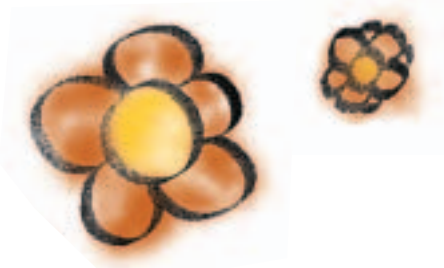


GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

A Parent's Guide to Helping Children Learn



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



Early childhood education plays a key role in getting children ready for school. It helps them develop some of the qualities they need to make the most of their school years, such as physical health, social skills, emotional maturity, language and the ability to express ideas.

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a survey used to measure how well communities are preparing Manitoba children for school. The first provincial implementation of the EDI took place in 2003 and involved about 8,000 children. The first year of information found that most Kindergarten students were ready to start school.

Children who are ready for school tend to have more success because they have good language skills, are eager to learn and bring good attitudes and behaviours into the classroom. Giving our children their best start in school through good quality play-based childhood education will help them find the joy of learning that is an important part of a happy and successful life.



The EDI considers the following five areas in determining a child's readiness for school:

Physical Health

Physical health and well-being include:

- being properly dressed for the weather
- getting enough sleep
- having enough good food
- using the washroom independently
- holding a pencil or crayon properly
- having energy to play throughout the day
- playing comfortably with puzzles



You can help your child stay healthy by:

- playing jumping and running games with older children, rolling and crawling games with younger ones
- practising climbing stairs and playground structures
- making sure they have enough sleep – 11 to 14 hours every night
- playing creatively with paper, crayons, paints, playdough
- choosing healthy snacks, such as vegetables and fruits, whenever possible

Social Skills

In their early years, children learn the skills needed to get along with others. Your children's social skills are reflected in their ability to:

- get along with other children
- follow rules and instructions
- demonstrate self-control
- solve some problems by themselves
- adjust to changes in routine
- tolerate someone making a mistake
- take care of their belongings
- respect others



To help your child learn social skills:

- give children two things to choose between so they can practise decision-making
- be a role model in your own relationships
- play games like Simon Says to practise following directions and listening
- plan play times with other children
- give two-minute warnings before changing activities



Emotional Maturity

Emotionally mature children tend to:

- help other children if they are hurt
- show empathy to others
- offer to help other children with a task
- try to stop a quarrel or dispute among their peers
- invite others to join in a game or activity



To help prepare your children emotionally for school:

- practise describing feelings to your child such as, "I think your friend might be sad today; he isn't smiling."
- set a good example by showing you care for other people
- encourage them to include others in their play
- praise them when they help others
- talk about upcoming events or changes in routines



Language & Thinking Skills

Children's language and thinking skills are shown when they:

- show interest in books
- know some letters of the alphabet
- recognize numbers and are able to count
- show ability to print their own name and other words
- know shapes and colours
- show ability to remember things easily

To help develop your children's language and thinking skills:

- read to them
- tell stories to each other and have lots of conversations
- count things, such as the number of stairs, shoes, trees, cars, etc.
- play sorting games with common items, such as spoons, socks, pots, lids, etc.
- practise writing names and other words
- play memory and number games or help your child invent a game
- talk about and compare the sizes and shapes of different objects





Communication and General Knowledge

Communication and general knowledge are seen in:

- telling a story
- playing imaginatively
- communicating needs to adults and other children in understandable ways
- understanding instructions the first time, with the ability to respond

To help your child learn communication and general knowledge:

- read to your children
- play pretend and imagination games
- have your children tell you stories
- encourage your children to express themselves in your conversations with them



ARE OUR CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL?



Using the Early Development Instrument in Manitoba



Are Manitoba children getting what they need in their first years of life? How ready are Manitoba's children when they begin school?

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) survey will help answer these questions.



The EDI:

- helps parents, schools and communities learn important things about their children, so we can support them in their school lives
- shows how all children in a community are doing when they start school
- measures the “readiness to learn” of groups of children rather than individuals
- helps measure five important areas of early child growth:
 - children's physical health
 - how they relate to others
 - how they are feeling
 - words they know
 - how they express themselves



Most Manitoba communities were ready to use the EDI in 2003. The survey included a very large group of children -- two out of every three in Kindergarten. There were about 8,000 children in this group. In a few years, the Province of Manitoba will be measuring how ready all Manitoba children are when they enter school.

The first year of information from this survey indicates Manitoba children are doing as well as other children in Canada. Most children were ready to start school. But many of Manitoba’s children (more than one in four) needed more help. For those who are not ready, learning is harder and school is less fun.

In 2003, boys were not as prepared to learn as girls were when they started school. Girls continue to do better as they go through the early years of school. Many boys need extra help.

The knowledge and skills children need when they start school are best acquired long before the age of five. In fact, children’s ability to learn depends on their experiences before, during and after birth. Healthy pregnancy, lots of gentle touching, conversation and reading all help set the stage for learning.

The EDI survey will be used annually in Manitoba to see how ready children are to begin school. This information can be used by governments, schools and individual parents to plan ahead in helping children succeed in school.

Funded by Healthy Child Manitoba (HCM) and developed by the Offord Centre of Child Studies, the EDI is one of the ways that the Government of Manitoba puts children and families first. To learn more, you can visit the HCM website www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild or call 945-2266, toll-free 1-888-848-0140.





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Cette information existe également en français.