

MNCHP Network Bulletin



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MNCHP NETWORK 'SPECIAL' BULLETIN JANUARY 14, 2011 Healthy Child Report Cards

This week's bulletin highlights a number of report cards related to child health. These report cards measure various indicators of progress in relation to child health and development (i.e., physical activity, levels of poverty, breastfeeding rates, etc.). These documents can be useful for a number of different groups (e.g., policy-makers, service providers, general public) to assist in planning, decision-making, and as a general source of information.

This selection of information is based on a preliminary scan and is not exhaustive.

We invite you to share other relevant information about this topic.

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I. CHILD HEALTH

1. The Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity

Active Healthy Kids Canada (2010) (available in French)

The physical activity levels of Canadian children and youth are examined in this report card by connecting individual characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, race, gender, socio-economic status, etc.), influences (e.g. school, families, peers, community, etc.), physical activity levels (active play, active transportation, organized sports, etc.), and outcomes (mental health, body weight, physical health, etc.). This report determined that children and youth in Canada have a failing grade in physical activity levels. Included in the report are recommendations for policy makers, public health, and healthcare professionals, parents, early childhood educators, and schools.

English: <http://www.activehealthykids.ca/ecms.ashx/2010ActiveHealthyKidsCanadaReportCard-shortform.pdf>

French: <http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Francais.aspx?lang=fr-ca>

2. Breastfeeding Report Card

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, United States (2010)

This report card looks at the breastfeeding rates as well as the length of time women breastfed, the amount of birth facility and professional support, legislation, infrastructure, and support in childcare settings. This report card shows that there is a high rate of women who start out by breastfeeding their babies in the United States but they may not be getting the support they need. Breastfeeding rates were low at 3, 6, and 12 months, illustrating that mothers continue to face multiple barriers to breastfeeding. The author recommends improving hospital practices and policies to promote and support breastfeeding.

<http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm>

3. Report Card on Children: Family Influences on Children's Health and Development

Toronto Public Health (2009)

The well-being of Toronto children is explored in this report card by examining family functioning and parenting practices. Family functioning is defined as how the entire family interacts and functions (i.e., quality of relationships, ability to discuss feelings and concerns, ability to communicate and make decisions, etc.). This report finds that most Toronto parents of children between the ages of 1 and 5 years old report high levels of family functioning, however, there still needs to be more work focused on identifying characteristics of Toronto families with low levels of family functioning. The author defines parenting practices as the ways in which parents relate to their children and shape their behaviour. The findings indicate that both positive and negative parenting practices are found in all family structures and socioeconomic levels. In Toronto, parents of children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old reported significantly lower

levels of positive parent child interaction than parents in the rest of Ontario. The implications of this report will help to: (1) identify issues and trends and (2) target areas within Toronto that require attention.

http://www.toronto.ca/reportcardonchildren/pdf/factsheet_familyinfluences_TPH.pdf

4. **The Health of Canada's Children: A Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH) Profile 3rd Edition**

CICH (2000) (available in French)

This report is a comprehensive profile of the health of children and youth in Canada. It provides information about pregnancy, birth and infancy, pre-school children, school-aged children, youth, income inequity, mental health and well-being, children and youth with disabilities, Aboriginal children and youth, and children's environmental health.

English: http://www.cich.ca/Publications_monitoring.html

French: http://www.cich.ca/French/resource-f_Surveillance.htm#ProfileFrench

II. EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

5. **Report Card on Ontario's Elementary Schools**

Peter Cowley, Stephen Easton, and Michael Thomas (2010)

This report card compares and examines the performance of individual schools so that parents can use it as a resource when they are choosing a school for their children. The authors look at indicators such as:

- effective teaching,
- gender gap indicators (how well teachers take student differences into account),
- academic performance,
- socioeconomic differences (how well teachers take into account a student's life circumstances), etc.

<http://ontario.compareschoolrankings.org/pdfs/Ontario-Elementary-Schools-2010.pdf>

6. **Report Card on Early Learning and Child Care**

Code Blue Child care (2007)

Code Blue developed this report card on Early Learning and Childcare, which gave Stephen Harper a failing grade. Code Blue is a Canada-wide campaign to build a real pan-Canadian child care system which brings together national, provincial, and territorial child care organizations, labour, women's and social justice groups along with Canadians from all walks of life. This report card briefly looks at Stephen Harper's performance in the following areas: universal childcare, parent choice, balancing work and family, access, and honouring agreements.

http://www.buildchildcare.ca/BE_petition.php/reportcard

7. **The Child Care Transition: A League Table of Early Childhood Education and Care in Economically Advanced Countries**

Unicef (2008) (available in French)

This report analyzes the status of early childhood education and care in the 25 most affluent countries in the world. It found that most children in industrialized countries are in some form of child care and education. This report recommends that government invest in equitable access to quality early childhood services to help all children have a chance at a good start in life. The author argues that it is affordable for governments and has excellent social and economic benefits down the road.

English: <http://www.unicef.ca/portal/SmartDefault.aspx?at=2250>

French: <http://www.unicef.ca/portal/SmartDefault.aspx?at=2251>

8. **With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario**

Dr. Charles E. Pascal (2009) (available in French)

This report develops a comprehensive plan of action that covers full-day learning for 4-5 year olds as well as Ontario's Best Start goals to support children from 0-12 years old and their families. Pascal recommends four key components of early learning:

- full day learning for 4-5 year olds,
- before-and-after-school and summer programs for school-aged children,
- quality programs for younger children, and
- enhanced parental leave by 2020.

He also includes suggestions on how to move the recommendations into action through increased resources (funding), provincial leadership, early learning professionals' education and training, a common programming guide, and more accountability for achieving results.

English: http://www.ontario.ca/en/initiatives/early_learning/ONT06_018865

French: http://www.ontario.ca/fr/initiatives/early_learning/ONT06_018866.html

III. GENERAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

9. **The Children Left Behind**

Unicef (2010)

This report explores the material well-being, education, and health of children in 24 of the world's richest countries. It measures the gap in material well-being, educational achievement, and physical health between the average child and the most disadvantaged child in order to measure and compare differences in condition within and between countries.

<http://www.unicef-irc.org/files/documents/d-3794-Rich-countries-letting-po.pdf>

10. **Reduced poverty = Better Health for All: 2010 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada**

Campaign 2000 and Partners (2010) (available in French)

This report card looks at the country's most recent child poverty rate compared to the rates from 1989 when the Parliament unanimously agreed to "seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000". Although the child poverty rate is slightly lower now than it was in 1989 (9.1% compared to 11.9%), there

are still over 600,000 children and their families living in poverty. The author recommends that federal leadership is necessary to help Canadian families recover from the most recent recession and to prevent increased levels of child poverty.

English: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/reportcards.html>

French: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/reportcards.html>

11. Reaching for the Top: A Report by the Advisor on Healthy Children & Youth

Health Canada (2009) (available in French)

This report was written because the health and wellness of children and youth in Canada is relatively poor when compared to other wealthy countries. A number of recommendations to improve the well-being of children are provided: developing a National Injury Prevention Strategy, reducing childhood obesity, improving mental health services for Canadian children and youth, undertaking a longitudinal cohort study to provide data on the health of Canadian children and youth to help understand environmental factors impacting children's health, and establishing a National Office of Child and Youth Health.

English: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/child-enfant/advisor-conseillere/index-eng.php>

French: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/child-enfant/advisor-conseillere/index-fra.php>

12. Toronto Report Card on Children

Toronto Children's Services and the Report Card Working Group (2003)

This report card looks at the condition of Toronto's children (between 2002-2003) in order to: help measure progress in improving the situation of children, identify gaps in service, build public awareness, serve as a planning tool for service providers, and act as a catalyst for political and community action. The author explores economic security (income security, parental supports, stable affordable housing), health, safety (free of violence, abuse, neglect), access to development opportunities (childhood learning and care, inclusive services for children, recreation), and positive parenting (resource centres, parent education, access to specialized services, community supports).

<http://www.toronto.ca/children/report/repcard5/repcard5.htm>

IV. INTERNATIONAL REPORT CARDS RELATED TO CHILD HEALTH

13. A Picture of Australia's Children

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2009)

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has put together this statistical report that examines the health, development, and well-being of children between the ages of 0 and 14 in Australia. It covers a number of topics including:

- health status (e.g., mortality, chronic conditions, disability, mental health)

- risk and protective factors (e.g., physical activity, weight, substance use, literacy and numeracy, attendance at early childhood education programs)
- families and communities (e.g., family functioning, family economic situation, parental health status, neighbourhood safety)
- safety and security (e.g., injuries, child abuse and neglect, homelessness, crime)
- system performance (e.g., immunization, leukemia survival)

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/childyouth/childyouthhealth/childhealth/index.cfm>

14. The Best Start in Life: Achieving Effective Action on Child Health and Wellbeing

Public Health Advisory Committee, New Zealand Ministry of Health (2010)

The lack of progress with regard to improving health outcomes for children under the age of 6 in New Zealand is examined in this report. The author recommends that New Zealand: invest in leadership to champion child health and well-being, develop an effective intersectoral government approach for children, build an integrated approach to service delivery for children, and monitor child health and well-being.

<http://www.phac.health.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexcm/phac-the-best-start-in-life-2010>

15. Children's Health, Our Future: A Review of Progress against the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services

Department of Health, United Kingdom (2004)

This report looks at the progress made since the National Service Framework for Children, Young People, and Maternity Services was published in 2004 (a 10 year program that set standards in all organizations providing services to these populations and their delivery partners). The author demonstrates that policy makers and healthcare providers are making significant changes to the way health services are planned and delivered.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_080379

16. Child Health USA

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2010)

This is the most current data available that offers a profile of children's health in the United States. It includes population characteristics (i.e., poverty, education, childcare), health status (i.e., vital statistics and health behaviour), health services financing and utilization, state data, and city data.

<http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/mchirc/chusa/index.htm>

V. OTHER REPORT CARDS OF INTEREST

17. Welfare Incomes 2009

National Council on Welfare (2010) (available in French)

The state of welfare in Canada in 2009 is examined in this report. The findings indicate that welfare can be harder to get today than it was 20 years ago (i.e., people have to be living with lower incomes in order to qualify). Although all welfare incomes increased in 2009 compared to the previous year, welfare incomes were still far below most socially accepted measures of sufficiency.

English: <http://www.cnb.gc.ca/l.3bd.2t.1ils@-eng.jsp?lid=331>

French: <http://www.cnb.gc.ca/l.3bd.2t.1ils@-eng.jsp?lid=331&lang=fr>

18. Hunger Count 2010: A Comprehensive Report on Food Bank use in Canada and Recommendations for Change

Food Banks Canada (2010)

The use of food banks in Canada is explored in Hunger Count 2010. It shows that the need for food banks increased this year across a wide range of users, including: adults, children, and youth; families with children and single people; women and men; Aboriginal people; seniors; and people with disabilities. One of the largest group of food bank users was children (38%) and families with children comprised over half of the households seeking food assistance.

http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/documents/HungerCount2010_web.pdf

19. National Report Card 2010: Inclusion of Canadians with Intellectual Disabilities

Canadian Association for Community Living (2010)

This report card examines how Canada is doing in the areas of inclusive education, disability supports, and family supports. These three areas are the top priorities for improving the status of Canadians with intellectual disabilities and their families. In order to build toward this future, the report sets the following objectives: achieve equality rights and recognition, close institutions and assure a home in the community, secure child rights and needed supports, ensure families have needed supports, achieve inclusive education, secure the right and access to disability supports, establish safe and inclusive communities, eradicate poverty for people with intellectual disabilities and their families, achieve employment equality, and make a global impact on inclusion.

<http://www.communitylivingontario.ca/issues/cacl-report-card>

20. Report Card on Water Safety and Drowning Prevention

The Lifesaving Society (2009)

This report examines Ontarians' knowledge of water safety and drowning prevention. Ontarians scored good grades by enrolling their children in formal swimming lessons, believing that a lifejacket would keep a child under the age of 5 safe in water, and thinking that the best method for restricting access to a backyard pool is a four-sided

fence. They were less aware that: adults should be within 2 feet of a child under 5 when near water; water wings, arm floaties, and inflatable rings are not an effective flotation device for young children; and drowning is often silent.

Media Release: <http://www.lifesavingsociety.com/PDF/ReportCard.pdf>

Lifesaving Society Website: <http://www.lifesavingsociety.com/default.asp?PageId=1>

21. The POWER Study

St-Michael's, Keenan Research Centre, Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, Echo: Improving Women's Health in Ontario (2010)

The POWER Study (Project for an Ontario Women's Health Evidence-Based Report) examines the health differences between men and women and between various groups of women. Differences reported are associated with age, income, education, ethnicity, language, and where the person lives in the province. The different topics covered include: the burden of illness, cancer, depression, cardiovascular disease, access to health care services, musculoskeletal disorders, diabetes, HIV infection, reproductive and gynecological health, social determinants of health, and special populations (i.e., low income, immigrant and older women).

<http://www.powerstudy.ca/>

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- [Click4HP](#) - An open, facilitated public listserv, is an international dialogue on health promotion. Participants exchange views on issues and ideas, provide leads to resources, and ask questions about health promotion. <https://listserv.yorku.ca/archives/click4hp.html>
- [Health Nexus Today](#) - Health Nexus Today is our Blog on health promotion. According to Google, "Blog is short for weblog - a journal or newsletter that is frequently updated and intended for the general public." Find the latest on health promotion including breaking news, highlights, studies, and issues in health promotion and the determinants of health in Canada and internationally. <http://www.blogs.healthnexusante.ca/>

In French:

- [French distribution list](#) - The free distribution list offers information in French on maternal, newborn, and child health promotion topics. http://www.meilleurdepart.org/index_fr.html
- [Le Bloc-Notes](#) - The biweekly French language bulletin provides information on health promotion. <http://leblocnotes.ca/>