK resource bags for students and k-transition (SPARK) events.

SPARK was implemented at all elementary schools. SPARK bags continue to be provided centrally via the ELCC team. Elementary schools implemented a variety of the recommended programs. The Early Years Coordinator continued to provide resources and lessons for successful implementation of the program.

SPARK continues to run as last year. Ready Set Learn (RSL) funding from MECC continues to be allocated to each school to support k-transition events (SPARK). Training and support continues to be provided to kindergarten teachers and interested Principals and Vice-Principals by the ELCC team.

The ELCC team will investigate additional options for the provision of the SPARK bags and how to best utilize the RSL funding to support program implementation. The ELCC team will continue to support and build resources for SPARK to reflect the growing interests and needs of SD73.





In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025



In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025



PAST

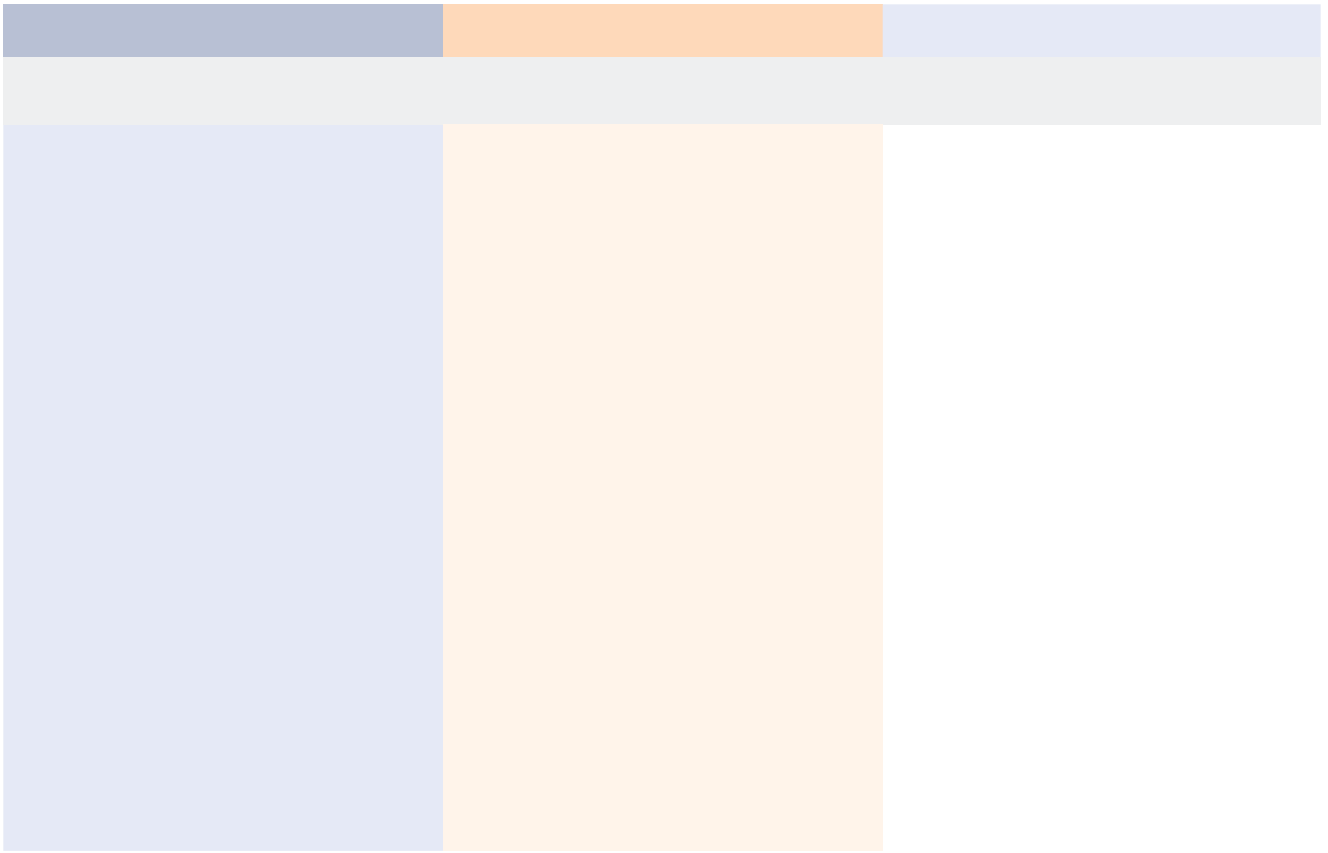
PRESENT

FUTURE



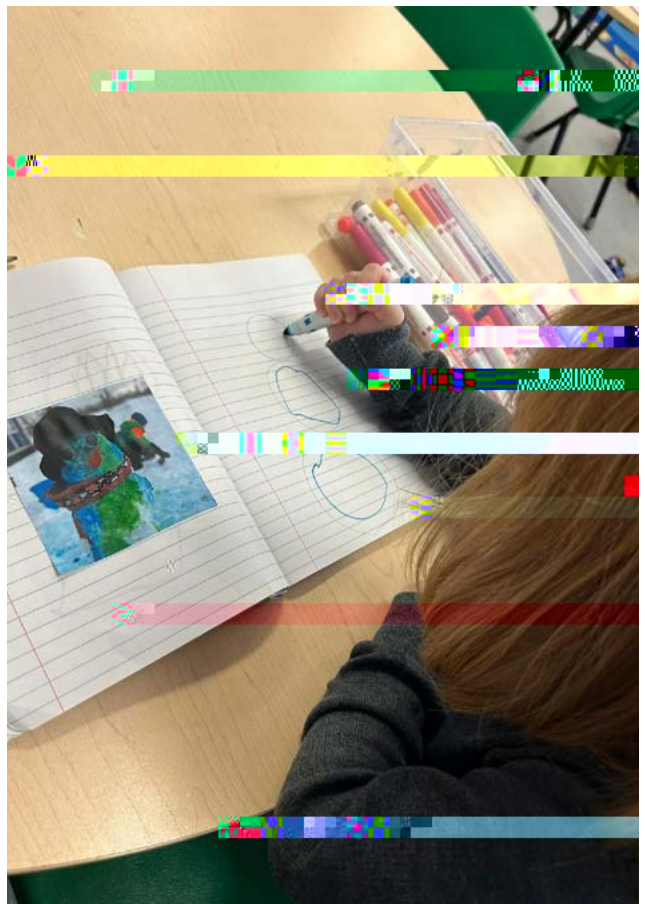
In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025
Collaborations: ELCC and the Curriculum and Instruction Literacy Team		
<p>The Literacy team worked with a small group of teachers to revise the district Reading Strategies bookmark. The group created four differentiated bookmarks focused on word reading strategies. A series of four POPEY workshops on Literacy Foundations was offered in 2022-2023 to 20 K-Grade 1 teachers from eight schools. A workshop on <i>Shifting the Balance</i> for K-Grade 2 teachers was offered in December 2023 that focussed on the importance of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. With support from ELCC, the Literacy Team purchased, organized, and provided each elementary school with kits for Grade 1 and Grade 2. This resource complements <i>Jolly Phonics</i> for kindergarten. The Literacy Team updated the BC Performance Standards for Reading and Writing to align with the new Proficiency Scale.</p>	<p>Bookmarks were introduced and distributed at the PRA in-services in the fall. An after-school workshop was offered January 31st. A lesson sequence to introduce the strategies has been developed and implemented. A series of four POPEY workshops on High-Impact Literacy Routines was offered in 2023-2024 to 20 Grade 2-3 teachers from nine schools. A workshop on <i>Shifting the Balance</i> for Grades 3-8 teachers was offered in December 2024 that highlighted applications to both whole class instruction and intervention. Workshops on <i>Companion</i> were offered in September and at the October Non-instructional Day. The Literacy Team has worked with the District Library Coordinator to begin a Decodables (for beginning readers) section in the HGEC Library Learning Commons. The Literacy Team is compiling various Literacy Guides and scopes and sequences (shared by several BC school districts).</p>	<p>The Literacy Team will continue to recommend and support bookmark use. An updated buddy reading lesson sequence will be created to support implementation. The collaboration with POPEY will be ongoing and it is hoped that this series might be replicated in some way to continue its work in supporting primary teachers, possibly specific to K teachers next year. The Literacy Team will continue to recommend and provide workshops focused on current professional learning resources. With exemplary phonemic awareness and phonics resources in K-Grade 2, the focus will shift to Grade 3. Various resources are being reviewed, including <i>Bug Club Morphology</i>. Decodables will continue to be added to the collection. The Literacy Team will continue work on developing a Literacy Guide to provide information about instruction and assessment. It is hoped this will provide a possible foundation for a district literacy intervention model.</p>

In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025
Collaborations: ELCC and the Curriculum and Instruction Numeracy Team		
<p>The Numeracy team, along with Number Sense Assessment (NSA) work outlined previously, completed professional development around number sense and computational fluency using the anchor text</p>		



In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025
Collaborations: ELCC and Community Partners		
<p>The ELCC team works with a vast number of community partners in order to provide quality programs, resources, support and opportunities for preK and K-3 children. Please refer to the ELCC Flow Chart on page four.</p> <p>Specific ongoing community events that the ELCC team are actively involve in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise a Reader - Sept 2023 • ABC Family Literacy Day - Jan 2023 • Kindergarten Round Up - Feb 2023 • Kamloops Immigrant Services - K Loose with Mother Goose - Feb 2023 • Teddy Bear Picnic - June 2023 <p>In May 2023, the SD73 ELCC team hosted the first in-person Child Care Administrators dinner meeting, in partnership with the Kamloops YMCA-BC, Childhood Resource and Referral and Kamloops Early Years Centre (CCRR) who lead these meetings throughout the year.</p>	<p>The ELCC team continues to work hard to maintain ongoing partnerships while looking for additional opportunities for connection and partnership. In the fall of 2023, the team met with a variety of child care providers in Barriere to discuss what the community child care specific needs are and how we can come together to help support meeting the needs. The ELCC team continues to work with TRU nursing students and early childhood educators to establish positive relationships with families that foster children's healthy development. SD73s involvement in the community run Kindergarten Round-Up presentation evening continues as well as exploring the possibility of additional supportive family sessions earlier in a child's development towards kindergarten. The ELCC team will continue to co-host with the Kamloops YMCA-BC, CCRR the May Child Care Administrators dinner meeting.</p>	<p>The ELCC team will continue to work with the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society, looking for innovative ways to provide educational opportunities for Indigenous people in the community who are interested in becoming Early Childhood Educators. The ELCC team will continue to collaborate with community partners with resources, materials and sessions for kindergarten readiness for families, preschools and childcare professionals. The ELCC team will continue to collaborate with early years' community partners on community programming such as <i>Mother Goose, One-to-One Before Grade 1</i> to increase awareness about the importance of early literacy for all families while also continuing to deliver <i>Kindergarten on the Loose with Mother Goose</i> sessions that target early learning kindergarten literacy readiness skills. ELCC will continue to work closely with the Early Years Center on analyzing gaps in the system around family and community needs and create innovative resources and/or programs to fill the gaps.</p>

In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025
Collaborations: ELCC StrongStart facilitators and Kindergarten teachers		
<p>StrongStart facilitators worked in collaboration with kindergarten teachers at SS schools during the month of September 2022. Further, StrongStart facilitators were released to attend kindergarten transition meetings and Kindergarten teachers were invited into preschool to observe and discuss children, spring 2023.</p>	<p>Both initiatives will continue during this school year. Kindergarten teachers and StrongStart facilitators speak to the positive impact these initiatives have on early learners transitioning into kindergarten.</p>	<p>Continue to develop ECE and kindergarten teacher partnerships in unique and creative ways to support seamless transitions into kindergarten for students and their families.</p>







In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	

In 2022-2023	In 2023-2024	In 2024-2025
<p>Ministry Initiatives & Programs: Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transitions (SEY2KT) SEY2KT is an MECC funded program aimed at improving the social, emotional, and learning skills, during</p>		

PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

In 2022-2023

In 2023-2024

In 2024-2025

Child Care Programs: Seamless Day Kindergarten (SDK)



In 2022-2023		



Intellectual Development

ASSESSMENTS/SURVEYS

Assessments and Surveys provide snapshots of how the district's earliest learners are improving their skills over time and with teacher implementation of programs, strategies and skills. In early learning, we are fortunate to have a snapshot, via the CHEQ Survey of potentially impactful factors prior to children even beginning in the K-12 system. From entry into kindergarten until the end of grade 3 there are layers of assessments to support growth over time and snapshots in time to ensure the teaching, programs and resources connected to ELCC are making an intentional positive difference for SD73's earliest learners. The data collected from these assessments and surveys directly relate to success in later assessments such as Foundational Skills Assessments (FSA) which is a summative snapshot of the work done in K-3.

Kindergarten (K) Survey Development



The K Survey is administered each year: Fall/Winter/Spring. Kindergarten teachers complete the survey through a variety of methods including observation and one-on-one conversations. The data supports early intervention which in turn secures the best outcomes for student success.

Points of interest from Fall 2023 K Survey data:

Based on the fall findings, social-emotional learning, subitizing, and expressive grammar are all areas showing as areas needing additional teaching and/or targeted intervention strategies.

Although 1 to 1 counting is relatively strong, this same group of K students struggle with subitizing, the ability to instantly recognize the number of objects without actually counting them. Students are able to memorize and repeat numbers, but they are not transferring this knowledge to number recognition and number concept: "...counting is the foundation upon which number concepts and skills are built" (*Young Children's Mathematics*, p. 8).

Expressive grammar is the ability to put thoughts into words and sentences in a way that makes sense and is grammatically correct. This is a good snapshot of how kindergarten students are doing specific to oral language development which is the cornerstone to reading and writing.

Struggles in the realm of social-emotional learning is not surprising for this cohort when one takes into consideration the correlated information provided in the Fall CHEQ results.





INITIATIVES and PROGRAMS

Literacy

professional development at school-based non-instructional days, staff meetings, and Learning Assistance Resource Teacher (LART) sessions.

Supported grade 1 students participating, as an intervention strategy, in the Summer Primary Reading Program which is pivotal to support students with literacy challenges. These students are recommended by teachers to help reduce summer reading gap occurrences and to capitalize on the reading flow many young readers find near the end of a school year. Participation in this program helps reduce equity gaps by providing a way for students to increase or at least maintain their reading abilities over the summer break. This program consistently fills a need for over 300 grade 1 students each summer:

Summer 2021	Summer 2022	Summer 2023
327	301	308



I saw students gain confidence with their literacy skills and abilities throughout their participation in this program.

- Summer Reading Program teacher

Supported the purchasing of Canadian resources and programs such as: Moe the Mouse; Nelson Socials; SyllaSense Decodables; and The Phonics Companion, that highlight Canadian and Indigenous content.

Ensured all schools have programs that support meeting the needs of students with diverse learning needs i.e. program includes embedded assessment and suggestions for differentiation and the Heggerty's

Numeracy

By providing intentional attention to numeracy, the stage is set for students to engage in deep connections related to the magnitude of numbers that will set them up for success throughout school and life. The ability to decompose numbers fluently and see math concepts spatially sets the stage for primary students to enter the work of place value and strategies around operations where they start to make sense of whole numbers, decimals and fractions. In order to be able to work with abstract concepts, later on, primary students need to first have concrete contextual experiences with the use of manipulatives which provides an anchor to future understandings.



What children learn in mathematics between the ages of about four and a half and seven years sets the stage for their success at age 15. This research ... underlines the critical importance of providing young children with explicit mathematics learning opportunities.

- Watts, Duncan, Siegler, and Davis-Kean, 2014

Points of Interest:

Ongoing collaboration with the **District Numeracy Team** specific to the complete implementation of the district Number Sense Assessment in the 2024-2025 school year which will initiate the collection of baseline data for this assessment.



I just wanted to share that there has been a lot of positive discussion, learning and collaboration going on right now as teachers navigate the NSA. I am very excited about the positive direction our district is headed with respect to having a standard primary assessment in terms of better teaching practices, more resources available for schools and a deeper understanding of our very vague curriculum.

- Grade 2 teacher quote
specific to the work and training opportunities provided for the NSA

Ensuring the integration of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into planning, teaching and implementing teacher professional development opportunities - connected to effective strategies, assessments and practices.

Ensured equitable access to the resources and programs used in workshops by purchasing additional program kits and teacher resources that are accessible via the HGEC Library Learning Commons.

Ensured current researched best practices in teaching and assessing numeracy continues in the district by reading current research and attending professional development opportunities.

Through the process of creating the NSA, it was important that supportive lessons and resources were provided so that teachers could know the next steps to take after the assessment was provided to teach students who needed additional support.





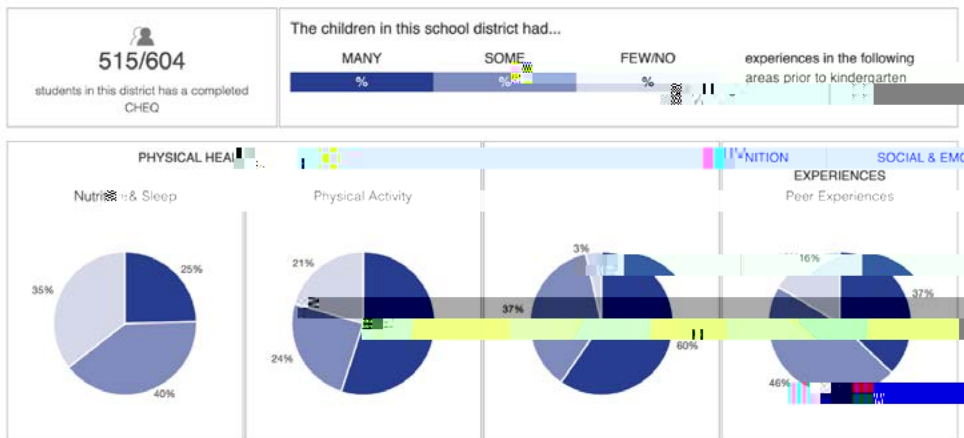
ASSESSMENTS/SURVEYS

Assessments and Surveys provide snapshots of how the district's earliest learners are improving their skills over time and with teacher implementation of programs, strategies and skills. In early learning, we are fortunate to have a snapshot, via the CHEQ survey of potentially impactful factors prior to children even beginning in the K-12 system that provides baseline information to help target potential gaps in learning right from the start. From entry into kindergarten until the end of grade 3 there are layers of assessments to support growth over time and snapshots in time to ensure the teaching, programs and resources connected to ELCC are making an intentional positive difference for SD73's earliest learners.

Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (CHEQ)

Early child development is a social determinant of health which potentially impacts lifelong health and well-being. CHEQ helps to monitor this in our community.

The 2023 district snapshot of the current kindergarten cohort, who were two years of age when the COVID pandemic began, is as follows:



Points of interest:

27% of the current K cohort experienced a stressful event (COVID, parent separation/divorce, death

Of their parents/caregivers:

74% have experienced child care challenges. Availability, being on a waitlist and cost were listed as the top three areas of challenge.

78% express that their stress levels have been medium to very high over the last 6 months.

In general, provincially, children are experiencing:

Less sleep	Lower frequency of peer experiences
Less physical activity	Less time outside
Less perception of parks being safe	Less frequency of risky play
More screen time per day	Increase in barriers in accessing health care, programs and supports
Negative pandemic impact still reported for one quarter to one third of families	

Why is this important? Improved early childhood experiences improve school performance, completion rates and break the cycles of intergenerational poverty. Knowing that children entering kindergarten are having these experiences in growing numbers enables districts to create targeted interventions to improve opportunities and experiences for all children.

The Early Development Instrument (EDI)

Wave 8 data was collected in 2020 and Wave 9 data was collected in January of 2023. Wave 8 students are currently in grade 4 and Wave 9 students are currently in grade 1.

The 2023 district Wave 8 snapshot:

WAVE 8 Points of Interest, Provincially:

Across the province, 33% (13,500) of kindergarten students were vulnerable in one or more areas that are critical to their healthy development. This means that one in three of these children entered kindergarten vulnerable in at least one area of development important to their future success. Without care and support these children are more likely to experience difficulty in their future success in school or beyond such as an increased risk of encountering difficulties in the school years and beyond.

Social and Emotional Development (Emotional Maturity and Social Competence) remains the highest area of concern and directly relates to common childhood mental health issues. K students, with vulnerability in Emotional Maturity & Social Competence have increased odds of mental health related issues by age 14.

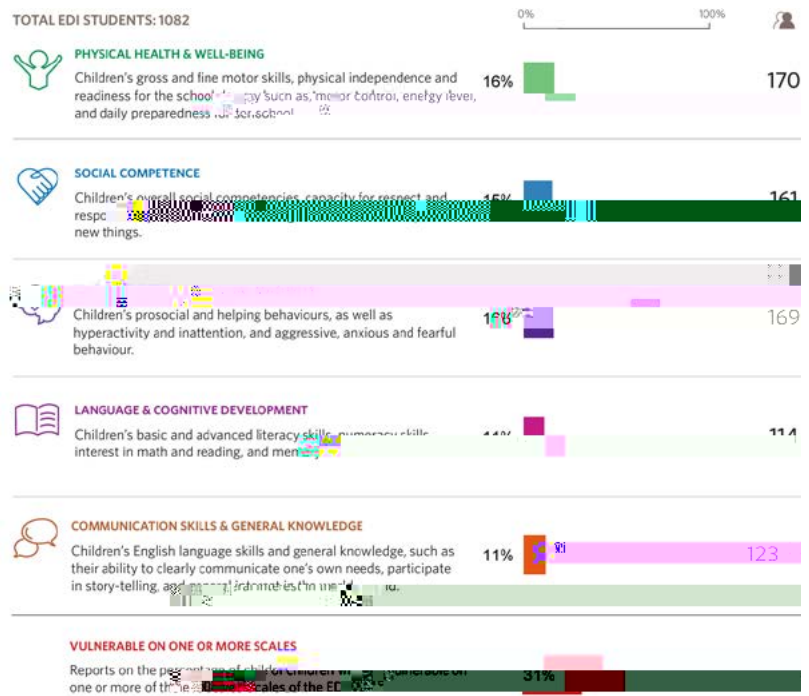
The data highlights the inequities that children and families across BC continue to face.

Wave 9 Points of Interest, Provincially:

The trend for overall vulnerability rates, long-term, continues to increase in BC. Significant disparity with vulnerability rates across the province highlight that where you live matters.

Children who experience poverty in both their household and their neighborhood have 107% higher odds of vulnerability in 2+ more EDI domains.

Timing and targeting of interventions are important i.e. intervene early and often. Research shows that early and consistent supports and interventions that reduce barriers for vulnerable families and children are necessary to lower the overall vulnerability rates.



SD73 specific data:

The Wave 8 report was released in spring 2023. Wave 8 results show 30% of SD73 kindergarten students are considered vulnerable on more than one indicator.

Social and Emotional Development (Emotional Maturity and Social Competence) and Physical Health and Wellbeing remain the highest areas of concern and relate directly to common childhood mental health issues. The Wave 9 cohort in SD73 would have been 3 years old when the pandemic started and are now in grade 1.

Child Care Needs Assessment Surveys

The Child Care Needs Surveys (Indigenous Families Child Care Environmental Scan Survey and the Child Care Needs Assessment Survey) were developed as a part of the MECC's Environmental Scan. The results have been shared with the school district, community partners and is a part of the New Spaces Fund application as data sources.

Points of Interest:

Both child care needs assessment surveys reinforce that there is a limited availability of child care spaces and quality programs available within SD73 communities.

Programs that do currently exist have waitlists that are long and require full-time commitment from families vs. flexible drop-in ability.

Families with children with neuro-diverse needs are struggling to find care even more than families with neuro-typical children.

Surveyed families indicated their preference for child care at their elementary school.

MECC: Environmental Child Care Scan Final Report

The report for this Environmental Child Care Scan was submitted July 2023. The final report is accessible here: [SD73 Environmental Scan](#).

Points of Interest:

Space requirements and limitations create one of the biggest barriers to child care expansion for SD73.

Recruitment and retention of child care staff is an ongoing area of concern and a necessary component of expansion.


There is a noticeable absence of before- and after-school care at most elementary schools.

Ensuring equitable access to programming is essential in creating a child care model which is accessible to all.

SD73 completed two child care surveys which both clearly indicated a high need for before- and after-school care and child care occurring during school breaks.

Of the four considerations and suggestions mentioned in the report, specific to child care, two have already been implemented in SD73: expansion of Just B4 programming and the development of an LOU with CUPE specific to expanding the child care workforce.

INITIATIVES and PROGRAMS



are actionable items that support a child’s human and social development which then ultimately reduces equity gaps to ensure all children are able to function successfully in school and life.

StrongStart

Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC)

CR4YC brings educators together who share the same children and families and provide them with the opportunity to collaborate and strengthen relationships over time. Further information can be found at <https://cr4yr.com/2023/09/12/cr4yc-collected-research-stories-2022-2023/>

	Educators	'Wonder Children'
Numbers of Participants	12	12
Total number of participants overall in CR4YC	72	72

Points of Interest:

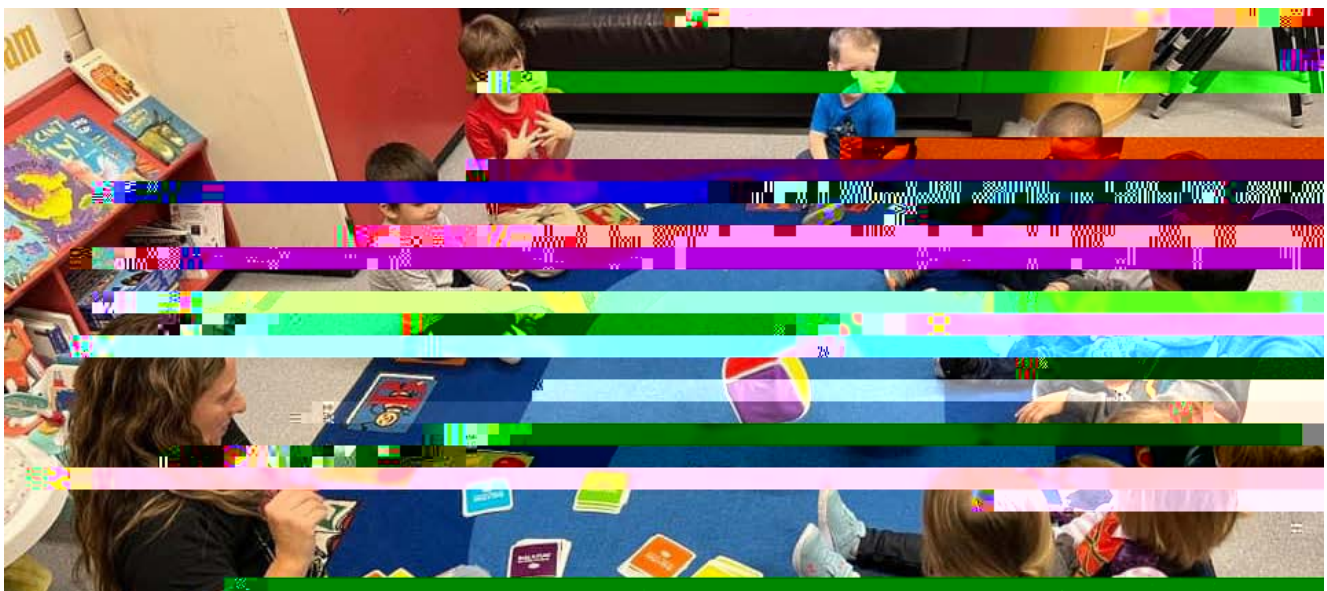
72 educators and children have benefited from CR4YC over the past six years.

CR4YC is a collaborative inquiry project that brings together community-based early childhood educators, StrongStart facilitators, and kindergarten teachers. Participants focus on individual students who would benefit from targeted interventions that support social-emotional learning. Successes are shared with the collaborative team with the intention of making this work scalable while aligning pedagogy between early childhood educators and primary grade educators.

SD73's District Early Years Coordinator continues to be the region's trained facilitator for this program.

Continued participation in year five of Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC) research. New reports and summary of findings are published each year in the fall.

<https://cr4yr.com/2023/09/12/cr4yc-collected-research-stories-2022-2023/>

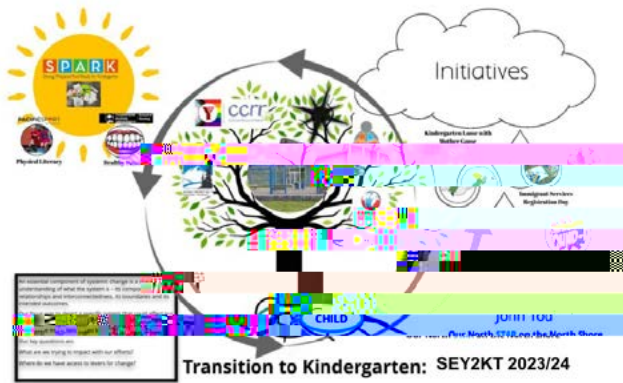




Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transition (SEY2KT)

482 adults and 491 pre-k children benefited from the work being done by the SEY2KT team during 56 sessions designed to support a positive transition into kindergarten.

Based on current interest by community partners in the programs created and provided by the SEY2KT team, the program is expanding. The team continues to consider options for expansion in spite of this.



Supported Transitions

Entering kindergarten is an important step in every child’s development. A successful transition into school for children who need support involves parents and professionals working together to plan and make decisions. The Kindergarten transition is an opportunity for families, school district staff and other professionals who work with children, to plan a successful entry for children into kindergarten. This is even more important when working with children who have diverse needs and who may require additional support through the process.

Spring Data Intake	Males	Females	Children with Special Education	Rural Children	Urban Children
Number of Incoming Learners: 2022	53	20	32	14	59
Number of Incoming Learners: 2023	73	20	43	23	70

Points of Interest:

Based on this comparative data, the supportive needs are increasing for children entering kindergarten.

To prepare for kindergarten, the parents/caregivers of children with diverse learning abilities entering kindergarten are invited to attend district engagement sessions. In addition, a kindergarten transition night is planned with community agencies for these parents.

Once students enroll in school, Inclusive Education Services staff members provide direct service and consultation, together with school-based teams, on an as-needed basis to meet individual student's needs.

Currently there are 67 children with designations in kindergarten for the 23/24 school year.

During Spring 2023, there were 89 district supportive transition meetings held. Changes are taking place to ensure district transition meetings are focused on students needing significant intervention and support from multiple disciplines within the Inclusive Education department.

For more information on supporting students in SD73, see the Annual Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Report on the SD73 website.

The ELCC team also supports other initiatives that work to create successful transitions into kindergarten such as: SPARK events and sitting on the panel for the community Kindergarten Round-Up parent evening which provides families the opportunity to learn about kindergarten expectations, community support and kindergarten registration processes. This also allows families the opportunity to ask questions they may have.

Currently the ELCC team is exploring with community partners the possibility of having earlier transition evenings and events for families to participate in (i.e. when children are 3-4 years olds) prior to the Kindergarten Round-Up and SPARK K transition events to answer questions and alleviate possible concerns earlier in a child's development.

With the expertise of ECE staff in both StrongStart and the Just B4 programs in SD73, kindergarten transition events support students and families. The addition of ECE staff in supportive roles in K classrooms in schools for the month of September is showing positive results.



Our ECE has been so helpful, especially for a teacher who recently switched grades and is back to teaching kindergarten/grade one after a couple of years! I completely forgot how chaotic a startup can be with these littles. I don't know what I would have done without her help this past month! We are very lucky to have her.

- Kindergarten teacher

Child Care

	Males	Females	Children with Aboriginal Ancestry	Children in Care	Children with Special Education Designations	Rural Children	Urban Children
Number of Children in SD73 Child Care	39	29	4	1	9	20	48

Points of Interest:

Develop further ECE and kindergarten teacher partnerships.

Continue to work with the finance department to establish effective ways of collecting fees from families as well as the creation of a financial structure that is sustainable to the district and these programs.

Develop a five-year plan for child care expansion opportunities.

Look for innovative community partnerships that are interested in creating new ECE training opportunities.

Work with Human Resources in the active recruitment and retention of ECE workers for SD73 child care programs.

Work with the district Inclusive Education team for ways to ensure all children in the new pre-K to 12 education system have the necessary access and support to child care ensuring equity for our youngest learners and their families.

Participate in all regional and provincial committees and meetings dedicated to child care and in doing so, encourage additional funding to support inclusion in SD73 run child care (SDK/JB4) programs.

Communicate with community partners when new child care opportunities are available within SD73 buildings.

Seamless Day

Just B4 Preschool (JB4)



Making sure that schools and four-year-olds are ready for kindergarten is so important. There is no better way to help them be ready than to experience school first-hand from the gym to library – sharing, learning and growing together. This is exactly what Just B4 preschool does! The growth I've seen in these four-year-olds over the four weeks has been amazing. During these uncertain times, Just B4 has given every child enrolled the courage to know school is safe and fun. I can confidently say these children are more prepared for kindergarten.

- ECE/preschool teacher for JB4

JB4 is specifically designed for 3 and 4-year olds who will be entering Kindergarten in the next few years. The initial five day program at Arthur Hatton has been successfully running for three years and the newly modified version began at four additional sites this winter.

Points of Interest:

The program is 100% full at all five of these programs. Interest is already being expressed for registration in the fall of 2024.

Challenges that continue to be addressed include funding structures, how to continue to fund additional ECE care for students with diverse needs, how to better support parents in accessing subsidies and the School Cash Online program for payments, expanding the program, and having enough ECEs available to provide coverage when staff are off.

Just B4 Preschool and the work involved with ECEs and families help to develop a seamless transition into kindergarten.

Exploration of expanding the four new sites into week programs will be based on parent/caregiver interest and community need as indicated in a survey to existing families in JB4 and SS.

New Spaces

The first New Spaces Fund application supported the purchasing of four child care specific modular buildings: two each at Ralph Bell and Happyvale elementary schools. These will be operated by Inquiring Little Minds and offer over 70 child care spaces at each site.

A second New Spaces Fund application has been submitted to ensure effective child care provision within the new Parkcrest Elementary school building.

The ELCC team continues to look for possible and potential expansion opportunities for child care provision either directly or indirectly through additional third party providers.

The ELCC team continues to look for possible and potential expansion opportunities for BASC provision at elementary schools that have both administration and staff support.

SD73's community partnerships throughout the Kamloops-Thompson region are a key component of our ongoing success with early years' programs. With the addition of active involvement in child care, these collaborative partnerships have become even more essential for success moving forward. Working with our community benefits early learners and their families and supports the SD73 Strategic Plan's Value Commitment of Connection/Relationships by "Building meaningful relationships that support and strengthen learning and growth" for our youngest learners, their families and the staff that are committed to this age group. Working together we are better able to support the development of healthy, social families and their children which will be beneficial when these children enter kindergarten.

Community Partners

SURREY
SU...
SU...
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Allocating Resources Responsibly, Fairly and Sustainably Through Operations

Facilities/Purchasing

ELCC is also unique in that it is responsible for creating processes and structures that support child care expansion. For instance, working together with Finance, Facilities and Purchasing, RFPs are created that are placed on the BC Bid site for child care operators to apply for spaces connected to the school district. Part of

