

EDI in Ontario

The EDI is a validated and respected tool, used widely across Canada and abroad. In international jurisdictions, such as

The initial implementation also dismissed an essential partner—regional governments (Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, CMSM) who have the primary responsibility for the planning and management of services for young children and families. Indeed, the ded0.2 (e) 0.2 (egn 45 0 0 T

wider provincial policy framework. The municipal coordination role includes the building and maintenance of partnerships with the education and public health sector as well promoting community engagement in service planning processes.

- 3. Responsibility for functions currently carried out by Data Analysis Coordinators should be*

The underlying principle being that, while all children and families require some level of support, some communities may require more intensive supports than others. In practical terms, the question becomes, “what do we need to do to achieve best possible outcomes for all children in any given community?” as opposed to only attempting to reduce levels of vulnerability of some children to more tolerable levels.

This change in focus would also aid in avoiding the already mentioned EDI interpretation problems including over-emphasis on individual developmental domains. This is especially serious when “at risk” labels are being applied to neighbourhoods with a high proportion of young children whose first language is neither English nor French as well as children from minority cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Although “norming” of the data is important on the provincial level, in many jurisdictions that experience high immigration and population turnover, norming on the municipal level can make a significant contribution to better service planning and management.

5.

7. EDI collection should be implemented in the same calendar year for coterminous school boards.

The implementation and analysis of the EDI also suffers from the existence of four different education authorities in each geographical area, often with different boundaries. Further confounding the problem is the practice of EDI surveys in different school boards serving the same geographic area not being administered in the same years.

8. The provincial government should introduce a companion instrument to be administered at the beginning of Junior Kindergarten; this will provide a valuable and timely assessment of supports that children aged 0-3 and their families need to thrive in their communities. It will also help in assessing the school's performance over the two years of kindergarten.

Full day kindergarten also presents an opportunity to introduce a companion instrument at children's entry into junior kindergarten. In fact, during the early days of the EDI some school boards administered the instrument to JK students (soon after the beginning of the school year).

Conclusion

The EDI is potentially a very valuable tool whose usefulness has been demonstrated in other provinces across Canada and many countries abroad. In Ontario there are specific challenges that need to be overcome in order to maximize the potential of EDI; the recommendations in this submission have been crafted with this goal in mind.

Petr Varmuza and Laura Coulman are PhD students in the Applied Psychology and Human Development Department at OISE/UT.
