

Developments

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A Newsletter by
Child, Youth and Social Development Studies
Applied Research Branch



Table of Contents

ANNOUNCEMENTS	
10 th Anniversary	1
Vulnerable Children Book	2
Policy Developments ECD Agreement	3
Upcoming Data Collections and Releases.....	4
Aboriginal Policy Research Conference	5
Policy Research Symposium	5
UEY OVERVIEW	
Study Highlights from Selected Communities	7
KIDS	
Status of Cycle 3 Research Papers.....	8
ECD for First Nations and Other Aboriginal Children.....	9
Research on Vulnerable Children	10
YOUTH	
YITS and PISA Data Collection Update	11
NGS Data Collection Update	11
First Results from PISA.....	12
First Findings from YITS for 18-20-year-olds.....	13
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	
Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities: GOC Report.....	14
Transforming Disability into Ability: OECD Report	14
A Profile of Disability in Canada, 2001	15
Publications.....	16
CYSD TEAM	17
Contacts.....	18

10 Year Anniversary of the NLSCY

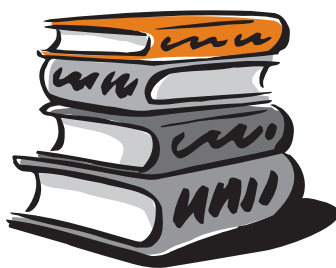


In 1992, in recognition of the limitations of existing data sources, and the need to study child and human development from birth to adulthood, the Government of Canada took the unprecedented step of funding the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. Much of the research done at that time was dependent on different sources of cross-sectional data that looked mainly at risk factors such as child poverty. The NLSCY data, first collected in 1994 and continuing, includes measured child outcomes such as language skills and behaviour.

HRDC celebrated this anniversary and the publication of the book, *Vulnerable Children* with a small reception on October 21, 2002. We would like to thank the original staff at Health and Welfare Canada, colleagues in government, academics, representatives of various non-governmental organizations and all those who assisted in creating the NLSCY. A further recognition of the contribution of the NLSCY is being planned for 2004, ten years after the first data was collected. For more information, see the forthcoming announcement at, <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nlscy-elnej>.



Announcing the publication of a new book



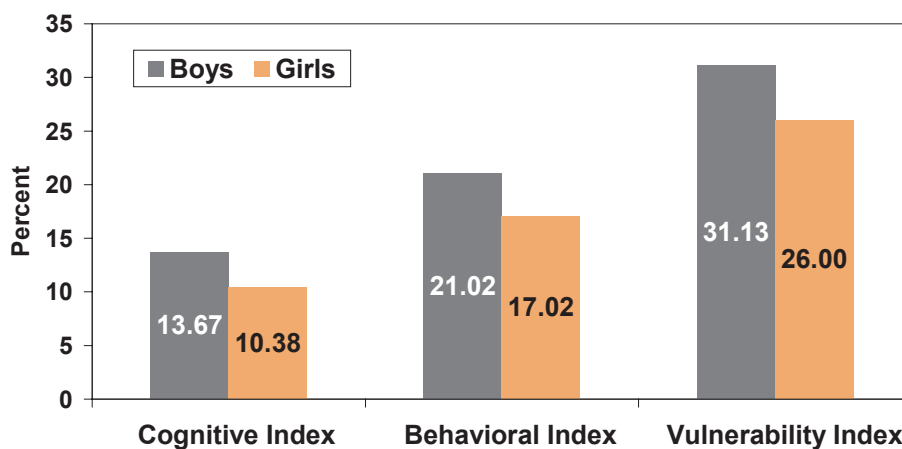
Vulnerable Children: Findings from Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth was written by a group of leading Canadian researchers and edited by J. Douglas Willms, Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick. This book presents research based on 1994 data from the NLSCY.

HRDC funded the research and is a co-publisher of the book along with The University of Alberta Press. We are very proud of this research and hope to see it making a contribution to the development of policies and programs across the country.

The major contribution of this work lies in the identification of vulnerable children by actual outcomes rather than by risks. Outcomes measure the progress of children in their health, behavior, social, emotional and cognitive development. Risks, on the other hand, are attached to situations such as poverty. By focusing on outcomes the researchers identify children who are *having* problems as opposed to children who are at *risk for* problems.

The differences between the sexes in the prevalence of vulnerability are gauged by the cognitive, behaviour, and overall vulnerability index. On average, boys tend to be more vulnerable than girls.

Prevalence of Vulnerable Children by Sex. Boys Tend to be More Vulnerable than Girls



Source: Cycle 1, NLSCY Adapted from *Vulnerable Children*, 2002: 56

The table of contents and information on how to order the book may be found under Research at: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nlscy-elnej>.

Policy Developments

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement

In September 2000 the Government of Canada, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments¹ reached a historic agreement to improve and expand the services and programs they provide for children under the age of 6 and their families.

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement is a long term commitment to help young children reach their potential, and to help families support their children. As part of this agreement, governments committed to report regularly on the progress of the ECD agreement and to continue to build knowledge and share information with parents, service providers and communities to provide children with the best possible start in life.

How will Governments Report on their Progress in Early Childhood Development?

Governments have committed to keep the public apprised of progress in the area of early childhood development. Specifically, First Ministers committed to report on two areas of early childhood development: investments in ECD programs and services, and child outcomes.

Beginning in the Fall of 2002, each participating government will report annually on their progress in improving and expanding early childhood development programs and services under the ECD Agreement. The Government of Canada's report entitled, *Early Childhood Development Activities and Expenditures – Government of Canada Report*, was released in September 2002 in fulfillment of this commitment. This report is available at <http://socialunion.gc.ca/ecd/2002/activities-expenditures-toc-e.html>, or by calling 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-022-6232).

Also in the Fall of 2002, participating governments will begin reporting on indicators of child well-being. Reporting on indicators of well-being will help build public awareness of how young children are faring in Canada as well as demonstrate the commitment of governments' to meeting the objectives of the ECD Agreement. This report is the Government of Canada's first step in fulfillment of this commitment.



¹ The government of Quebec has stated that while sharing the same concerns as other governments on early childhood development, it does not adhere to the federal/provincial/territorial Early Childhood Development Agreement. The Government of Quebec is receiving its share of funding from the Government of Canada for early childhood development programs and services through the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST).

Upcoming Data Collections and Releases

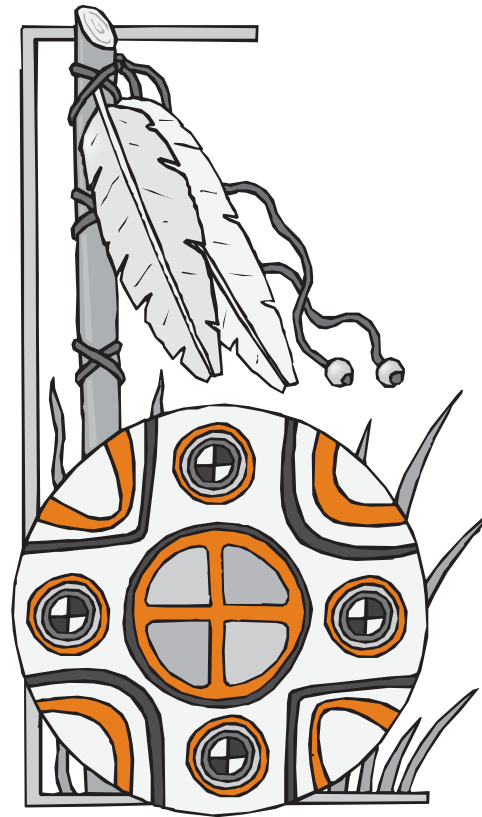
Listed below are the upcoming data collections and releases for the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the National Graduates Survey (NGS) and the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS).

	Data Collections			Releases	
	Completed	In Process	Planned	Completed	Planned
NLSCY	Cycle 1 – 1994 Cycle 2 – 1996 Cycle 3 – 1998 Cycle 4 – 2000	Cycle 5 – 2002	Cycle 6 – 2004	Cycles 1, 2, 3	Cycle 4 – 2003
YITS 2000	Cycle 1 – 2000 Cycle 2 – 2002		Cycle 3 – 2004	Cycle 1 Partial data for 15 years (no parent) – 2001 Partial data for 18 to 20 years – 2002	Cycle 1 – 2003 Complete 15 and 18 to 20 years
PISA 2000	2000			2001	
YITS 2003			Cycle 1 – 2003		
PISA 2003			2003		
NGS (and Follow-up of Graduates)	Classes of 1982, 1986, 1990, 1995 and Follow-ups Class of 2000 (2002)		Class of 2000 Follow-up (2005)	Classes of 1982, 1986, 1990 and Follow-ups Class of 1995	Class of 1995 Follow-up (2003)
PALS 2001	2001				2002-2003

Aboriginal Policy Research Conference

Ottawa, November 26-28, 2002

The Aboriginal Policy Research Conference provided a unique opportunity for participants to learn about cutting-edge research that is taking place on Aboriginal issues. The conference integrated researchers, policy makers, and Aboriginal peoples in order to expand social, economic and demographic determinants of Aboriginal well-being, facilitate policy, and shape the research agendas for government, academia, and Aboriginal peoples. For more information regarding the outcomes from the conference, visit the website: <http://www.ssc.uwo.ca/sociology/aprc-crmpa/welcome.htm>.



Reconciling Research Evidence for the Skills Agenda, Symposium Report: Your Perspective: Policy Research Symposium, Gatineau, Quebec

On May 23 – 24 of 2002, the Applied Research Branch and the Learning and Literacy Directorate with support from Industry Canada and Statistics Canada, organized a Policy Research Symposium. The event was inspired by the new Innovation Strategy, and initiated by the Government of Canada. The Symposium brought together policy decision makers and key organizations to discuss a research strategy in support of the Skills Agenda for the next decade. The presentations and discussions focused on key research questions, gaps and issues. The participants included representatives from Federal and Provincial governments, and non-governmental organizations, which allowed for a wide range of opinions and ideas. *Reconciling Research Evidence for the Skills Agenda, Symposium Report* will be released in early 2003, and will be available on request.

Understanding the Early Years (UEY)

UEY is a national research initiative that provides several diverse communities across Canada with information that will help them make more informed policy and program decisions for families with young children.

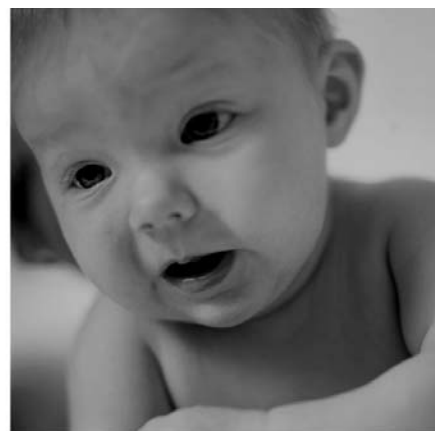
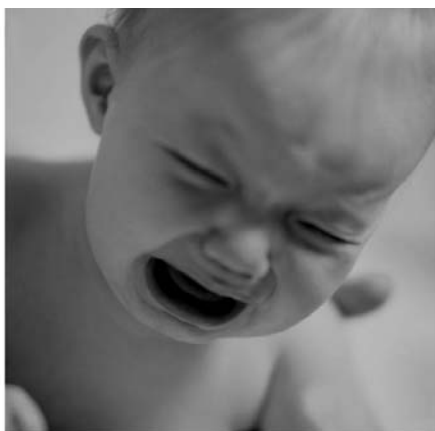
Thirteen communities across Canada are currently participating in this five year study. The first of these communities began in 1999 with the remaining seven communities coming on board in 2001. Children aged 0 to 6 years were assessed using the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and the NLSCY.

These two instruments are comprised of several measures and include an exploration of: (1) Family background including information on the parents' income, level of education, and occupational status; (2) Family processes including positive parenting practices, engagement in learning activities, family functioning, and maternal mental health; and, (3) Community factors including social support and social capital, neighbourhood quality and safety, use of recreational, cultural, and educational resources, and residential stability.

Since evidence suggests that neighbourhoods and communities where children grow and learn directly influences their development, mapping community resources in the neighbourhoods where our children live is also a key component of this study. This is especially important since communities across Canada are so geographically and culturally diverse.

To further help policy decision makers deliver programs that are sensitive and responsive to local conditions, it is important to gather community-specific information about children and the places where they are raised.

To date, valuable lessons have been learned from the UEY initiative about the needs and strengths of communities with different economic, social, and physical characteristics, and about how each community is working to improve their children's outcomes. This information will contribute significantly by providing insight into which factors lead to success and which warrant further consideration.



Study Highlights from Selected Communities

In **Prince Edward Island**, children scored higher than the national averages for all outcomes measured with the EDI and the NLSCY instruments. In addition, many children that were living in poor areas were faring quite well. Despite relatively low levels of socioeconomic status, PEI had high scores on community indicators for social support, social capital and the quality and safety of its neighbourhoods.

There was limited mobility in PEI, as few residents move within or out of the province. Parents also had relatively strong parenting skills and lived in safe and high quality neighbourhoods. These factors undoubtedly contributed to PEI's success in achieving high levels of children's outcomes.

The community of **South-western Newfoundland** can take pride in their children and themselves for having safe, low transition neighbourhoods which enable the children to be above the national average in many areas such as their vocabulary, behavior and cognitive development. Parents also had strong parenting skills and were frequently involved in their children's learning activities.

Overall, the children of **North York, Ontario** were healthy and most showed strong signs of positive development and preparedness for a good start in life. Parents were operating with good levels of self-reported social support, strong parenting skills, good family functioning and low levels of depression. Neighbourhoods were safe and clean and, in general, had accessible services. What distinguishes this community from many other communities is its ethnic and cultural diversity (47% of children had a mother tongue other than French or English).

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan scored well in community and family indicators such as family functioning, social support, and neighbourhood safety making this an admirable community, especially when considering it had above national average levels of low income areas (35%). The children of Prince Albert also scored above the national average in social knowledge and communication skills. It is interesting to note that Prince Albert's study area included both urban and rural areas.



Winnipeg, Manitoba had approximately 42% of families in low income areas. Parents tended to have strong parenting skills despite living in relatively less safe neighbourhoods with low social cohesion and social support. Approximately 27% of children aged six and younger in the community are of aboriginal status – an indicator of the cultural diversity among young children in Winnipeg.

To date, these five communities have released three major reports: the integrative research report, the mapping report and the EDI report. For further information and details about UEY and related publications, visit the UEY website at:

<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sp-ps/arb-dgra/nlscy-elnej/uey-cpe/uey.shtml>

HRDC will also be releasing eight integrative research reports for the remaining communities.

NLSCY

Research Papers

Based on Cycle 3 Data

A series of research papers based on three cycles of NLSCY data have been completed and are currently being prepared for publication. With three cycles of data available from 1994, 1996 and 1998, the NLSCY includes children 0-15 years old.

The cycle 3 research papers examine a broad range of children's developmental outcomes and of the determinants of these outcomes. The papers are:

- *The Effect of Changes in Maternal Employment and Family Composition on Children's Behaviour*, by Paul Roberts
- *Is History Destiny? Resources, transitions and child education attainments in Canada*, by John Hoddinott, Lynn Lethbridge and Shelly Phipps
- *Development of Prosocial Skills*, by Rauno Parrila, Darcy Fleming, Xin Ma and Christina Rinaldi
- *Poverty, Social Capital, Parenting and Child Outcomes in Canada*, by Charles Jones, Lynn Clark, Joan Grusec, Randle Hart, Gabrielle Plickert and Lorne Tepperman
- *A Study of Family, Childcare and Well-being in Young Canadian Children*, by T. Seifert, P. Canning and B. Lindemann
- *Early Language, Literacy and Learning Disabilities in the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, by Eleanor M. Thomas, D. Roland Thomas



Early Childhood Development for First Nations and Other Aboriginal Children

The federal government has recently initiated a strategy on Early Childhood Development for First Nations and other Aboriginal children which includes the improvement, expansion, integration and coordination of federal programs as well as the development of a knowledge and research strategy. This strategy will be developed by HRDC and Statistics Canada in consultation with representatives of Aboriginal organizations.

There is a significant lack of data on the development and well-being of young Aboriginal children, compared to that available on Canadian children as a whole. The NLSCY has provided a powerful tool for researchers, program and policy makers, and the public to understand the factors which contribute to positive outcomes among Canadian children generally. And the UYEY research initiative takes measuring and monitoring of child well-being to the community level and explores the impact of community influences on developmental outcomes. However, neither of these tools is able to shed light on the situation of Aboriginal children.

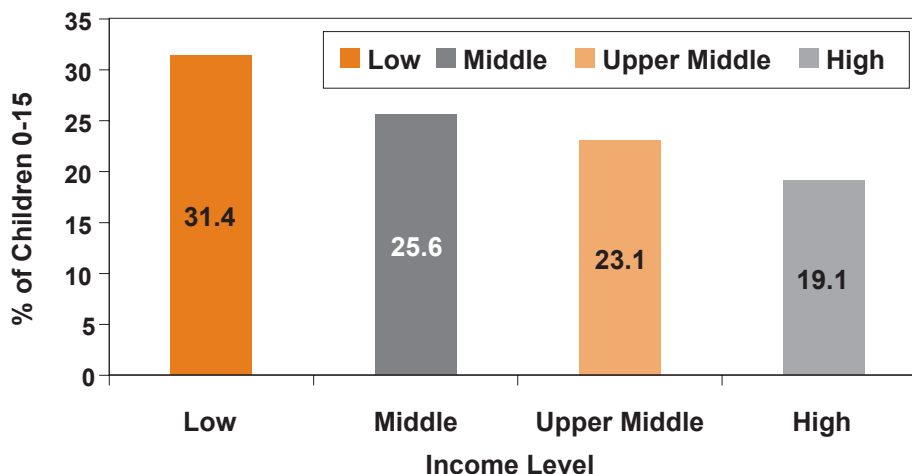
The objectives of the knowledge and research strategy of this initiative are to provide meaningful outcome data for First Nations and other Aboriginal children to assist governments and Aboriginal communities address the specific and unique needs of their young children.



CYSD Research on Vulnerable Children

Vulnerability is the incidence of low measured existing outcomes that point to a higher likelihood of negative outcomes later in life. Children may experience short episodes or prolonged periods of vulnerability. Most vulnerable children do not live in low income families, but children in low income families are more likely to be vulnerable.

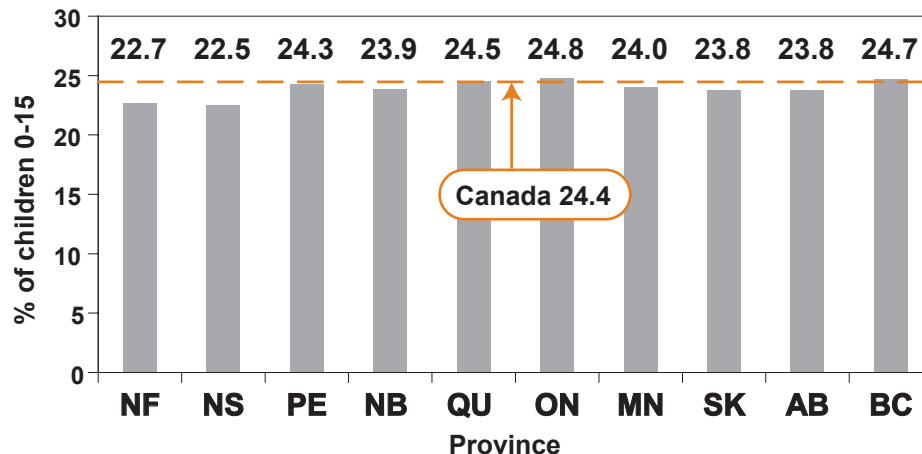
Vulnerability According to Income



Source: NLSCY, 1998-99

Proportions of vulnerable children in Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia are below the national average, while Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia have vulnerability rates above the national average.

Vulnerable Children Are Distributed Unevenly Across Provinces



Source: NLSCY, 1998-99

Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Data Collection Update

Two new surveys examining youth were started in 2000 – the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

YITS is designed to collect data on youths' transitions between education and work. The first cycle was administered in 2000 to 30,000 15-year-olds and over 20,000 18 to 20-year-olds. The data collection for the 15-year-olds took place in their schools. Data was provided by the youth, their parents and their school administrators. In addition, these youth completed a PISA reading assessment, an OECD initiated international assessment tool. The 18-20-year-olds were included in YITS to provide data more quickly on school-work transitions. Both cohorts will be followed every two years into their late 20's. The second data collection took place in 2002.

PISA will be implemented in OECD participating countries every three years. Extending on this, a second cohort of 30,000 Canadian 15-year-olds will comprise the upcoming YITS/PISA 2003 data collection. The data collection will mirror that for 2000. The PISA assessment for 2003 will focus on mathematics. This cohort will also be followed through YITS every two years into their late 20's. See the upcoming data collections chart for dates.

National Graduates Survey (NGS) Data Collection Update

The National Graduates Survey (NGS) examines the relationship between post-secondary education and training and labour market activities of recent graduates. Sponsored by HRDC and conducted by Statistics Canada, the survey has been in existence for twenty years. Graduates are surveyed two years and five years after completing their programs. Currently, full data are available for the graduating classes of 1982, 1986 and 1990. The first data collection for the Class of 1995 is also available, while data for the 5-year follow-up of these graduates (as well as a report) is scheduled to be released by Statistics Canada in late 2002. This past spring and summer, post-secondary graduates from the Class of 2000 were surveyed for the first time.



First Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

The skills and knowledge that Canadians bring to their jobs, and to our society, play an important role in determining our economic success and our overall quality of life. In order to provide policy-oriented international indicators of the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) initiated the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is a collaborative effort among OECD countries to regularly assess youth outcomes in three domains: reading literacy, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy.²

Approximately 30,000 Canadian students participated in PISA 2000, and they performed well compared with students in 31 other countries, ranking second in reading, sixth in mathematics, and fifth in science. Canada is among a select few countries that scored near the top in all three domains. Furthermore, only Finland performed significantly better than Canada in reading, only Korea and Japan performed significantly better in mathematics, and only Korea, Japan, and Finland performed significantly better in science.

The performance of students in the majority of provinces placed these provinces among the top ranked countries in all three domains. Students from Alberta performed significantly above the Canadian average in all three domains, as did Quebec students in mathematics and science. In Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, the performance of students was about the same as the Canadian average, while the performance of students in the four Atlantic Provinces was significantly below the Canadian average. However, their performance was at or above the middle of the international range. Further Canadian results are available in the report, "Measuring Up: the Performance of Canada's Youth in Reading, Mathematics and Science – OECD PISA Study – First Results for Canadians aged 15". This publication is available electronically at: www.pisa.gc.ca or www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb.

What is striking about the Canadian results is that despite having different provincial systems, the outcomes of the PISA assessment are quite similar for the majority of provinces. As well, the pan-Canadian report of PISA shows that no single factor, by itself, can explain differences in reading achievement. School, student and family characteristics work alone and in combination to influence the success of students. Nevertheless, the performance of Canadian youth in PISA appears promising for their future and for the future of Canada.



² In Canada, PISA was carried out through a partnership between Human Resources Development Canada; the Council of Minister of Education, Canada; and Statistics Canada.

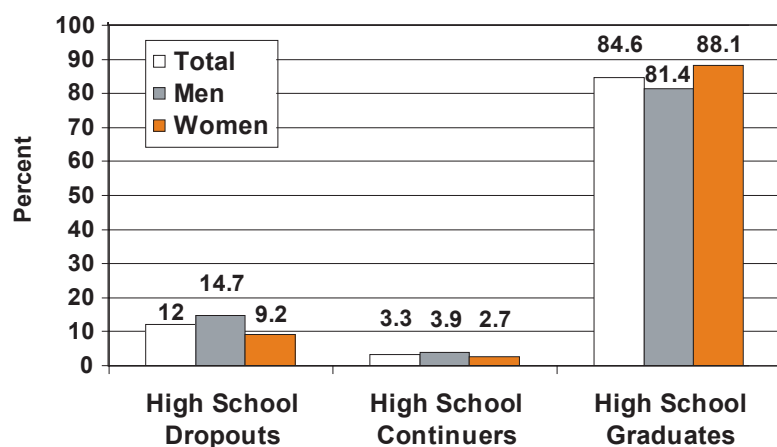
At a Crossroads: First Findings from the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) for 18-20-year-olds

In January 2002, HRDC and Statistics Canada released the report *At a Crossroads*. The report presented first findings for the cohort aged 18 to 20 from Cycle 1 of the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) – a new longitudinal survey designed to examine major transitions in the lives of youth, particularly between education and work. More than 22,000 18-20-year-olds from the ten provinces participated in the survey in early 2000. In particular, the report presented information on the issue of dropping out of high school, as well as the post-high school education and work experiences of youth 18 to 20.

Among the major findings, as of December 1999, the high school dropout rate in Canada among 20-year-olds stood at 12%. This compares to a dropout rate of 18% reported in the 1991 School Leavers Survey. High school dropout rates remained high in most provinces for young males compared to young females. Dropout rates varied by province and were relatively low in Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Ontario and relatively high in Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Manitoba.

Dropouts were less likely than graduates to have lived in two-parent families while in high school. They were also less likely than graduates to have parents who had completed a post-secondary education (PSE) diploma or degree, and less likely to have parents who worked in management, science or other professional occupations. Dropouts obtained lower grades on average relative to graduates, and they were also less engaged in school both academically and socially. Still, not all dropouts obtained low grades. Almost half of all dropouts obtained a B grade average or better (at least 70%) in their final year of high school.

**High School Completion Rates,
Youth 20-year-olds,
December 1999**



Source: YITS 18-20, Cycle 1

Additional findings showed that about half of all youth no longer in high school were attending a PSE institution (52.2%); a small percentage had already graduated (4.3%) or had left a PSE program before completing it (5.7%). Close to half of PSE participants attended a community college or CEGEP in their first year of PSE; about one-third attended university; and the balance attended a range of other types of PSE programs. PSE participants were least likely to have come from single-parent families and were more likely to report having lived with both parents while in high school.

Rates of full-time employment were highest for 18-20-year-olds who had completed a PSE program. Though employed, many of the jobs held by high school graduates with no PSE were part-time.

Additional findings can be found in the report, which is available to download at the Applied Research Branch web-site, or the YITS-PISA project web-site at: www.pisa.gc.ca.

Advancing the Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities: Government of Canada Report

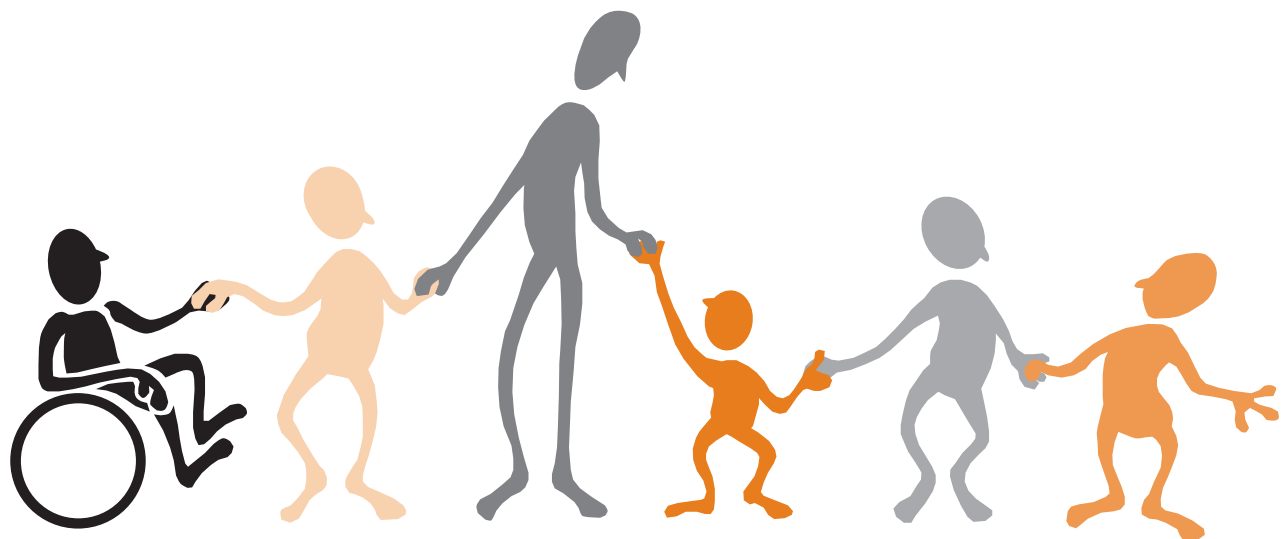
HRDC published the first federal report on disabilities on December 3, 2002. This report is the first to bring together information on the performance of federal programs and services in support of persons with disabilities. Its aim is to show Canadians the progress made on commitments by the Government of Canada. The report is comprised of both a relatively short main report for general audiences and a technical report with detailed information.

The report is available at: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/sdd-dds/odi/menu/home.shtml>

Transforming Disability into Ability: OECD Report

The major objective of the OECD Report "Transforming Disability into Ability: Policies to Promote Work and Income Security for Disabled People" is to identify disability policy packages that have proved successful in promoting labour integration of disabled people and/or reducing disability benefit recipient rates. Also, the study assesses each of the twenty participating country's distance from benchmarks of disability policy and each country's position relative to other OECD member countries.

The publication of this report is planned for early 2003, and will be available at: www.oecd.org.



A Profile of Disability in Canada, 2001



The Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) 2001 is a post-censal survey that collected detailed information on persons with disabilities in Canada. The last survey on disability was the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) conducted in 1991. A new survey was needed because the existing information was outdated and policy approaches to the issue of disability had changed over the past decade. PALS collected information on key issues such as: type and severity level of disability, time of onset and cause, need for and use of disability supports, barriers to participation, unmet needs, employment, education, daily living, housing, transportation, and level of participation in community activities. The survey was funded by HRDC.

The first release of the PALS was on December 3, 2002. A joint article between Statistics Canada and HRDC (ARB) is available at: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sp-ps/arb-dgra/whatnew.shtml>



PUBLICATIONS

UEY

- **Early Childhood Development in Southwestern Newfoundland**
KSI Research International Inc., Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, June 2002
- **Results of the Community Mapping Study for Southwestern Newfoundland**
KSI Research International Inc., Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, June 2002
- **Early Childhood Development in Prince Albert Saskatchewan**
KSI Research International Inc. Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, April 2002
- **Results of the Community Mapping Study for Children in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**
Debra Kuzbik, Linda Nosbush and Tom Sutherland, April 2002

KIDS

- **Engagement and Dropping Out of School: A Life Course Perspective**
Richard Audas, J. Douglas Willms, 2001
- **Children and Familial Economic Welfare: The Effect of Income on Child Development**
Paul Roberts, Peter Smith and Holly Nas, 2001
- **It's All in the Past? Exploring the Repercussions of Parents' Early Conjugal and Parental Histories on the Family Life course of their Children**
Heather Juby, Nicole Marcil-Gratton
- **Patterns of Young Children's Development: An International Comparison of Development as Assessed by Who Am I?**
De Lemos, Molly, Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, April 2002

YOUTH

- **At A Crossroads: First Results for the 18 to 20-Year-Old Cohort of the Youth in Transition Survey**
HRDC, Statistics Canada. January 2002
- **Measuring Up: The Performance of Canada's youth in reading, mathematics and science**
HRDC, Statistics Canada, CMEC. December 2001
- **Policy Research Issues for Canadian Youth: School – Work Transitions**
Victor Thiessen. June 2001
- **Post-Secondary Education Attainment in Canada and the United States in the 1990s**
Jeffrey W. Bowlby. March 2002
- **A Study on Preparing Canada's Youth for the Job Market of the Future**
SPR Associates Inc. March 2002
- **Policy Research Issues for Canadian Youth: An Overview of Human Capital in Rural and Urban Areas**
E. Dianne Looker. October 2001

Publications can be located at: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sp-ps/arb-dgra/publications/list.shtml>



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Websites

NLSCY:

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nlscy-elnej

PISA:

www.pisa.gc.ca

YITS:

www.pisa.gc.ca/yits.shtml

UEY:

www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/nlscy-elnej/uey.shtml

Statistics Canada:

www.statcan.ca

Copies of NLSCY questionnaires for Cycle 1, 2, and 3

www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/freepub.cgi



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- Applied Research Bulletins

Contact: HRDC-DRHC Publications Office

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Or

Contact the office administrator.

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