

Summary of the
**Kindergarten Parent
Survey (KPS)**
Results for **2018**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) – 2018 Results Highlights



The need for child care increases as children approach school entry.

64% of children attended a child care program the year prior to school entry.



Parenting can be challenging! The most frequently identified challenges in this survey included:

1. Healthy eating
2. Finding family time
3. Getting children ready for school/transitioning between activities
4. Finances



27% of respondents indicated health concerns for their child, including:

- Allergies
- Vision
- Dental
- Hearing
- Other – speech and language, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and physical disabilities

In the year prior to kindergarten entry, parents participated in a variety of programs with their children.



27% of children attended literacy and family reading programs



69% of children participated in organized physical activities



44% of children attended an EarlyON program



24% of children participated in music, arts or dance programs

The Kindergarten Parent Survey (2018)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by Jennifer Roussy, M.A., Children's Services Data Coordinator with the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB). We would like to extend a special thank you to the following partners – without their support and collaboration, this report would not be possible:

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

We would also like to express our appreciation to all of the parents and caregivers in the District of Nipissing who responded to the Kindergarten Parent Survey in 2018. The information collected through this survey can help to better understand our communities, and to help plan and support early years and child care programs and services in the District of Nipissing.



Conseil scolaire public
du Nord-Est de l'Ontario



WHAT IS THE KINDERGARTEN PARENT SURVEY?

The Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) was developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University and is intended to be used as a companion to the Early Development Instrument (EDI) results. The KPS 2018 was completed by parents or guardians of Junior Kindergarten (JK) and Senior Kindergarten (SK) students in the spring of 2018, and includes topics such as child care, pre-kindergarten experiences, health and wellness, and parenting challenges. The results of the KPS provide valuable insight into the needs of families with young children in our district, and help in understanding how community factors can influence child development.

The DNSSAB was responsible for communicating and advertising the survey to the community. Working with local partners to distribute the survey, invitations to participate were created and shared on the DNSSAB and school board social media accounts as well as on our website. The survey was available to complete online from April 16-June 15, 2018; alternatively, paper copies were available upon request.

The results presented in this report only represent those parents, guardians and families that chose to participate in the survey. As such, caution should be used when interpreting the results and should not be used to draw conclusions for the entire District.



Do you have a child in kindergarten?

We want to learn more about your parenting experiences.

Fill out a short survey for a chance to win a \$50 gift card.

The information gathered will assist community organizations and school boards to better tailor community programs and services and reduce barriers to access.



<http://oursurvey.ca/kps>



For more information dnssab@dnssab.ca Survey closes May 31, 2018

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Response Rate

For a response to be included in the results, at least two pages of the survey had to be completed. A total of **293** surveys were included in the results; based on an estimated 1,598 JK/SK students in the District of Nipissing, this represents a response rate of approximately **18%**. The majority of those that responded to the survey were the child's **mother**, at **92.2%**.

Respondents by School Boards

The table below indicates the number of respondents that were included from each school board. Of the 47 respondents that did not provide their school board, 4 did not know the name of their school board while 43 did not answer this question.

Table 1. Survey Responses across School Boards

School Board Name	# Surveys Included
Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord	60
Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario	21
District School Board Ontario North East	1
Near North District School Board	143
Nipissing Parry Sound Catholic District School Board	20
Renfrew District School Board	1
No School Board Provided	47
Total	293

HEALTH & WELLNESS

It is well-known that the early years set the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour, health and well-being. For young children, developing positive, supportive, loving relationships is essential for their physical, social and emotional health and well-being.¹ There were a variety of questions in the KPS survey aimed at gathering information on children's health and well-being.

Child Characteristics

At the time of survey completion, the average age of the children was **5.7** years and there were a higher proportion of **males (60%)** than **females (39%)**. There was a slightly higher representation of **JK** students at **52.9%** compared to **SK** students at **47.1%**. For those children who were in SK at the time of the survey, **96%** attended a JK program.

Birth Information

Premature birth, which is a birth occurring before 37 weeks of pregnancy, can lead to long-term complications in physical development, learning, communicating, and getting along with others.² Low birth weight can also lead to health conditions in later life, including intellectual and developmental disabilities.³ Therefore, it is important to look at these factors when considering children's overall health and well-being.



In Nipissing District, **4.4%** of respondents reported having a preterm birth (i.e. prior to 37 weeks gestation), while approximately **6%** of respondents reported having a child with a birth weight of less than 6 pounds.

Of those that were born prematurely, approximately **46%** reported a birth weight of less than 6 pounds. However, that proportion may actually be higher, as nearly 31% of responses were deemed 'unreliable' (e.g. 50 lbs).

Child's Overall Health

When asked about their child's overall health in the last year, just over **92%** of respondents indicated that their child's overall health was either good, very good, or excellent. Moreover, **97%** of respondents reported having a regular family doctor or health care provider. Of those that didn't have a regular health care provider, only **16.7%** reported that their child's overall health was fair; 50% and 33% reported excellent and very good health, respectively.

Approximately **27%** of respondents indicated at least one health concern for their child, including:



- Allergies (7.8%)
- Vision (6.1%)
- Dental (4.4%)
- Hearing (3.8%)
- Other (0.7%) – e.g. speech and language, mental health, behavioural, developmental, physical health

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Some respondents indicated that their child required intervention or services to help with their concerns. The table below demonstrates the type of concern, the percentage of children that indicated they required support and of those, the percentage of children who received supports or services.

Service Type	% of Children Requiring Service (of total respondents)	% who Received Services (of those requiring services)
Speech & Language Services	24.9%	91.3%
Dental Services (beyond regular dental care)	16.7%	100%
Hearing Services	9.9%	100%
Learning Support	9.6%	96.6%
Physical Therapy	8.5%	96.2%
Behavioural support	8.5%	86.2%
Mental Health Services	2.7%	80%

The results indicate that for those who responded to this survey, behavioural supports and mental health services may be slightly more difficult to obtain compared to the other types of services required.

Sleep

It has been shown that children who do not get enough sleep may have trouble functioning during the day and may find it hard to settle at night⁴. The Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) recommends children between the ages of 3 to 5 years old get an average of 10-13 hours of total sleep per day. Of those that responded to the survey, **83%** reported that their children slept between 10-13 hours per day, including naps. Moreover, **93%** reported that their children usually go to bed at the same time every day.



Physical Activity

Engaging in regular physical activity can have many health benefits, including keeping the heart and lungs strong and healthy, but it can also help improve mood and self-esteem and help children do better in school⁵. Children between the ages of 3 and 5 years of age

should engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity every day. Some examples include organized sports such as soccer, baseball, gymnastics, and hockey or unorganized activities such as playing tag, biking and skiing.



In the District of Nipissing, **57%** of respondents indicated that their child participated in physical activity once a week or more with a coach or instructor, and **60%** reported engaging in physical activity without a coach or instructor at least once a week or more.

Screen Time

One issue impacting the overall health and well-being of children, and that is of increasing concern, is the effects of screen time. Screen time can include televisions, computers, gaming consoles, smartphones and tablets. According to the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS), screen time for children between 2 to 5 years old should be limited to less than 1 hour per day⁶. Not only does too much screen time lead to lost opportunities for learning, social interaction, and playing outside, but it can also lead to an increased risk for children to become overweight, sleep-deprived, less school-ready, inattentive, aggressive and less able to soothe.



Not surprisingly, children in our district tend to engage in more screen time on the weekends compared to weekdays. Approximately **25%** of respondents indicated that their children spend more than an hour watching television alone on a typical weekday and **60.4%** reported this same amount on the weekends. The CPS website lists strategies to help parents with setting screen time limits at home and how to choose the right apps, videos or programs for your child when they do engage in screen time⁶.

EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE EXPERIENCES

Child Care

Approximately **82%** of respondents reported that one or both parent(s)/guardian(s) took parental leave when their child was born, and of those, **62%** indicated that the length of the parental leave was between 6 months to 1 year while **30%** took more than 1 year of parental leave.

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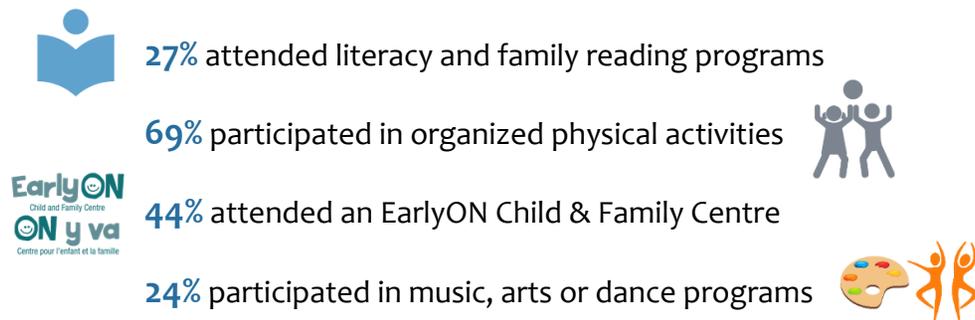


With respect to child care experiences, the results indicated that the need for child care increased as the children approached school entry. Between 2.5 years of age and school entry, approximately **41%** of children were attending a licensed centre-based program, **20%** were attending a home-based child care program (either licensed or private), and just under **8%** were receiving child care in their own home. The majority of these children were receiving full-time care (55.5%), followed by part-time (26.5%) and occasional (5.5%) care.

Early Years Programs & Services

Parent participation in early years programs and services not only helps to improve children's development, but it also strengthens families and parenting skills through connecting with and sharing with other families⁷. When children have access to quality early childhood environments and experiences, it can set the stage for positive trajectories later on in life.

Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of participation by their child in various activities in the year prior to school entry. The results presented below indicate the percentage of children who engaged in these activities regularly (i.e. once a week or more or 1-3 times per month) for all survey respondents.



When examining engagement in these activities based on child care arrangement type, responses indicated that children who were in parental care in the year prior to school entry had a slightly higher participation rate in these activities than children who were attending a child care program.

FAMILY TIME

Parenting

Being a parent is one of the most rewarding experiences, but it can also be one of the most difficult. Respondents were asked to indicate the challenges they faced and the most frequently identified challenges included:

- Getting their child to eat healthy (35.6%)
- Finding family time (28.9%)
- Getting their child ready for school (25.7%)
- Preparing healthy meals (23.3%)
- Making ends meet financially (19.8%)



Family Activities

Participants were asked to indicate how often they engaged in a variety of activities with their child the week prior to completing the survey. It was encouraging to see that of those that responded to this question, just over **90%** of respondents indicated that they spoke with their child about the child's day on a daily basis. The next most frequent activities that occurred on a daily basis included reading/telling stories (62.4%), doing household chores together (51.2%), sang songs or said rhymes (46.1%) and participated in physical activities together (35.2%).



Children can have some very strong emotions, and according to a poll of kindergarten teachers, one of the most important skills for school readiness is self-regulation⁸. This critical skill can be developed by helping children to identify emotions and strategies for coping with strong feelings, which can lead to a better ability to pay attention, plan and follow through and to conceptualize.

Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they spoke to their children about emotions, feelings and interactions with other children, both positive and negative. Approximately **70%** of respondents indicated that they spoke about their child's

feelings and emotions on a daily basis, but they were less likely to speak about their own emotions (41%) or other people's emotions (38%) at that frequency.

COMMUNITY

The District of Nipissing covers a large geographic area and consists of some urban communities but also has many rural and remote areas. Of those that responded to this question, **49%** indicated that they lived in an urban community, **45%** indicated that they lived in a rural community, while **6%** indicated that they were not sure.

Overall, respondents generally felt safe in their communities and that their communities were child friendly. Those who lived in rural communities reported less access to community activities or places such as grocery stores and pools or splash pads. However, most respondents do have access to amenities such as arenas, parks, libraries, and schools.



SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



Parent/caregiver engagement in school is a key factor in developing a child's well-being, as a child's achievement improves when parents/caregivers play an active role in the child's education⁹. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they faced any barriers to being more involved with school activities. The most frequently identified barrier at **49%** was that the times of the activities don't work or conflict with work schedules. Other barriers identified were having to arrange child care for other children (13%) and not knowing that activities were taking place (7%).

The majority of respondents had positive experiences with the school environment. Generally, **90%** or more of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

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- Child is able to manage their school day
- Child is accepted by adults in the school
- Child feels safe at school
- Child's school is friendly and welcoming
- Child enjoys going to school
- Child is excited about learning
- Child gets along with others their own age
- Child has many friends
- The kindergarten program helps my child's learning and development
- The kindergarten schedule meets the needs of my family
- Parents feel welcome
- Satisfied with the kindergarten program
- The school building is an inviting place to learn



FAMILY DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Examining family demographic information can help us paint a picture of the factors that may be affecting the development of our children. This survey asked respondents a variety of questions to help better understand the population that completed this survey. Please note that this is not a representative sample, and it should not be used to draw any conclusions about the families in the District of Nipissing.

Household Composition

The majority of respondents who completed this survey described their family as a two parent/guardian household (88%) and most did not share custody or parenting time with anyone outside of the home (86%). Approximately **48%** of households had 2 children, **25%** had 1 child, **20%** had 3 children, and **7%** had 4 or more children.

With regards to languages spoken in the home, approximately **50%** indicated English as the only language spoken at home, **29%** indicated English as a first language with French as a second language, and **13%** indicated French as a first language with English as a second language.

Parent/Guardian Education & Employment Information

For the respondents who completed the survey, the majority had a college diploma or trades certificate (46%), followed by those with an undergraduate degree (23%) and those with a graduate degree (18.9%). Approximately **62%** of respondents indicated that they were working full-time and most (45%) spent between 24-49 hours per week away from the home for work.



For the child's other parent or guardian, the most frequently identified education level was a college diploma or trades certificate (48%), followed by those with a high school diploma (18%) and those with an undergraduate degree (12%). Similarly, the majority of the child's other parent or guardian worked full-time (86%) and most worked between 24-49 hours per week away from the home (55%). However, a significant portion also worked away from the home for more than 50 hours per week (28%).

Food & Income Security

Food insecurity, which is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints, is a serious public health problem in Canada¹⁰. Statistics Canada has stated that 1 in 6 Canadian children under the age of 18 are affected by household food insecurity. This is significant as exposure to food insecurity can have a lasting impact on a child's well-being.



In the District of Nipissing, most respondents indicated that their child ate breakfast daily (90%) and most ate meals together with the family on a daily basis (80%). Although the majority of respondents (80%) indicated that they were never worried about whether food would run out before they got the money to buy more, **14%** indicated they were sometimes worried and **5%** indicated they were often worried.

In the last year, for those that were worried about food security, **14%** accessed a community food service 1-3

times, **2%** accessed a food service 4-6 times, and **4%** accessed a food service more than 6 times.

Respondents were also asked whether they had any money left over at the end of the month to buy extra items, to save or to use in an emergency, after they paid for necessities (i.e. food, housing, hydro, phone, clothes). Although most respondents reported always or often having money left over (23% & 26%, respectively), **21%** of respondents indicating having money left over about half of the time, **20%** indicated not often having money left over, and **8%** indicated never having money left over.

SUMMARY

Although the results from the KPS do not reflect a representative sample of the entire district, the results of this survey can still provide valuable insight into some of the needs of families with young children in our district. Similar surveys should continue to be conducted in our district in the future, as they can help us in understanding and monitoring how community factors influence child development over time.

END NOTES

1. <http://www.eriding.net/easysiteweb/getresource.axd?assetid=308399&type=0&servicetype=1>
2. <https://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/long-term-health-effects-of-premature-birth.aspx>
3. <https://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/low-birthweight.aspx>
4. https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy_sleep_for_your_baby_and_child
5. https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/physical_activity
6. <https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/screen-time-and-young-children>
7. https://www.beststart.org/OnTrack_English/1-importance.html
8. <http://www.eccpct.com/Resources/Child/Tips-for-Tots/Help-Young-Children-Regulate-Their-Emotions/>
9. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/>
10. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/children-food-insecurity-factsheet.pdf>