

SUMMARY OF THE
EARLY DEVELOPMENT
INSTRUMENT



ASSESSING SCHOOL READINESS IN THE **DISTRICT OF NIPISSING**

Cycle 6:
2022-2023



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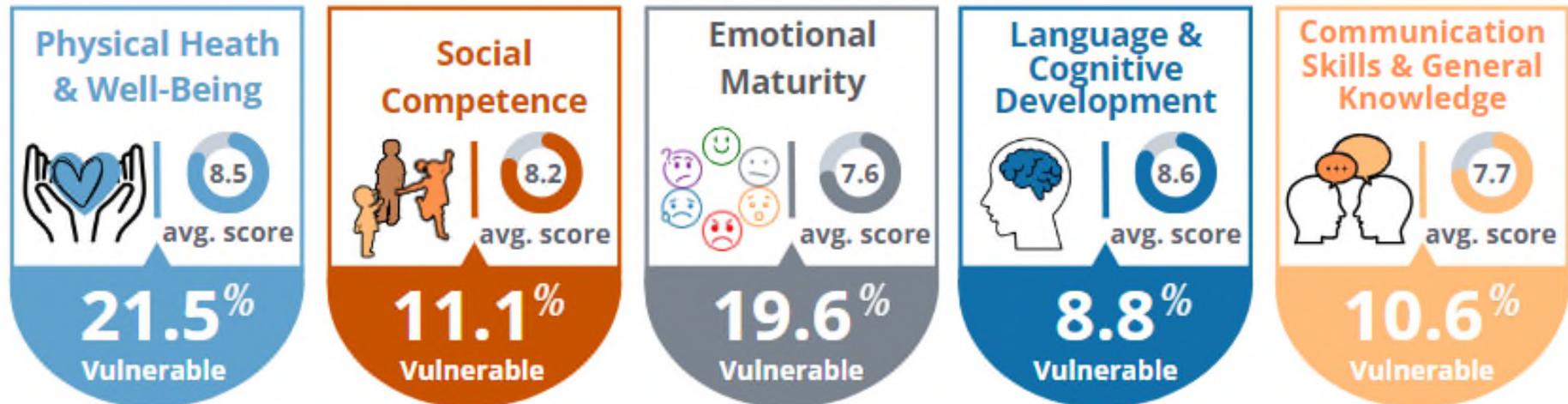
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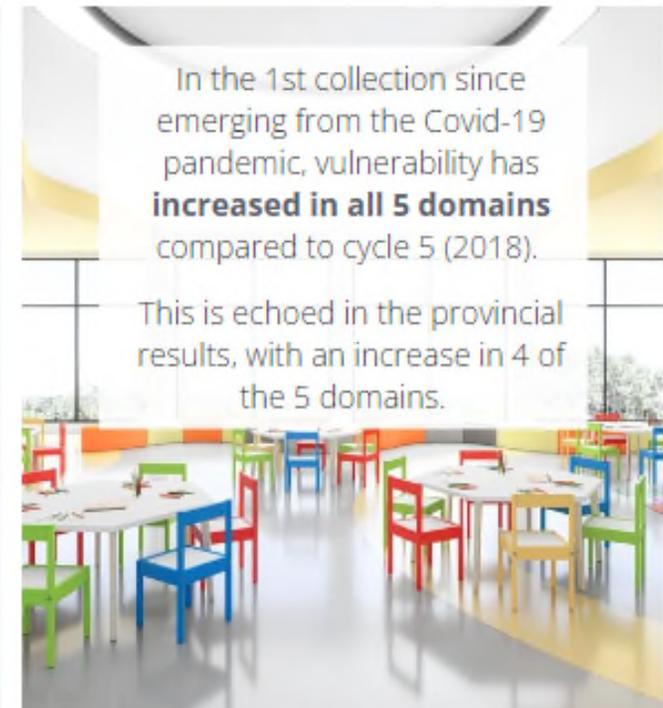
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Development Instrument (EDI) in the District of Nipissing - Cycle 6



624
SK students in the District of Nipissing were included in this report.





Acknowledgements

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- Near North District School Board
- Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario
- Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board
- Offord Centre for Child Studies

DNSSAB would like to express gratitude and appreciation to all the Senior Kindergarten teachers in the District of Nipissing who participated in the 2022/2023 implementation of the Early Development Instrument. Their patience and dedication to the early development of these children is admirable.

The information collected through the EDI has been, and will continue to be, a valuable resource in helping to plan and support early years and child care programs and services in the District of Nipissing. For more information regarding the EDI, please visit <https://edi.offordcentre.com/about>.





What is the Early Development Instrument?

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a population level research tool developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University, designed to measure a child's ability to meet age-appropriate developmental milestones upon school entry¹. Senior Kindergarten teachers complete the questionnaire in the second half of the school year, once students have been able to acclimate to the school environment, and the teachers have become familiar with their students.

The EDI measures children's developmental health across five domains: **Physical Health & Well-Being**, **Social Competence**, **Emotional Maturity**, **Language & Cognitive Development**, and **Communication Skills & General Knowledge**. The domains are then further divided into subdomains to measure a more specific area of development, helping to pinpoint areas of strength, and opportunities to focus on supporting needs (see [Figure 1](#)).

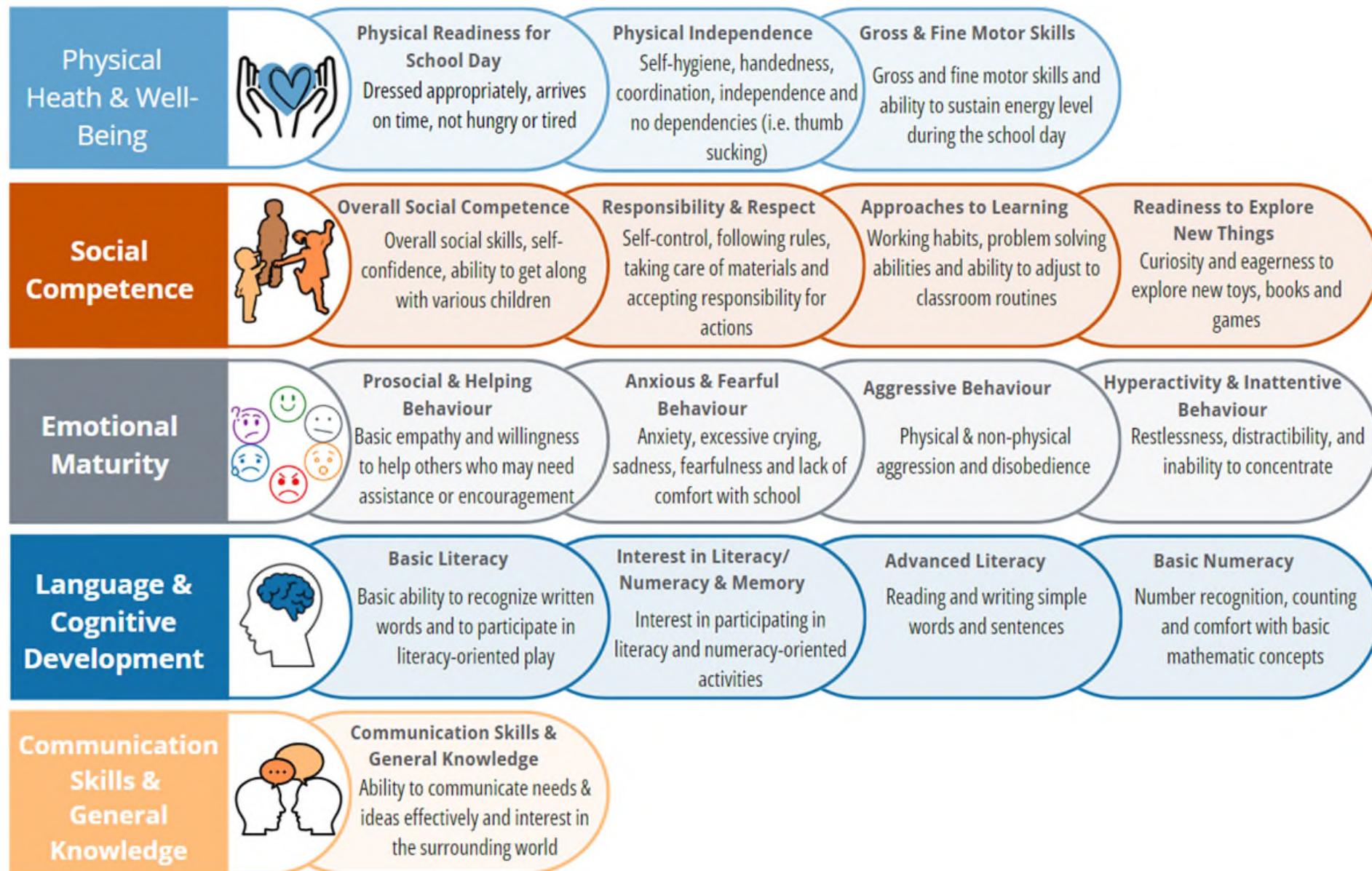
The EDI was first implemented in the District of Nipissing in 2004 and typically operates in three-year cycles, collecting data for every SK student attending publicly funded schools. The most recent implementation (Cycle 6) was scheduled to take place in February/March 2021; however, it was necessary to delay the collection until 2023 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, cycle 6 was completed later in the school year, resulting in a slightly older cohort than in previous EDI cycles. Participation in previous implementations was 100%; conversely, the cycle 6 participation rate is estimated at approximately 85%, as 5 of the 75 publicly funded Ontario school boards chose not to participate. Full involvement was demonstrated by the school boards in the Nipissing District.

While the Early Development Instrument is a reliable and valid tool in measuring early child development, there are limitations to the use of its results. Given that the EDI relies on self-reports from teachers, there is always a risk of subjective bias which may lead to inconsistent reporting. To minimize this effect, the Offord Centre provided a detailed guide which they developed to support teachers in responding accurately to the EDI questions. It is also important to note that the EDI results present a 'snapshot in time', and caution should be exercised when making conclusions or interpretations regarding the data.





Figure 1: Description of EDI Domains & Subdomains



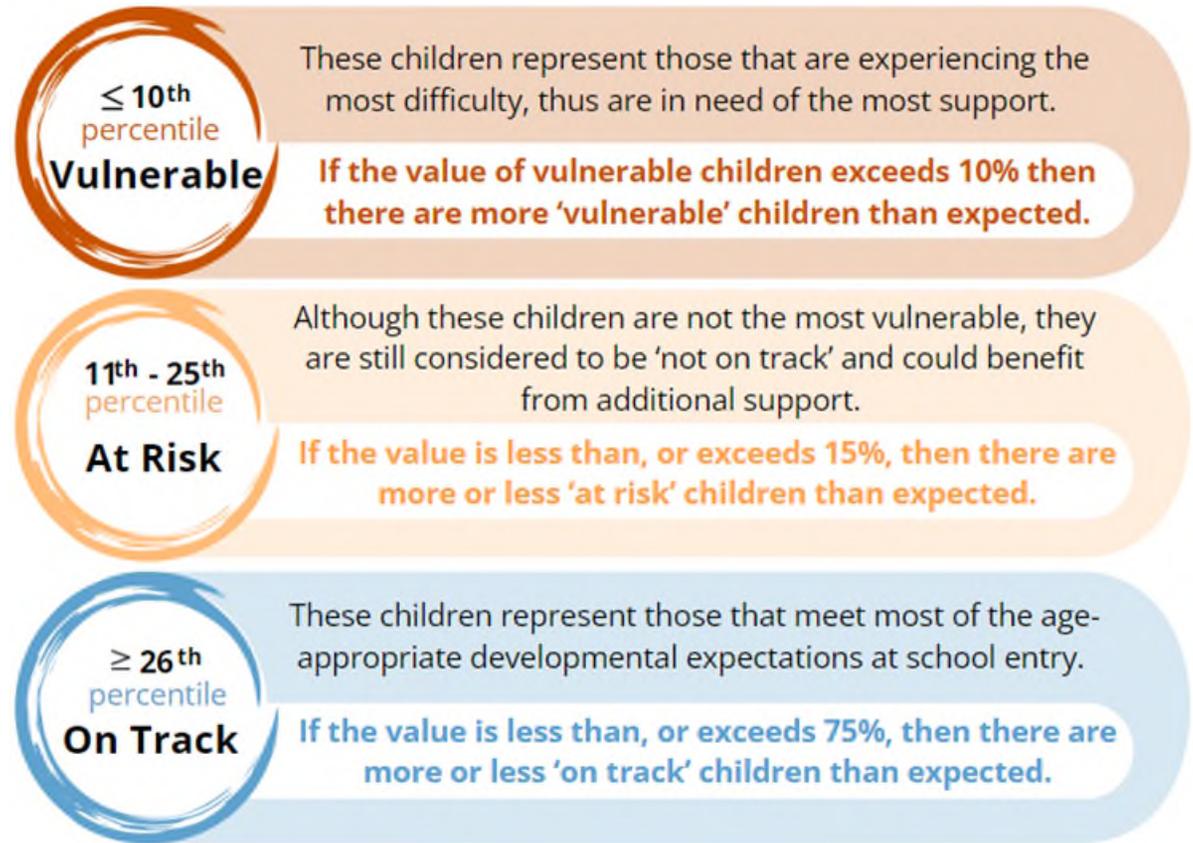


Determining Vulnerability

Distribution of Scores on the EDI Domains

Each of the domains on the EDI is based on the teachers' responses to the questions within each domain and is scored on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 being a perfect score).

The higher the score, the more the child is considered to be developmentally 'on track' at school entry. The scores for each domain are then grouped into categories to determine how well children are doing, based on the cut-points from the Ontario baseline administration of the EDI.



It is expected that senior kindergarten students in the community would be comprised of **10% who are Vulnerable to problems in later childhood** (children scoring in the lowest 10th percentile), **15% At Risk for continuing on the low achievement and health trajectory** (scoring in the 11th-25th percentile), and **75% On Track** (scoring above the 25th percentile)³.





Overall Vulnerability

Examining the percentage of children vulnerable on one or more domains is another method to assess overall vulnerability for the region. Measuring vulnerability in this way identifies all children who are struggling, even those whose struggles may not be apparent. A higher vulnerability rate indicates that a greater percentage of children are struggling.

Distribution of Scores on the EDI Subdomains

To further investigate and identify vulnerabilities within the domains, scores for each subdomain categorize the children into the following 3 groups²:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| All/Almost all | Children who have met all, or almost all of the developmental expectations |
| Some | Children who have met some of the developmental expectations |
| Few/None | Children who have met few, or none of the developmental expectations |

Exploring subdomains in this way will help identify the areas with the greatest hindrances, and highest capabilities within the individual neighbourhoods. This information can help with the planning and prioritization of current and future early years programs and services to focus on strengthening the areas in which children are most vulnerable.

Interpreting the Results

In Cycle 6, there were a total of 649 EDI questionnaires completed for senior kindergarten students without special needs across the District of Nipissing. Criteria established by the Offord Center deemed 25 (3.9%) of those questionnaires as invalid, leaving **624 valid for analysis** and inclusion in this report. Reasons for omission include: questionnaires missing more than 25% of responses to core questions; no response to the 'special needs' question; and less than 1 month of class attendance.



Characteristics of Children Assessed by the EDI



As with previous cycles, the ratio of males to females in cycle 6 of the EDI was proportionate, with slightly more female students (50.5%) than male (49.5%) included in this cohort. The delay in cycle 6 of the EDI collection resulted in a cohort that is slightly older (by approximately 2.5 months) than the previous 5 cycles, whose average age was 5.7 years.

This cohort has collectively spent less time in the school education system than the cycle 5 group. For instance, fewer of this cohort had been enrolled in Junior Kindergarten the prior year (6% reduction). Furthermore, students experienced nearly double the absences per month, averaging over 4 weeks absent as of the EDI collection in late April- mid June.

The majority of children were identified as having English as their first language, subsequently trailed by those who were bilingual in English and French, and closely followed by children whose first language is French. Students whose first language is not the dialect of instruction at the school board which they attend has continued to grow since the last EDI cycle. Most of these students (25.6%) represent children who are attending French-language schools for whom French is not their first language (ALF – Actualisation linguistique en français), while the other 10.6% are children who are attending English-language schools for whom English is not their first language (ELL - English Language Learners). Enrolment in French Immersion programs has remained relatively constant (0.6% decrease compared to the previous cycle).

Table 1: Characteristics of Children Assessed in the EDI (Cycles 1 through 6)

| | Cycle I | Cycle II | Cycle III | Cycle IV | Cycle V | Cycle VI |
|----------------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|----------|
| Total Children | 771 | 665 | 704 | 708 | 633 | 624 |
| Average Age (yrs) | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.9 |
| Language Status (ELL/ALF) | 15.4% | 17.1% | 18.6% | 13.0% | 26.7% | 36.2% |
| Average days absent | 7.4 | 6.1 | 7.9 | 8.1 | 8.7 | 21.5 |





Vulnerable Children

Overall, **37.6%** of children in the District of Nipissing were considered vulnerable on at least 1 domain of their development, while **18.0%** were considered vulnerable on 2 or more domains.

Although the percentage of children vulnerable on one or more domains depicts a significant increase over the past EDI cycle, the regression denotes no critical difference in comparison to cycle 4 of the EDI. The **6.6%** difference between the 2023 Ontario and Nipissing District results is inline with the average (6.7%) from the first 4 EDI cycles.

As indicated by Janus et. al (2007), research using the EDI has shown that girls were rated significantly higher than boys in all domains, resulting in boys being significantly more likely to score in the vulnerable range than girls.¹ This is consistent with findings from Cycle 6, in that **45%** of boys were considered vulnerable on at least one domain, while **30%** of girls met the same criteria.

The vulnerabilities are further broken down in [Figure 3](#) to show the contrast in the number of vulnerable domains identified by gender.

Figure 2: Percentage of Children Vulnerable on 1 or More Domains

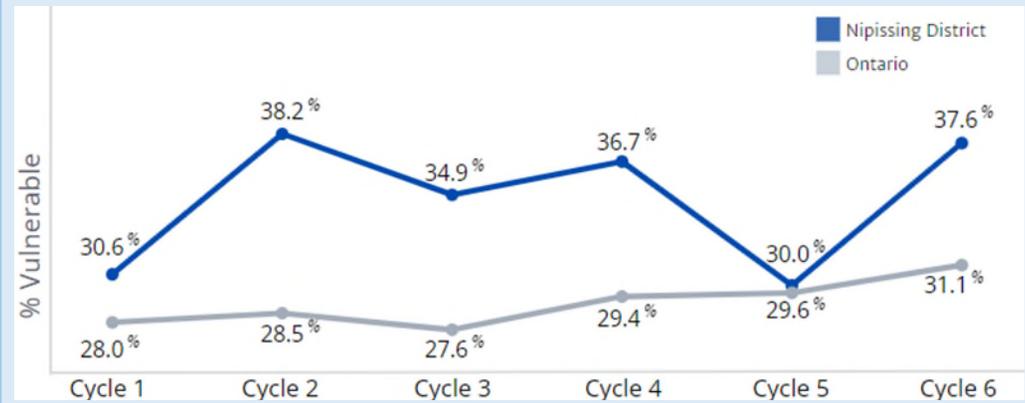
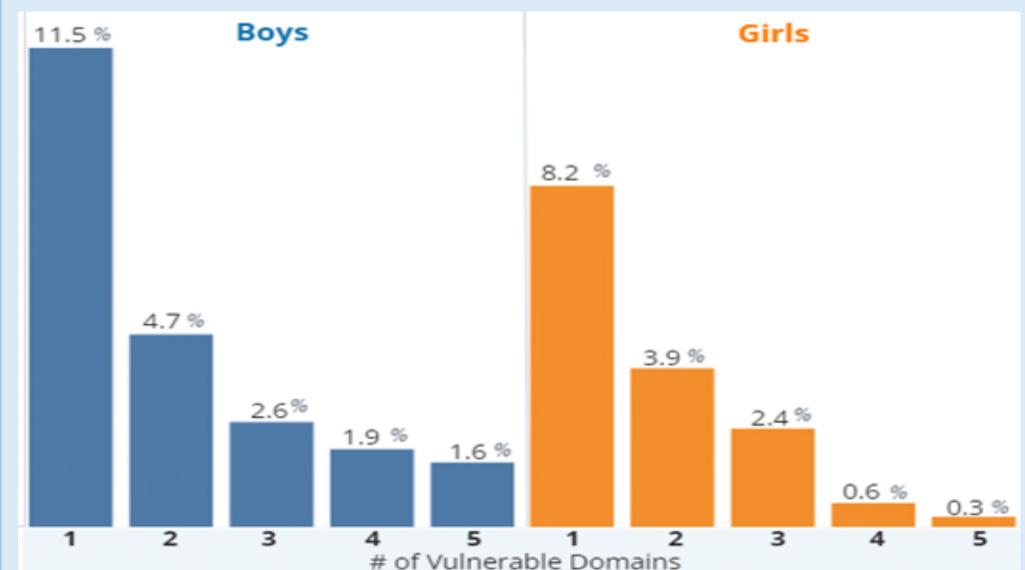


Figure 3: Number of Vulnerabilities by Gender





Vulnerability by Domain

Cycle 6 results show that the District of Nipissing surpasses the provincial vulnerability percentages on all domains. The area of highest concern for both the District and the Province continues to be Physical Health & Well-Being; this has been the case since the onset of the EDI. Emotional maturity has consistently been the second area of greatest concern in the district (as seen in [Figure 5](#)) and has always presented the largest divergence from the Ontario results.

While there was a significant increase in vulnerability on all 5 domains compared to the previous cycle, outcomes are similar to those of the pre-pandemic cycle 4 results.

The vulnerability rate for the Communications Skills & General Knowledge domain satisfies the expectation that a community would have 10% of children scoring in the lowest 10th percentile of the domain, while the Language & Cognitive Development domain exceeded expectation (only 8.8% vulnerability), and the Social Competence domain results sit just slightly above that expected target.

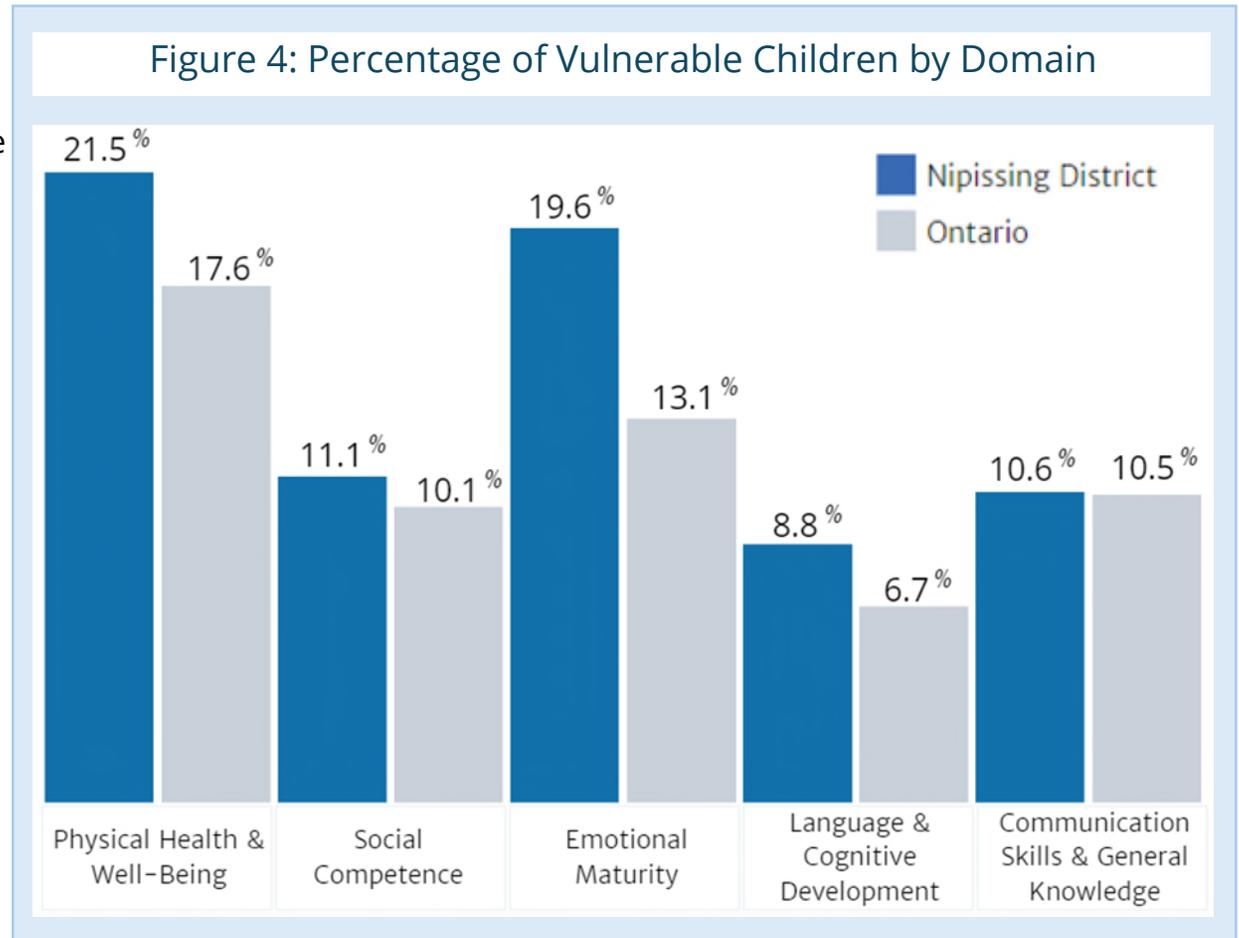
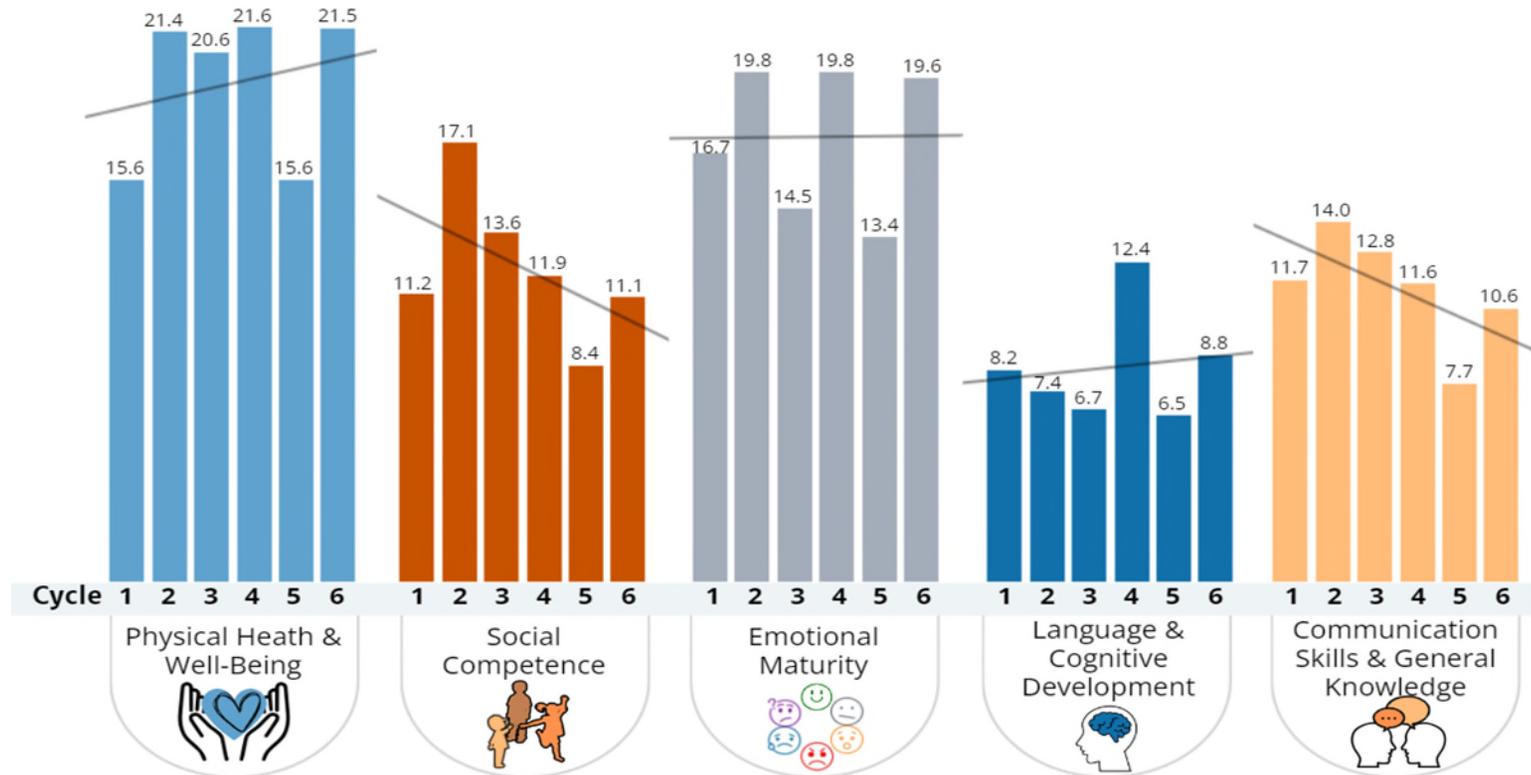




Figure 5: Percentage of Vulnerable Children by Domain and EDI Cycle in Nipissing District

As seen in Figure 5 to the right, the domains of Social Competence, and Communication Skills & General Knowledge are trending in a positive direction, towards lower vulnerability over the 6 cycle implementation, while the Emotional Maturity domain reveals a relatively level trendline.



Taking a Closer Look - Subdomain Analysis

As previously mentioned, taking a closer look at the distribution of scores for each domain and its subdomains will allow a better understanding of which areas of development are influencing the vulnerability rates within the District of Nipissing. Accordingly, sharing this information with community partners can help guide program planning and development to focus on strengthening the areas in which children are the most vulnerable.



Physical Health and Well-Being

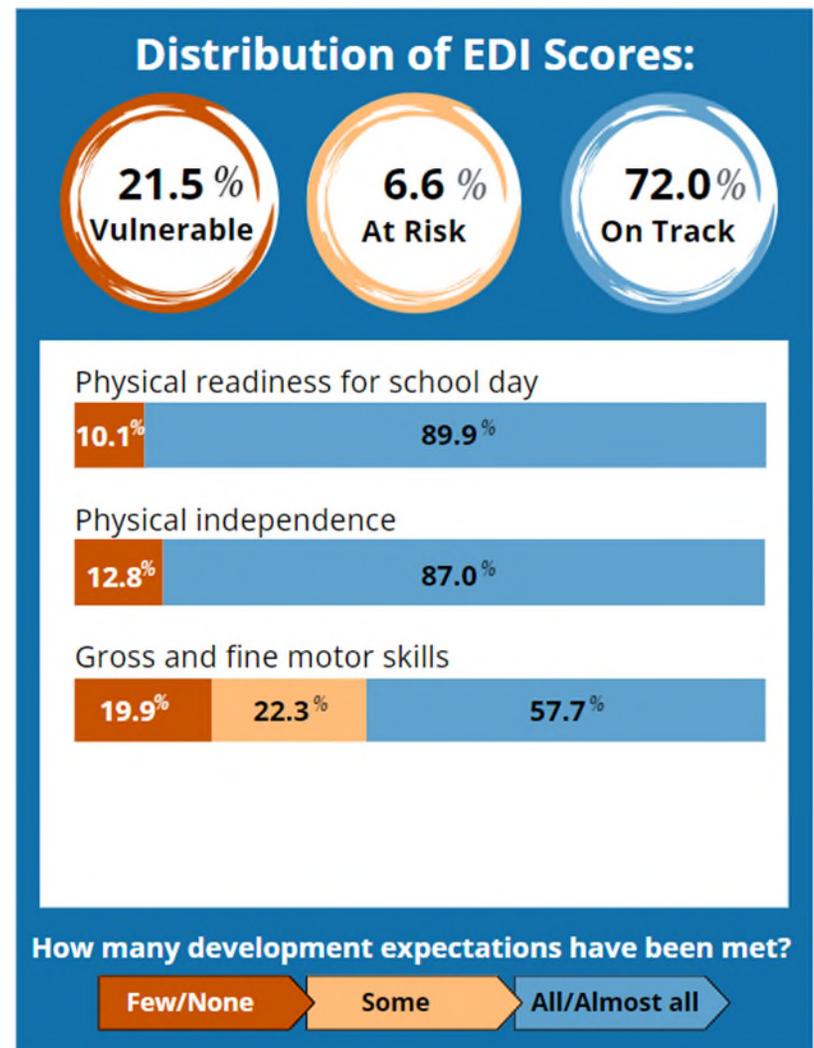
The Physical Health and Well-Being domain examines attributes including whether children are healthy, independent, and rested each day. Results for this domain display the largest vulnerability rates for children among the district (21.5%), as well as the province (17.6%).

Further subdomain analysis reveals the vulnerability rate is driven by difficulties within the **Gross and fine motor skills** subdomain, with **19.9%** of children meeting few/none of the expectations, and **22.3%** meeting only some of the expectations, which include the child's ability to do such things as manipulate objects, climb stairs, and their proficiency with holding writing utensils.

While the findings are similar between the district and the province, this is the only subdomain in cycle 6 of the EDI where the percentage of children meeting few/none of the developmental expectations in the province (20.3%) surpasses that of Nipissing District.

Conversely, children are showing strengths in the **Physical independence** and **Physical readiness for the school day** domains, where approximately 9 in every 10 children met all/almost all the developmental expectations.

Figure 6: Distribution of EDI scores for Physical Health & Well-Being Subdomains





Social Competence

The Social Competence domain explores concepts like whether children play and get along with others, share, and show self confidence.

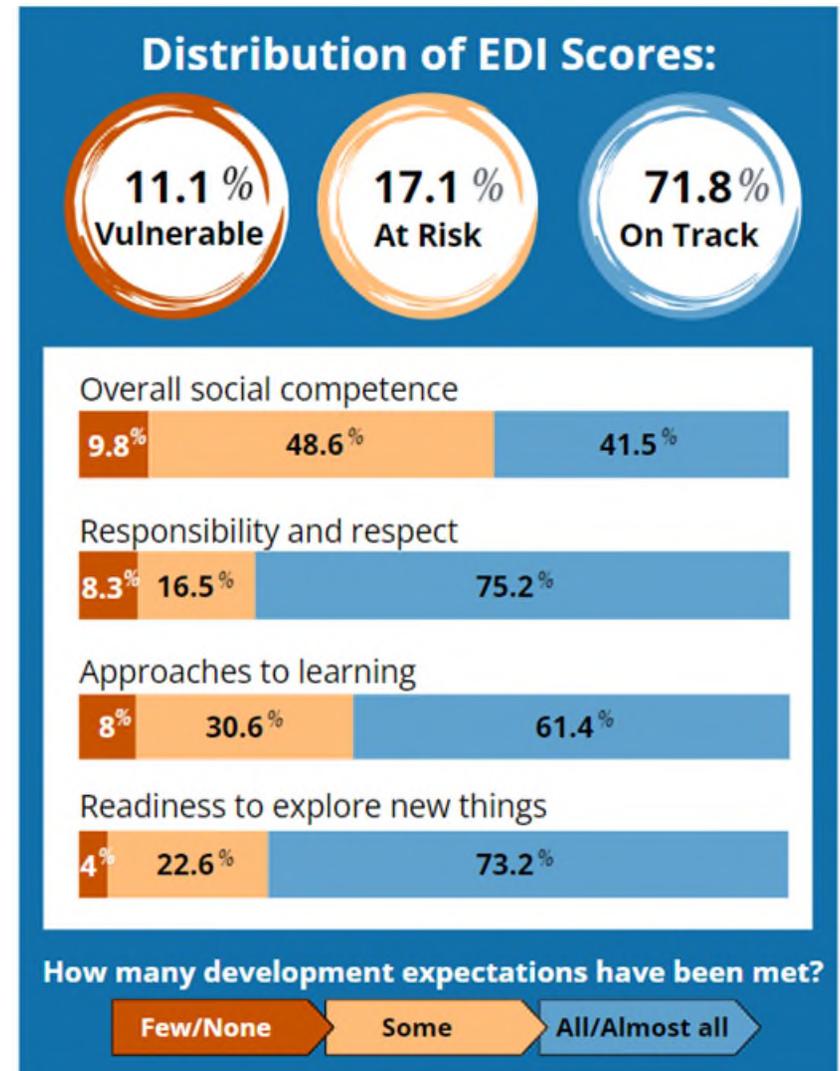
In cycle 6, the vulnerability rate in the Social Competence domain was 11.1% which is aligned closely with the Ontario results of 10.1%. While this represents a significant increase in vulnerability compared to cycle 5, it is lower than the cycle 1 through cycle 4 scores (see [Figure 5](#)).

When asked about the child's overall social/emotional development and ability to get along with peers (**Overall Social Competence** subdomain), teachers flagged nearly 60% of children as not on track, exhibiting either few/none or some of the developmental expectations.

There were adequate outcomes in the **Approaches to Learning** subdomain with 61.4% of children demonstrating all/almost all of the developmental expectations.

Positive outcomes were seen in the remaining two subdomains, identical scores were received by the district and the province with 75.2% of children achieving all/almost all of the expectations in the **Responsibility and Respect** subdomain⁴. Nearly 3/4 of students achieved all/almost all of the criteria in their **Readiness to Explore New Things**, while only 4% were flagged as vulnerable on this subdomain.

Figure 7: Distribution of EDI scores for the Social Competence Subdomains





Emotional Maturity

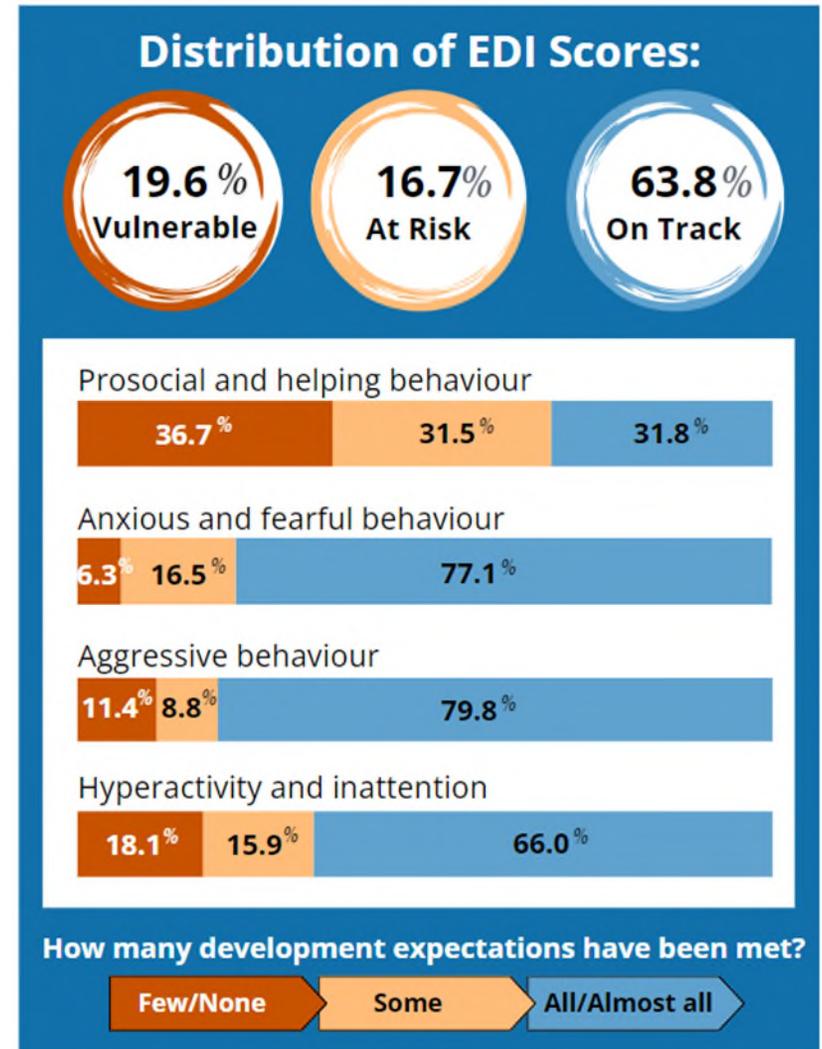
The Emotional Maturity domain considers whether children can concentrate on tasks, show patience, are willing to help others, and are seldom aggressive or angry. This domain resulted in the second largest vulnerability rates for both the district (19.6%) and the province (13.1%)⁴.

Across all subdomains, **Prosocial and Helping Behaviour**, which includes helping when somebody is hurt, sick or upset, or inviting bystanders to join in, was where the largest percentage of children met few/none of the criteria (36.1%). This was echoed in the provincial results (30.0%)⁴. More than 2/3 of children rarely or never show **Anxious or Fearful Behaviour**, appearing happy and comfortable to be dropped off for their school day.

It is encouraging to see that the majority of children in this cohort did not display **Aggressive Behaviour**, with 79.8% of students meeting all/almost all of the developmental expectations. This cycle presents nearly identical results to the previous EDI cycle in 2018 (79.5%) and is just shy of Ontario's 2023 score (80.9%)⁴.

While there is a decrease in children meeting all/almost all expectations on the **Hyperactivity and Inattention** subdomain compared to the cycle 5 results (72.7%), cycle 6 (66.0%) has achieved much higher scores than cycle 4 (39.3%) (Figure 5) and is closely aligned with the provincial result of 70.0%⁴.

Figure 8: Distribution of EDI scores for the Emotional Maturity Subdomains





Language and Cognitive Development

The Language and Cognitive Development domain investigates indicators such as whether children are interested in reading and writing, their ability to count and recognize numbers and shapes.

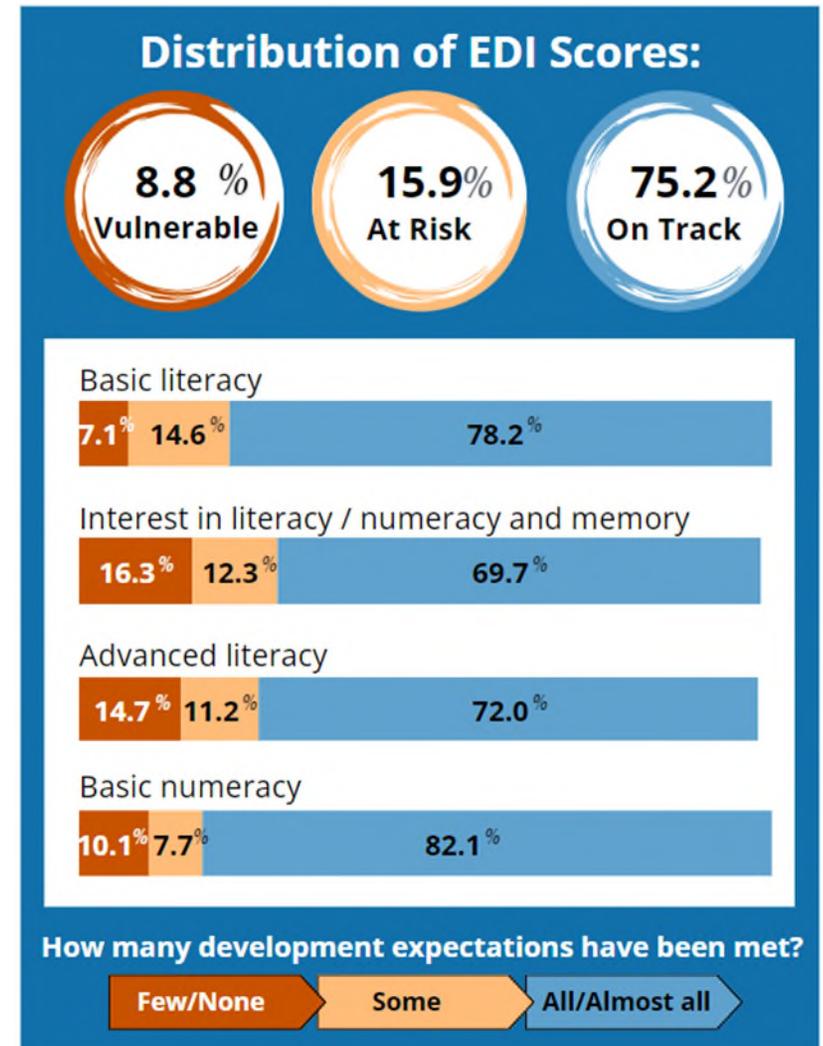
Results are as expected, with 3/4 of Senior Kindergarten students being identified as on track with their development for the overall domain.

The **Basic Numeracy** and **Basic literacy** subdomains displayed the strongest results, with an increased percentage of children attaining all/almost all of the developmental expectations. While the percentage of children that achieved few/none of the **Basic Literacy** expectations has increased slightly from 6.6% in 2018 to 7.1% in 2023, positive outcomes are seen in the shift from meeting some expectations to meeting all/almost all expectations, from 73.5% in 2018 to 78.2% in 2023.

It is promising to see 72% of children achieving at least half of the **Advanced Literacy** skills, which include reading complex words or sentences, writing simple words or sentences, and voluntarily writing.

The area that would benefit from the most supports within this domain is the **Interest in Literacy/ Numeracy and Memory**, which presents with the largest percentage of children in Nipissing District exhibiting few/none of the expectations (16.3%), as well as in Ontario (14.6%)⁴. Sparking interest is a stepping stone to higher achievement in each of the four subdomains.

Figure 9: Distribution of EDI scores for Language and Cognitive Development Subdomains





Communication Skills and General Knowledge

The Communication Skills and General Knowledge domain only includes one subdomain which captures whether children have excellent or very good communication skills, can communicate easily and effectively, can participate in story-telling or imaginative play, articulate clearly, show adequate general knowledge, and are proficient in their native language.

In the overall Communication Skills & General Knowledge domain, 10.6% of children were considered vulnerable. This is nearly identical to the Provincial results of 10.5% vulnerability for the cycle 6 EDI collection⁴.

When examining the subdomain results, 28.2% of children in the district of Nipissing met few/none of the developmental expectations, resulting in an increase over the 2018 results (21.0%) but comparable to the Provincial results from this EDI cycle (26.6%)⁴.

Summary of Subdomain Analysis

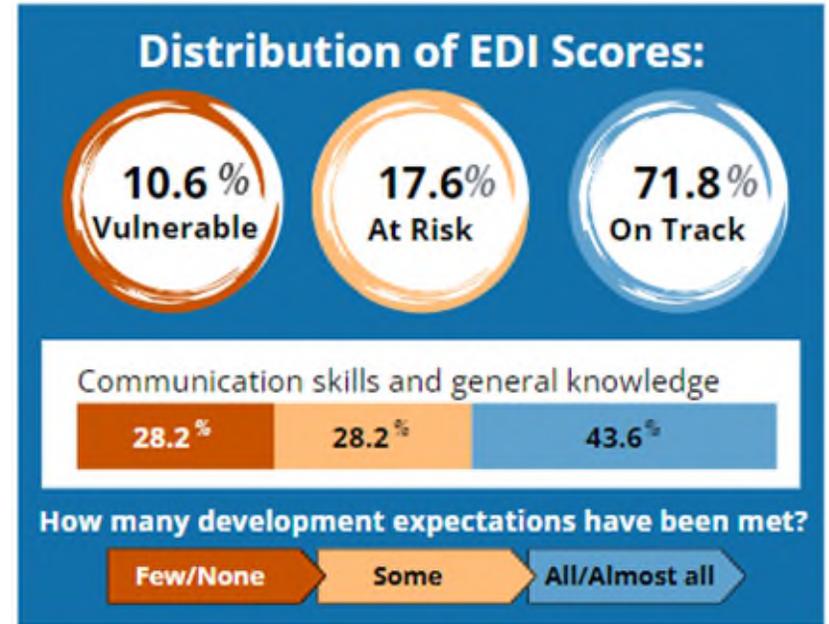
The highest percentages of children meeting 'few/none' of the expectations were seen in the following subdomains:

- Prosocial & helping behaviour 36.7%
- Communication skills & general knowledge 28.2%
- Gross & fine motor skills 19.9%

The highest percentages of children meeting 'all/almost all' of the expectations were seen in the following subdomains:

- Physical readiness for school day 89.9%
- Physical independence 87.0%
- Basic numeracy 82.1%

Figure 10: Distribution of EDI scores for Communication Skills and General Knowledge Subdomains





Neighbourhood Analysis

To better evaluate and address levels of vulnerability, the District of Nipissing was divided into 17 neighbourhoods (see [Figure 11](#) below), which were formed by joining multiple Dissemination Areas (DAs). As Dissemination areas are not provided in the EDI results, postal codes were used to assign children to their corresponding neighbourhoods. Where postal codes span more than one neighbourhood, the child's school was used for allocation. To maintain anonymity, data for neighbourhoods with less than 10 children has been suppressed (South Algonquin & Area; Temagami & Area). Although Nipissing First Nation lies within the district, there is a separate administration that governs Early Years and Family Services for that Neighbourhood.

Figure 11: The District of Nipissing - Neighbourhood Boundaries



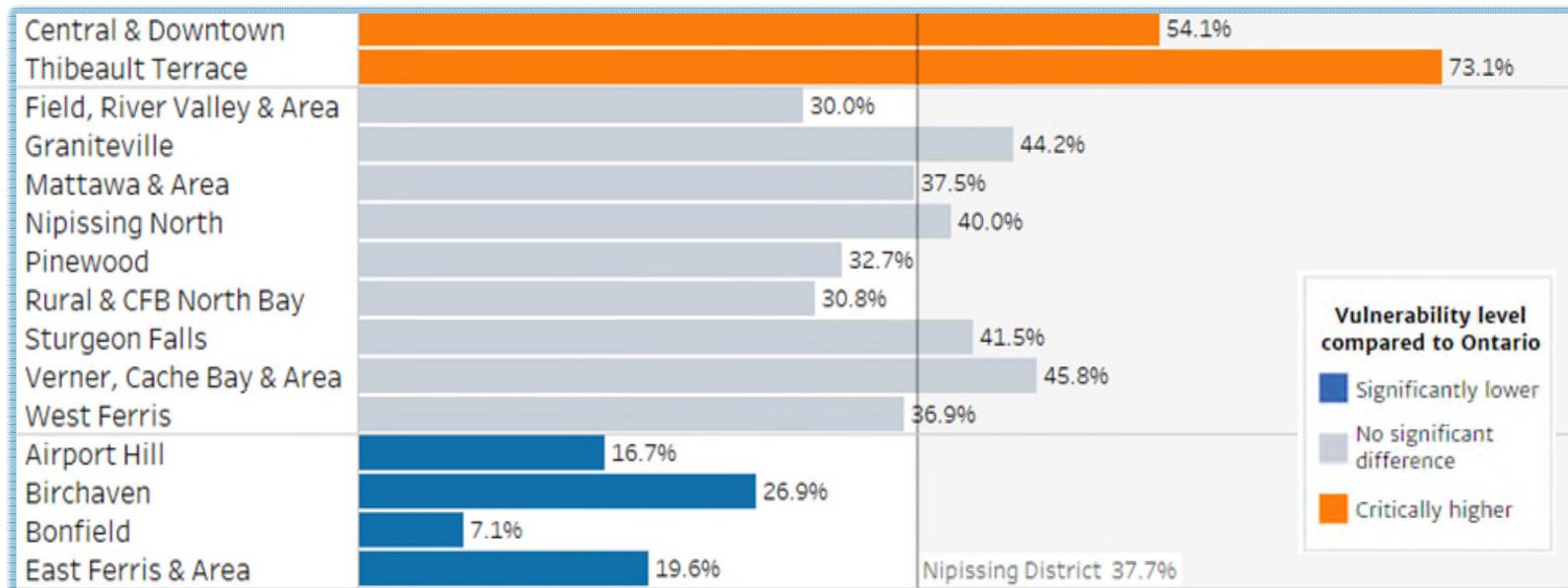


Overall Vulnerability by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood analysis is an essential tool for determining which areas are exceeding district results, drawing inferences from their successes to support those neighbourhoods identified as significantly more vulnerable.

The following graph depicts the percentage of vulnerable children on 1 or more domains for each neighbourhood, with a reference line identifying the overall level of vulnerability in Nipissing District. To compare the district and neighbourhood results, a [critical difference calculator](#)⁵, developed by The Human Learning Partnership at the University of British Columbia was used. The calculator takes into consideration the size of the population, in that the fewer children in a neighbourhood, the larger the difference needs to be to be considered meaningful.

Figure 12: Neighbourhood vulnerabilities in comparison to the overall district





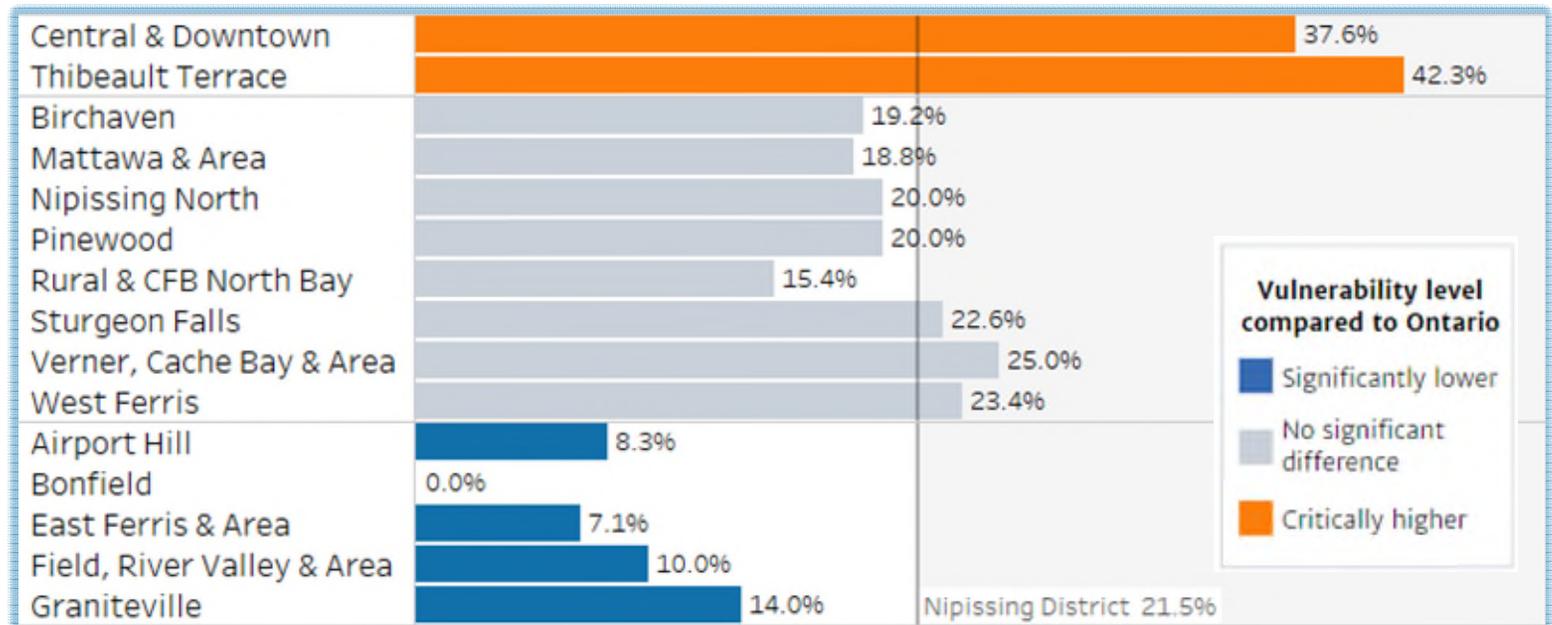
In comparison to the District of Nipissing (37.7%) two neighbourhoods had a critically higher percentage of children vulnerable on one or more EDI domains (Central & Downtown: 54.1% and Thibeault Terrace: 73.1%). There were also four neighbourhoods with significantly lower percentages of children vulnerable on one or more domains, which include Airport Hill (16.7%), Birchaven (26.9%), Bonfield (7.1%) and East Ferris & Area (19.6%). Notably positive results were seen in Birchaven and Bonfield, which had the most dramatic change, as in the previous cycle, they had been identified as critically higher than the district results.

Physical Health and Well-Being

As previously mentioned, Physical Health & Well-Being has consistently been the domain presenting the largest percentage of vulnerability (21.5%). Central & Downtown (42.3%) and Thibeault Terrace (37.6%) have been identified as critically higher than the district results for the second consecutive

cycle. Alternatively, five neighbourhoods, including Bonfield (0.0%) East Ferris & Area (7.1%), Airport Hill (8.3%), Field, River Valley & Area (10.0%), and Graniteville (14.0%) had significantly lower vulnerability rates in comparison to the district results.

Figure 13: Neighbourhood vulnerabilities in comparison to the overall district



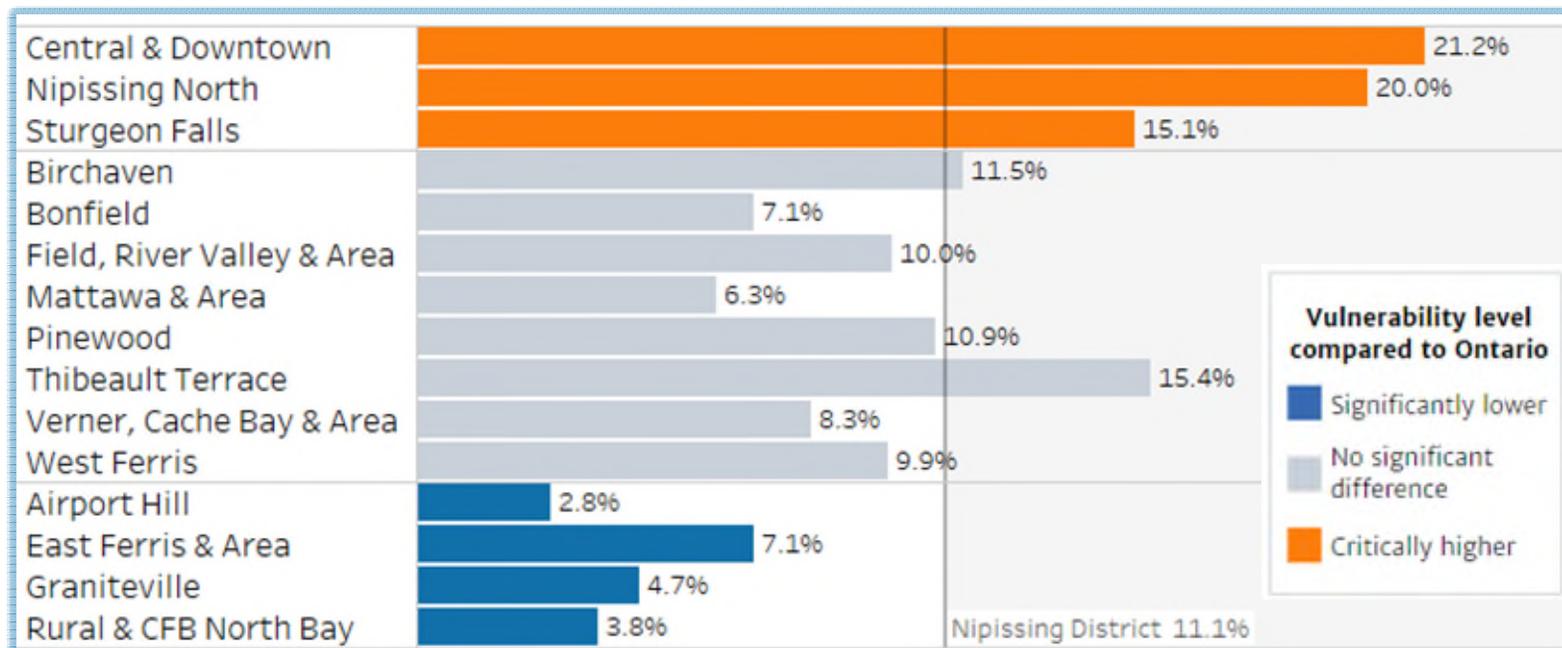


Social Competence

In comparison to the district results of 11.1%, three neighbourhoods were flagged with critically higher vulnerability in the Social Competence domain, including Central & Downtown (21.2%), Nipissing North (20.0%), and Sturgeon Falls (15.1%).

Neighbourhoods with particularly strong outcomes in this domain included Airport Hill (2.8%), Rural & CFB North Bay (3.8%), Graniteville (4.7%) and East Ferris (7.1%), who achieved significantly lower vulnerability than the overall district.

Figure 14: Neighbourhood vulnerabilities in comparison to the overall district

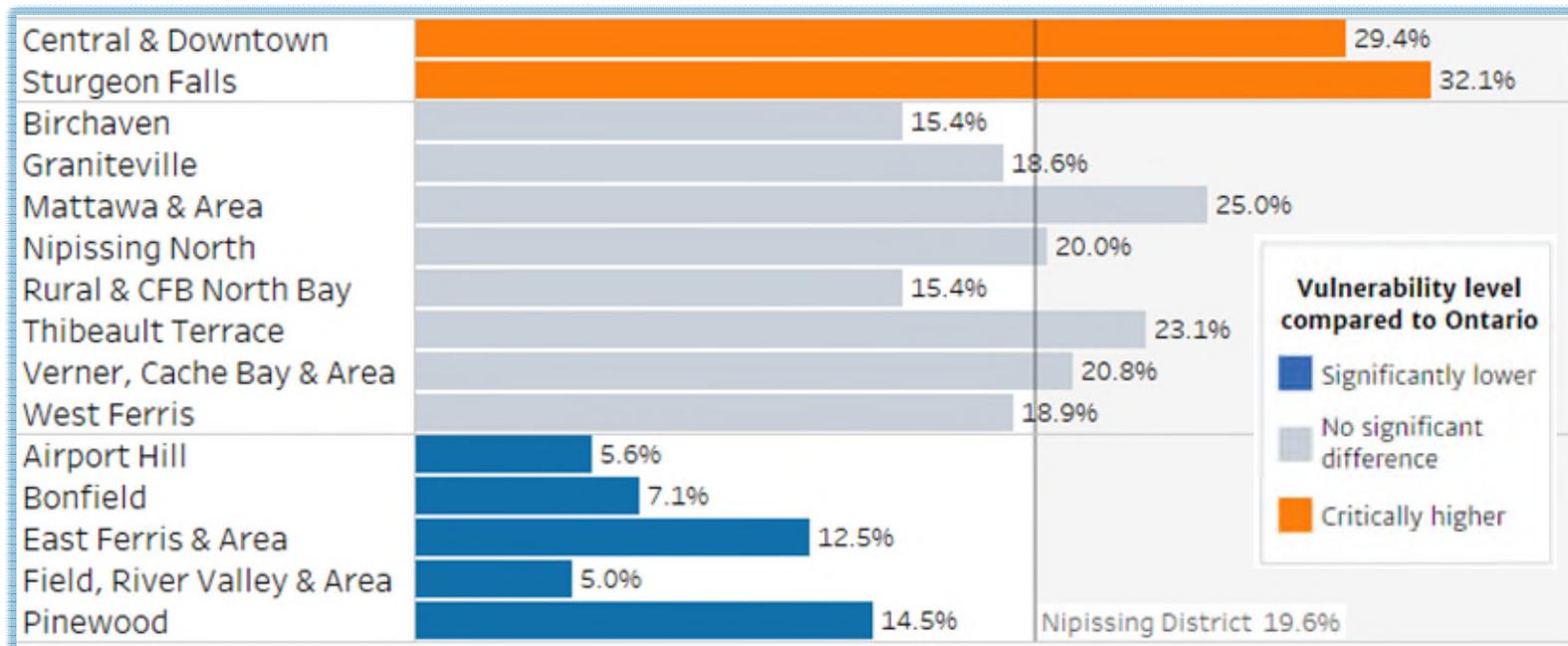




Emotional Maturity

As stated previously, the Emotional Maturity domain continues to exhibit one of the highest degrees of vulnerability within the District of Nipissing, with a score of 19.6% in cycle 6 of the EDI. The neighbourhoods of Central & Downtown (29.4%), and Sturgeon Falls (32.1%) presented with a significantly higher percentage of vulnerable children compared to the district total. In the previous EDI cycle, three neighbourhoods had significantly lower vulnerability rates compared to the district total, while in cycle 6, five neighbourhoods achieved this feat. Field, River Valley & Area (5.0%) as well as Pinewood (14.5%) were consistently lower in the two most recent EDI cycles, additionally Airport Hill (5.6%), Bonfield (7.1%), and East Ferris & Area (12.5%) reached significantly lower vulnerability in cycle 6.

Figure 15: Neighbourhood vulnerabilities in comparison to the overall district



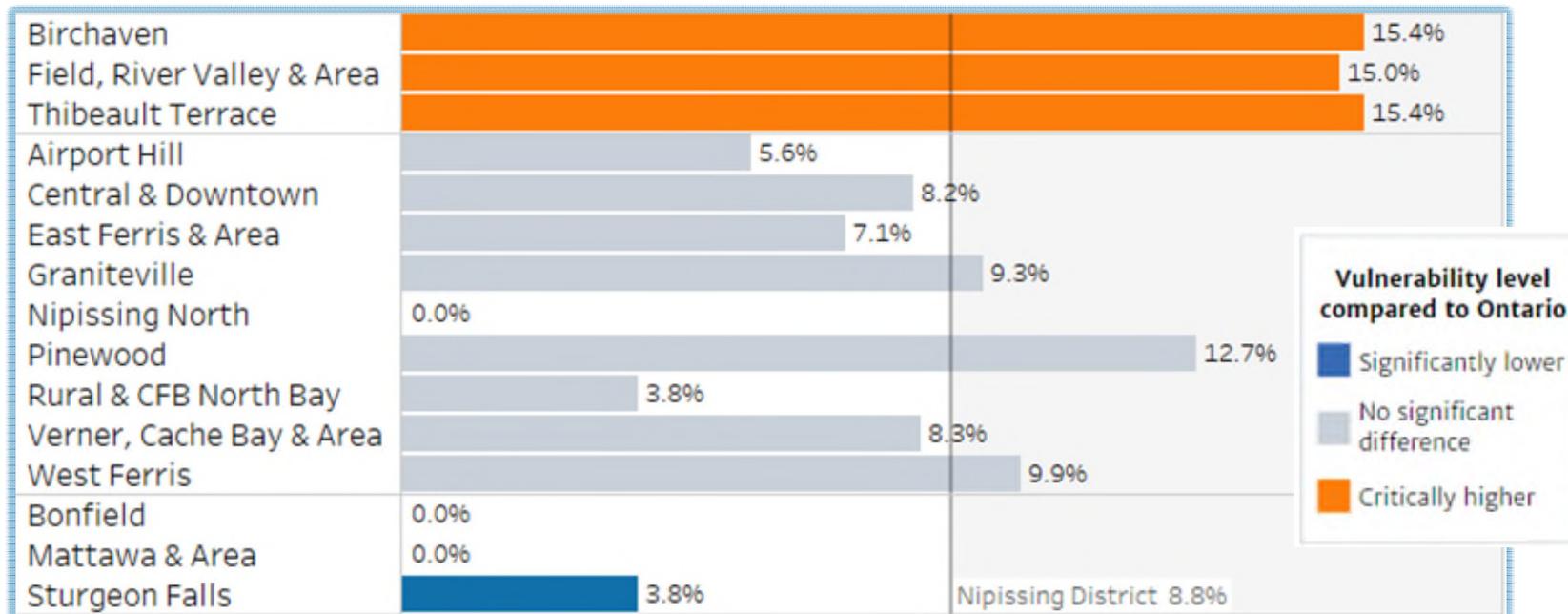


Language and Cognitive Development

There are 3 neighbourhoods in which the vulnerability for the Language and Cognitive Development domain measures critically higher than the Nipissing District outcome of 8.8%, including Birchaven (15.4%), Bonfield (15.4%) and Field, River Valley & Area (15.0%). An equal number of neighbourhoods showed significantly lower vulnerability rates than the district (8.8%), including Bonfield and Mattawa with no vulnerable children, and Sturgeon Falls with 3.8% vulnerability.

Although Nipissing North did not present with any vulnerable children in this domain, the result is not statistically different from the district score. As mentioned previously, the fewer children in the neighbourhood, the larger the discrepancy needs to be to be considered meaningful. This concept is also noticeable in the matching vulnerability score of 3.8% for Rural & CFB North Bay and Sturgeon Falls, who were categorized as no significant difference and critically lower vulnerability, respectively.

Figure 16: Neighbourhood vulnerabilities in comparison to the overall district



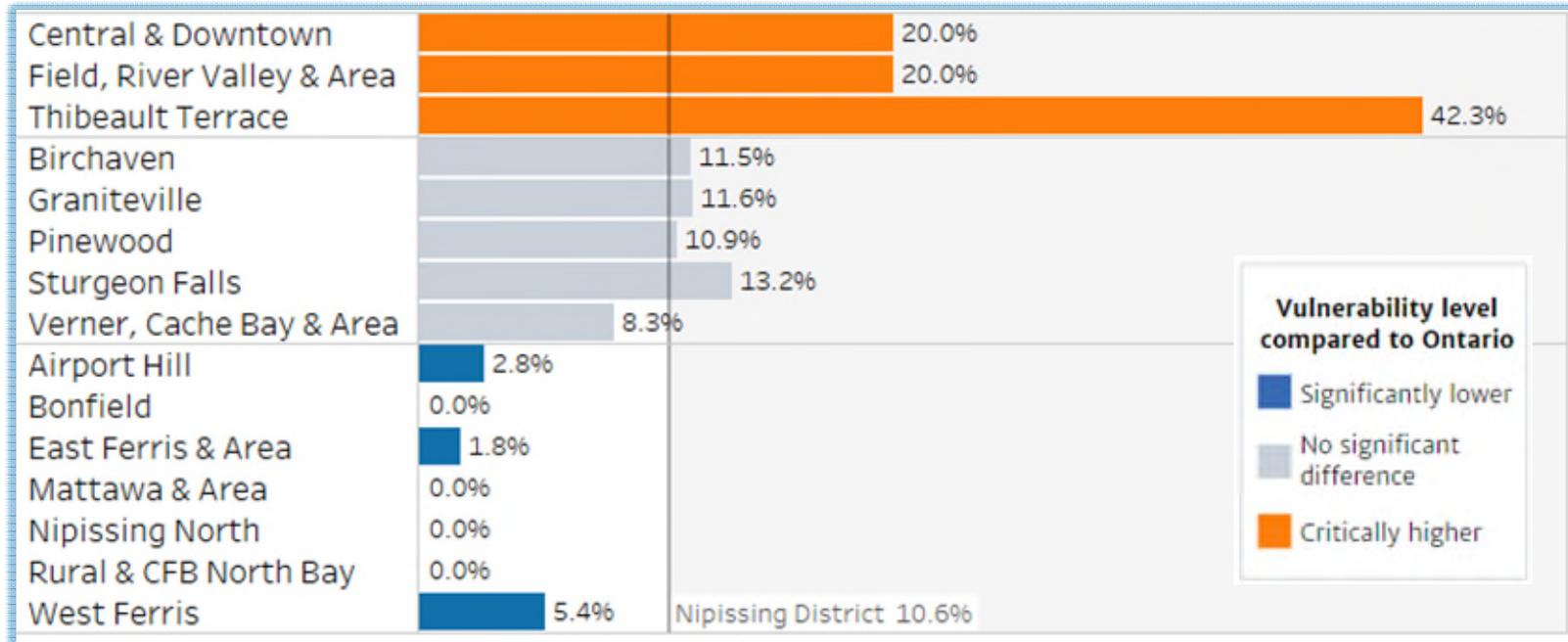


Communication Skills and General Knowledge

Bonfield (0.0%) and Airport Hill (2.8%) were again recognized with significantly lower vulnerability rates than the district (10.6%). Significantly lower vulnerability was also achieved on the Communications Skills and General Knowledge subdomain with 0.0% accomplished by Mattawa & Area, Nipissing North, and Rural & CFB North Bay, followed by East Ferris & Area (1.8%) and West Ferris (5.4%).

Critically Higher vulnerability percentages were noted in Field, River Valley & Area (20.0%), Central & Downtown (20.0%) and Thibeault Terrace (42.3%).

Figure 17: Neighbourhood vulnerabilities in comparison to the overall district





Summary of Neighbourhood Analysis

Presented in [Table 2](#) is an overview of the percentage of children identified as vulnerable in each domain, for each neighbourhood. The text is colour coded to indicate which neighbourhoods were **significantly above**, **significantly below**, or **not significantly different** than the district total, while the arrows reveal whether there was a significant increase or significant decrease in vulnerability compared to cycle 5 (2018) of the EDI in the corresponding neighbourhood.

Example 1: There was no significant difference between the vulnerability rates of the District of Nipissing and Birchaven on the Physical Health and Well-Being domain, however the neighbourhood achieved a significantly lower vulnerability rate than the previous cycle.

Example 2: While the percentage of children vulnerable in the Emotional Maturity domain in Pinewood is significantly below the district total, the orange up arrow reveals that the vulnerability rate in the neighbourhood has increased significantly from cycle 5 to cycle 6.

Figure 18: Examples - How to read The Percentage of Vulnerable Children Table





Table 2: Percentage of Vulnerable Children by Domain and Neighbourhood

| Neighbourhood | Vulnerable in 1 or more areas | Physical Health & Well-Being | Social Competence | Emotional Maturity | Language & Cognitive Development | Communication Skills & General Knowledge |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Airport Hill | 16.7 % | 8.3 % | 2.8 % | 5.6 % | 5.6 % | 2.8 % |
| Birchaven | 26.9 % ↓ | 19.2 % ↓ | 11.5 % ↓ | 15.4 % ↓ | 15.4 % | 11.5 % |
| Bonfield | 7.1 % ↓ | 0.0 % ↓ | 7.1 % | 7.1 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % |
| Central & Downtown | 54.1 % ↑ | 37.6 % ↑ | 21.2 % ↑ | 29.4 % ↑ | 8.2 % | 20.0 % ↑ |
| East Ferris & Area | 19.6 % | 7.1 % | 7.1 % | 12.5 % | 7.1 % | 1.8 % |
| Field, River Valley & Area | 30.0 % ↑ | 10.0 % | 10.0 % ↑ | 5.0 % | 15.0 % ↑ | 20.0 % ↑ |
| Graniteville | 44.2 % | 14.0 % | 4.7 % ↓ | 18.6 % | 9.3 % | 11.6 % |
| Mattawa & Area | 37.5 % | 18.8 % ↑ | 6.3 % | 25.0 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % |
| Nipissing North | 40.0 % | 20.0 % | 20.0 % | 20.0 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % |
| Pinewood | 32.7 % | 20.0 % | 10.9 % | 14.5 % ↑ | 12.7 % ↑ | 10.9 % |
| Rural & CFB North Bay | 30.8 % | 15.4 % | 3.8 % ↓ | 15.4 % | 3.8 % | 0.0 % |
| Sturgeon Falls | 41.5 % ↑ | 22.6 % ↑ | 15.1 % ↑ | 32.1 % ↑ | 3.8 % | 13.2 % ↑ |
| Thibeault Terrace | 73.1 % ↑ | 42.3 % ↑ | 15.4 % | 23.1 % | 15.4 % ↑ | 42.3 % ↑ |
| Verner, Cache Bay & Area | 45.8 % | 25.0 % | 8.3 % ↑ | 20.8 % | 8.3 % | 8.3 % |
| West Ferris | 36.9 % ↑ | 23.4 % ↑ | 9.9 % | 18.9 % ↑ | 9.9 % | 5.4 % |

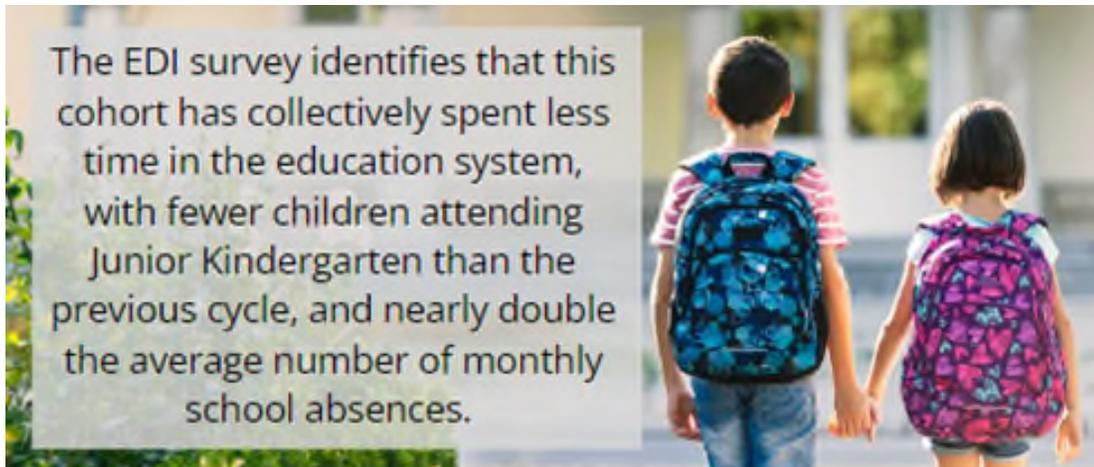




Conclusion

Children experience accelerated physical, social and emotional development during their formative years (0 to 8 years of age). The EDI captures a snapshot in time, assessing their progress towards developmental milestones and markers, and flagging developmental vulnerabilities during this fundamental period of growth. In the District of Nipissing, for the first time since the inception of the EDI, there was an increase in vulnerability on all 5 domains. This was echoed in the provincial results with an increase on 4 of the 5 domains.

Parents and families faced unprecedented challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic that may have contributed to the uprise in vulnerability seen in the cycle 6 EDI results. Social isolation, gathering restrictions, closure of schools, child cares, EarlyON sites, and even neighbourhood playgrounds, hindered opportunities for typical childhood experiences beginning in March 2020, with several re-openings and closings up to 2022. Emergency child care was implemented by the district beginning in April 2020, providing care to children of frontline healthcare workers; however, this left numerous working parents without licensed child care. Many parents were left juggling working from home and helping their older children complete online schooling, while caring for their younger children.



The EDI survey identifies that this cohort has collectively spent less time in the education system, with fewer children attending Junior Kindergarten than the previous cycle, and nearly double the average number of monthly school absences.

Despite these challenges, four neighbourhoods thrived, with significantly lower percentages of children displaying vulnerabilities on one or more domains in comparison to the district results, including Airport Hill (16.7%), and East Ferris & Area (19.6%). While Bonfield (7.1%) and Birchaven (26.9%) are also included in this group, they simultaneously achieved a significant decrease in vulnerability compared to their cycle 5 EDI outcomes.





Results further highlight the neighbourhood of Thibeault Terrace as the area with the highest percentage of children displaying vulnerabilities on one or more domains (**73.1%**) and levels significantly higher than the district total on 3 of the 5 domains. Services in the neighbourhood are limited; currently there are no licensed childcare locations available, though One Kids Place does operate an EarlyON Child and Family Centre in the neighbourhood 3 days a week. Thibeault Terrace reached the top 5 in three of the vulnerable population groups outlined by the 2021 StatsCan census, as seen to the right, in Table 3.

The neighbourhood of Central & Downtown has one of the largest populations in the district, which is reflected in the number of services offered in the area (11 licensed centre-based child cares, 10 licensed home-based child cares, and 5 EarlyON Child and Family Centres.) EDI results revealed

vulnerability percentages that were significantly higher than the district total for 4 of the 5 domains, with 54.1% of children displaying vulnerabilities on one or more domains. As seen in Table 3, Central & Downtown reached top 5 in 6 of the vulnerable population groups outlined by the 2021 StatsCan census⁶, including 18% of the neighbourhood's population being in core housing need.

The results of the EDI can be combined with other local socio-economic, health, and program/service information to help paint a more complete picture of the children in the district. It is hoped that this report will help other agencies and community partners to recognize children's developmental health needs, as well as to help inform equitable decision making for future program planning and development.

Table 3: Percentage of people/families included in vulnerable population groups

| | Thibeault Terrace | Central & Downtown |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Low-income population | 15% | 22% |
| Spend 30% or more on shelter | 14% | 30% |
| In Core housing need | 5% | 18% |
| Single parent families | 44% | 50% |
| Francophone population | 12% | 14% |
| Indigenous population | 16% | 13% |
| Immigrant population | 4% | 5% |
| Visible minorities | 7% | 5% |

A yellow highlight indicates the neighbourhood is among the top 5 within the district.





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