



**Poverty Reduction Strategy for the  
City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton**

**Children and Youth Action Plan:  
Background and Resources  
March 2016**



*County of Haliburton*

## **Introduction**

The foundation for lifelong health, learning and behaviour is set in early childhood. A family's income has a significant influence on these factors. Families need enough income to provide the best circumstances for their child including an adequate and nutritious diet, safe and secure housing and opportunities for their child to socialize and participate in recreational activities.

The effects of living in poverty are felt immediately and can have long lasting effects that can compromise a child from reaching his or her full potential when families do not have enough money to meet their child's basic needs. Children living in poverty, especially persistent poverty, are more likely to experience health, emotional, behavioural and mental health problems both as children and later as adults. Research also shows that "poverty has consistently been found to be a powerful determinant of delayed cognitive development and poor school performance."<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, children raised in poverty are more likely to have lower school achievement which in turn affects their future employment and income opportunities. Prolonged poverty also impacts a child's perception and self-esteem, relationships and risk behaviours.

Based on the latest available after-tax low income measures through 2013 Taxfiler (T1FF) data, more than 18% of children 17 and under in the City of Kawartha Lakes live in low income households. This percentage increases to over 23% for those living in Haliburton County.<sup>2</sup>

We can make a difference and improve outcomes for children in our community by supporting and investing in the healthy development of children, youth and their families.

Along with strategies known to optimize children's likelihood of reaching their optimal growth, development and overall well-being, strategies that address the root causes of child and family poverty, such as the lack of safe, affordable and appropriate housing for families, attaining an optimal level of education to secure employment that pays a living wage, and addressing transportation barriers are fundamental to reducing child poverty.

Research shows that implementing strategies and interventions to reduce child and family poverty increases the likelihood of children being successful in school and growing up to become, healthy, productive adults who participate and contribute to society. "Investing in children also lays a strong foundation for community and economic development. Early investment is the wisest investment, with the impact seen in adulthood as demonstrated by the greatest returns in higher levels of education

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<sup>1</sup> Larson, C. Paediatrics & Child Health. (2007). *Poverty during pregnancy: Its effects on child health outcomes*. Retrieved from: [National Center for Biotechnology Information Website](#)

<sup>2</sup> Income Statistics Division, Statistics Canada. (2015). Annual income estimates for census families and individuals (T1 family file). Retrieved through the Community Data Program: [Community Data Program website](#)

and employment, lower levels of crime and better health and well-being for the community.”<sup>3</sup>

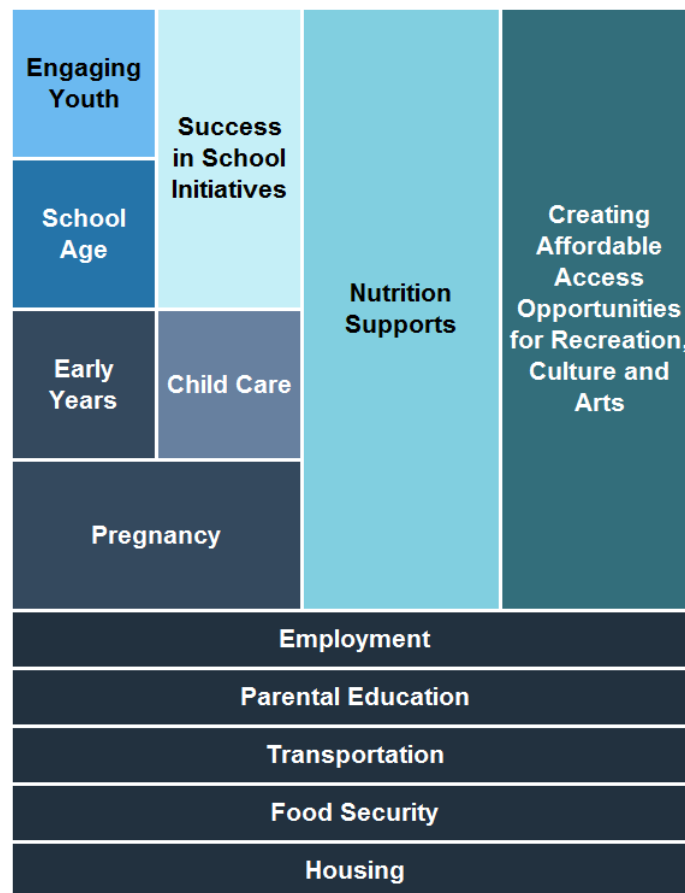
The Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy reports that investing in children makes economic, moral and social sense. The Province’s initial report, released in 2008 called ‘Breaking the Cycle’, focused on poverty reduction strategies for children and their families. In the report, they identified that a healthy, educated and employable workforce is fundamental to the economy. The recently released second report titled ‘Realizing Our Potential’ in 2014 continues to focus on poverty reduction strategies for children and youth while also highlighting other areas of concern: employment and housing.

Given the growing amount of research in poverty reduction strategies and the evidence supporting recommendations such as the ones from these reports, the Children and Youth component of the Poverty Reduction Strategy for the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County is developing recommendations similar to those in the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy reports, in addition to developing poverty reduction strategies tailored to the needs in our local community to address child, youth and family poverty.

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<sup>3</sup> Morcos, A. Knox City Council. (2012). *Municipal early years plan 2011-2015, ‘off to a flying start’*. Retrieved from: [Knox City Council Municipal Early Years Plan](#)

Figure 1 - The framework of support for children and youth.



## **Pregnancy**

The effects of poverty on a child's health and development can start during pregnancy. Pregnant women living in poverty are more likely to have inadequate nutrition, experience higher levels of stress and depression, lack social support systems and have inadequate prenatal care.<sup>4</sup> These factors have a significant impact on the health of both the mother and her baby.

Pregnant women living in poverty are more likely to have pregnancy related complications and poor birth outcomes including premature births, low birth weight and higher neonatal and infant mortality rates.<sup>5</sup> They are less likely to seek adequate prenatal care and education for a multitude of reasons including personal and systemic factors such as living in a rural area and not having transportation to get to their medical appointments.<sup>6</sup>

Pregnant women living in poverty are less likely to seek dental care during their pregnancy, yet it is imperative, as pregnancy affects the oral health of the mother and

<sup>4</sup> Best Start Resource Centre. (n.d.). *Reducing the Impact: working with pregnant women who live in difficult life situations*. Retrieved from: [Reducing the Impact working with Pregnant women who live in difficult life situations](http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti_poverty/pdf/prog_mgr_guide.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Best Start Resource Centre. (2003). *The impact of poverty on pregnant women: A guide for program managers*. Retrieved from: [http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti\\_poverty/pdf/prog\\_mgr\\_guide.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/anti_poverty/pdf/prog_mgr_guide.pdf)

her unborn child. Poor oral health care during pregnancy is associated with complications such as pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, preterm birth, and low birth weight.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore important, that in addition to taking good care of their teeth they should see a dental health care provider for preventative care and to identify oral health problems early. Yet, there are many reasons why low income pregnant women do not seek oral health care during pregnancy such as financial reasons which include the inability to pay for care if they have no dental insurance coverage and lack access to care. Limited transportation services are a barrier to accessing health care services. As a result, it is essential to address transportation issues so that pregnant women can access health care services in our community.

Fortunately, the Human Services Department at the City of Kawartha Lakes currently provides for pregnant women receiving Ontario Works to be seen by a dentist to have her teeth cleaned during pregnancy (and up to three months post-partum) to a maximum of \$350.00. If during the exam and cleaning, it is noted that emergency work is needed (i.e. fillings or extractions), it is covered under emergency dental coverage and is in addition to the cleaning work. For those on Ontario Disability Support Program their dental card covers the cleanings. This dental program for pregnant women is actively marketed and encouraged by the Human Services Department of the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton as well as by other health and social service providers in the community.

## **Success in School – The Early Years (0-5)**

The early years, the time of conception to age 5, are the most critical to skill development and later learning/success in life. “The harmful effects of poverty on children are more marked in the preschool period than in later developmental stages. Second, the number of years that a family lives in poverty is significantly associated with negative outcomes in children.”<sup>8</sup>

It is during these years that the brain develops the most rapidly. Although everyone is born with a specific set of genes that are inherited from one’s parents, how those genes are expressed and how the connections in the brain are wired are strongly influenced by one’s experiences in early life.<sup>9</sup>

Healthy development requires adequate nutrition and housing, access to healthcare and social services and to be raised in a safe, secure, loving, nurturing and stimulating environment. “Children who are well supported and nurtured, physically emotionally, socially and intellectually will develop a multitude of neural connections that will service

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<sup>7</sup> Government of Canada. (2014). *Oral health and pregnancy*. Retrieved from: <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/pregnancy-grossesse/general-information-renseignements-generaux/oral-buccodentaire-eng.php>

<sup>8</sup> Offord, D., Lipman, E. Pulsus, Paediatrics & Child Health (1999). *Lessening the impact of poverty on children*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2830780/> Nov-Dec; 4(8): 526–529.

<sup>9</sup> Katz, I., Corlyon, J., La Placa, V., & Hunter, S. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2007). *The relationship between parenting and poverty*. Retrieved from: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/parenting-poverty.pdf> pp. 5.

them well throughout their life course.”<sup>10</sup> They will develop the social, emotional, cognitive, physical and literacy skills that are required to be ready to learn and successful in school and eventually in the job market.

Although parents have the primary responsibility for nurturing their child, they cannot do it alone. It is a shared responsibility in which individuals, families, communities and the various levels of government play an active role in supporting the well-being of children.

Investment in programs and services that focus on children’s development and early childhood nutrition are fundamental to optimal early childhood development. Research shows that “intervention during the early years of a child’s life through public investment programs has an estimated return of 6 to 1.”<sup>11</sup> Investing in community services and programs such as prenatal and parenting classes, high quality child care, pre-school education and ensuring access to enriching community resources such as libraries, community and recreational centres and early learning opportunities support healthy child development and are critical to optimal social and economic outcomes.

Canadian Council on learning research indicates that the experiences during the first five years of a child’s life have a major bearing on his or her future success in school, in the workplace, and many other aspects of a healthy, fulfilling life.

Source: With Our Best Future in Mind. Implementing the Early Years in Ontario. Charles Pascal (2009)

Early childhood programs play an important role in supporting the development of all children and for mitigating the negative effects on children living in poverty. High quality licensed child care may be found in a child care centre or school-based setting or in a private home. Programs are licensed by the Ministry of Education and must meet the requirements of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. Licensed child care agencies offer programs that make children feel safe, supported and cared for. Quality, licensed programs offer stimulating environments that help children ages 0-12 years develop and grow. Licensed centre-based care provides opportunities to develop stronger cognitive and language skills, increased pre-academic skills involving letters and numbers, and to develop their socialization skills (leading to fewer behaviour problems). Attending high quality child care can assist with school readiness (e.g. reading, writing, number skills) and with the transition to the education system. Licensed child care providers have staff members that are trained in early childhood education, who facilitate play-based activities so every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

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<sup>10</sup> Best Start Resource Centre. (n.d.). The on track guide. Retrieved from:

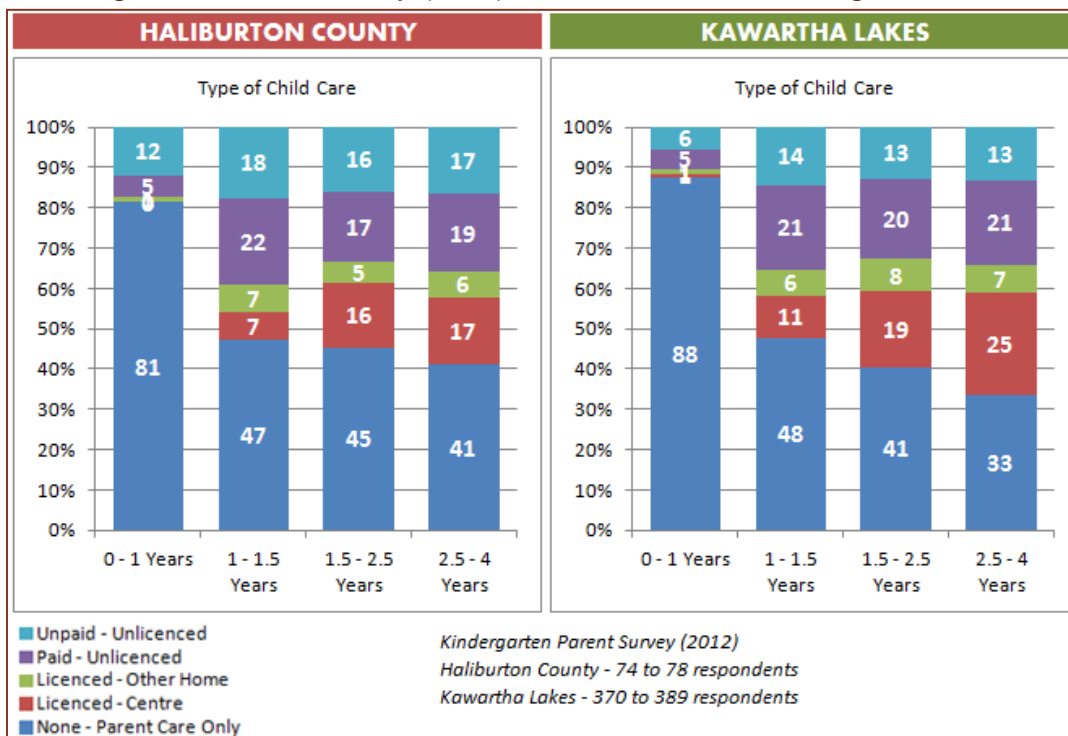
[http://www.beststart.org/OnTrack\\_English/pdf/OnTrack\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/OnTrack_English/pdf/OnTrack_PDF.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Public Health Ontario. (2014). *The first five years: A foundation for life*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/OHP\\_infog\\_FirstFiveYears\\_2014.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/OHP_infog_FirstFiveYears_2014.pdf)

According to the 2012 provincial Kindergarten Parenting Survey (KPS), prior to entering kindergarten the majority of children in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County who are not being cared for by his or her parent, are being cared for in unlicensed settings (see Figure 2 below).

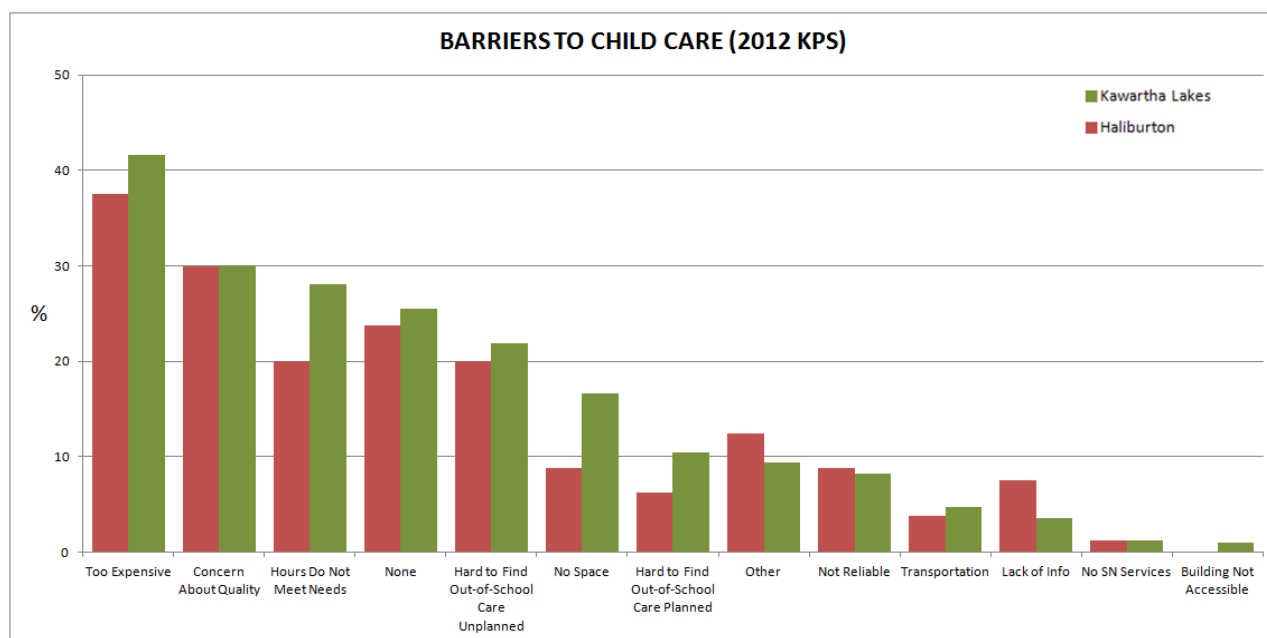
Figure 2: Type of child care, Haliburton County and Kawartha Lakes, Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) results for senior kindergarten students, 2012



Another interesting result from the 2012 KPS was that the greatest barrier for families to enrol their children in licensed child care in both Haliburton County and Kawartha Lakes was cost. As shown in the graph below, approximately 40% of parents of senior kindergarten children in 2012 indicated cost was the greatest barrier to having their child attend a licensed child care centre.

Figure 3: Barriers to child care, Haliburton County and Kawartha Lakes, Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) results for senior kindergarten students, 2012





Kindergarten Parent Survey (2012), City of Kawartha Lakes - 392 respondents, Haliburton County - 80 Respondents

For families that qualify for childcare fee subsidy, the children must attend a **licensed** childcare (center or home). For children 0-18 months of age, there are no licensed childcare spaces in Haliburton County and limited spaces in the City of Kawartha Lakes, 42 in total. Although low income families may qualify for childcare fee subsidy, the children must be placed in a licensed child care centre or licensed home day care. In both the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton, the demand is outgrowing supply of licensed childcare spaces, especially for children 0 to 18 months of age.

Another barrier identified in the KPS to placing a child in licensed child care included lack of available licensed childcare spaces. In Ontario in 2012 there was access to regulated centre-based and home child care spaces for only 15.4% of children 0 -12 years of age.<sup>12</sup> Additional concerns relate to lack of transportation and the hours of operation. There is minimal licensed childcare available on weekends, evenings, overnight or for parents who work on-call shifts; yet a significant proportion of the population, especially low income workers and the precariously employed, work outside of the traditional hours of Monday to Friday from 9 - 5. In addition, this is problematic for parents that need to return to school.

Studies have shown the positive impact of high quality childcare on not just a child's academic development, but in their development as a whole. The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study has evaluated a program carried out in the mid 1960's for children living in poverty in Ypsilanti, Michigan. One hundred twenty-three low-income children who were at high risk of school failure were part of the program. Randomly, 58 received

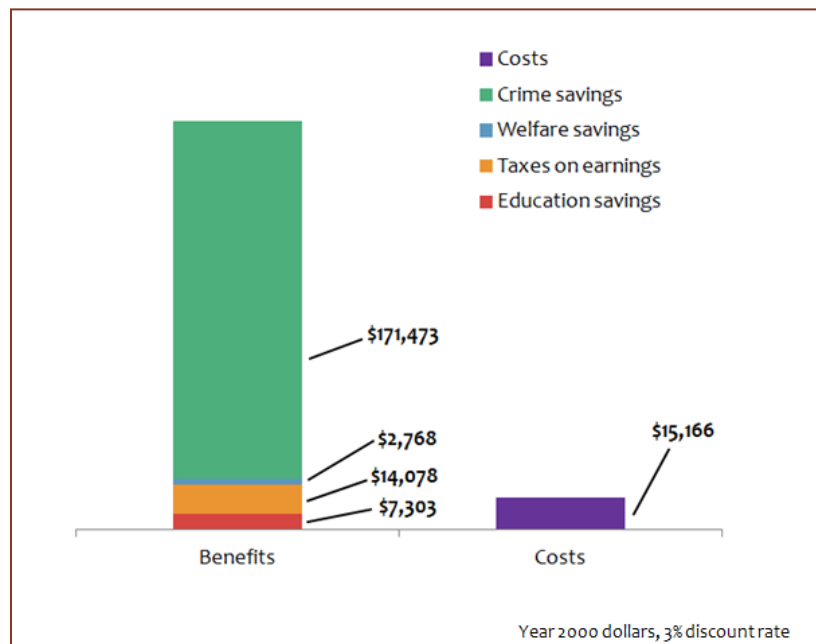
<sup>12</sup> Beach, J., Forer, B., Friendly, M., & Halfon, S. Childcare Resource and Research Unit. (2012). *Early childhood education and care in Canada 2012*. Retrieved from: [http://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU\\_ECEC\\_2012\\_revised\\_dec2013.pdf](http://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/CRRU_ECEC_2012_revised_dec2013.pdf)



a high quality preschool program at the ages of 3 and 4, while the remaining 65 were not given access to the programming offered to the others. These children were monitored as they progressed through school and into adulthood.<sup>13</sup>

Those that participated in the program, were more likely to graduate from high school and earn more money at age 40, along with greater achievement in a number of other measured variables.<sup>14</sup> Although impressive, perhaps the most compelling result from this study was not the academic success of the participants but the outcomes for the participants later in life. The benefits not only extend to the individuals that participated in the program, but to society as a whole (see Figure 4 below). The return on investment was staggering. For every \$ 1.00 invested, there has been a return of \$12.90.

Figure 4: High/Scope Perry Preschool Program public costs and benefits, 2005<sup>15</sup>



Investments made to high quality child care in Haliburton County and the City of Kawartha Lakes will have a positive impact on children in our community, especially for children from disadvantaged economic households. There is a secondary consideration to the investment in high quality child care: the economic impact it has on families.

<sup>13</sup> Schweinhart, L., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W., Belfield, C., & Nores, M. High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005). The High/Scope Perry preschool study through age 40. Retrieved from: [http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/specialsummary\\_rev2011\\_02\\_2.pdf](http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf), pp. 1

<sup>14</sup> Schweinhart, L., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W., Belfield, C., & Nores, M. High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005). The High/Scope Perry preschool study through age 40. Retrieved from: [http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/specialsummary\\_rev2011\\_02\\_2.pdf](http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf), pp. 2

<sup>15</sup> Schweinhart, L., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W., Belfield, C., & Nores, M. High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005). The High/Scope Perry preschool study through age 40. Retrieved from: [http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/specialsummary\\_rev2011\\_02\\_2.pdf](http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/specialsummary_rev2011_02_2.pdf), pp. 4

As mentioned, the greatest barrier in Haliburton County and the City of Kawartha Lakes for families to access child care is cost. A more affordable child care system has the potential for higher participation, allowing parents that are currently at home with their children the option to re-enter the workforce, or return to school. In a 2012 study, it was estimated that the low-fee child care program in Quebec had increased the total number of women in the Quebec workforce by 3.79%.<sup>16</sup> Correspondingly, this labour force impact had a positive impact on Quebec's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with an estimated increase of \$ 5.1 billion.<sup>17</sup> These numbers are significant and show that providing an affordable child care option for families has the potential to provide enhanced learning environments for children from economically disadvantaged families, create opportunities for parents to join the workforce, improve the economic prosperity of the region and reduce instances of persistent poverty.

Sweden's national framework for universal childcare has been flagged as a success. Guaranteed childcare spots and capped parental fees have contributed to the dramatic increase in enrollment (from 71,000 in 1970 to 720, 000 in 1998) and also to female employment rates. With high maternal work rates, child poverty hovers at about 4%. In comparison, Canada's child poverty rate was 19.1%<sup>18</sup> as of 2012, an increase from 15.8% in 1989.

An indicator of children's readiness to learn in school is the Early Development Instrument (EDI) which is a questionnaire that measures children's ability to meet age appropriate expectations. It is completed by senior kindergarten teachers in Ontario and measures physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge. The purpose of this instrument is to inform communities about the development of young children in their community so that the necessary supports can be put in place to optimize healthy child development. Figures 5 and 6 below show vulnerability in school readiness in Ontario (by gender and neighbourhood) and in the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton (by family income).

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<sup>16</sup> Fortin, P., Godbout, L., & St. Cerny, S. Universite de Sherbrooke. (2012). *Impact of Quebec's universal low fee childcare program on female labour force participation, domestic income, and government budgets*. Retrieved from: [http://www.usherbrooke.ca/chaire-fiscalite/fileadmin/sites/chaire-fiscalite/documents/Cahiers-de-recherche/Etude\\_femmes\\_ANGLAIS.pdf](http://www.usherbrooke.ca/chaire-fiscalite/fileadmin/sites/chaire-fiscalite/documents/Cahiers-de-recherche/Etude_femmes_ANGLAIS.pdf), pp. 14

<sup>17</sup> Fortin, P., Godbout, L., & St. Cerny, S. Universite de Sherbrooke. (2012). *Impact of Quebec's universal low fee childcare program on female labour force participation, domestic income, and government budgets*. Retrieved from: [http://www.usherbrooke.ca/chaire-fiscalite/fileadmin/sites/chaire-fiscalite/documents/Cahiers-de-recherche/Etude\\_femmes\\_ANGLAIS.pdf](http://www.usherbrooke.ca/chaire-fiscalite/fileadmin/sites/chaire-fiscalite/documents/Cahiers-de-recherche/Etude_femmes_ANGLAIS.pdf), pp. 17

<sup>18</sup> Campaign 2000. (2014). *Child poverty, 25 years later: we can fix this*. Retrieved from: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/anniversaryreport/CanadaRC2014EN.pdf>, pp. 3

Figure 5: Ontario Vulnerability in School Readiness<sup>19</sup>

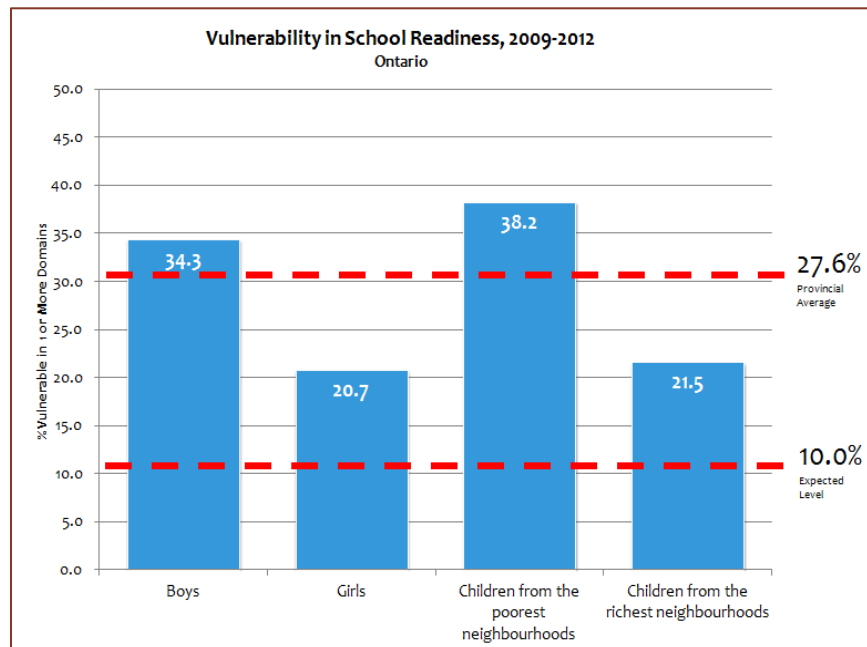
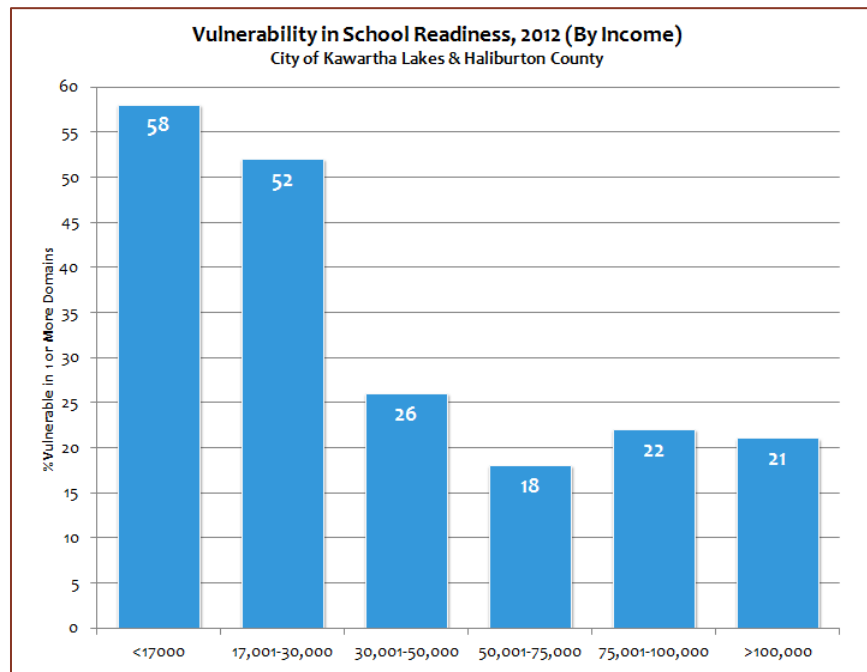


Figure 6: Percentage vulnerable on the EDI vs. reported income on the KPS (2012)



The children of families from low economic status households enter school already facing a gap in development when compared with their more affluent peers. The 2012

<sup>19</sup> Adapted from: Public Health Ontario. (2014). *The first five years: A foundation for life*. Retrieved from: [https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/OHP\\_infog\\_FirstFiveYears\\_2014.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/OHP_infog_FirstFiveYears_2014.pdf)

EDI / KPS results from our communities showed that kindergarten children from economically disadvantaged households are more likely to be vulnerable on the EDI than their peers. The potential for this gap to grow wider continues to exist as children move through the elementary school system.

Efforts at the youngest ages to keep children and their families engaged in their development leading up to school can make a difference. There are many programs in the community that support early childhood development. For example, the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit offers the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program which provides education and support for families and their children and links them to resources in the community.

The Ontario Early Years Centres (OEYC) offers programs across the community that provide enriching environments for young children to play and to learn as well as provide educational opportunities for parents to learn and develop their parenting skills. The OEYCs offer programming that focuses on school readiness and offers supports for parents and caregivers as they seek to become the best parents and caregivers they can be. Other programs and services offered by City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County, Five Counties Children's Centre, Point in Time, SIRCH, Community Living, the Boys and Girls Club of Kawartha Lakes, KINARK, Haliburton- Kawartha Children's Aid Society, Big Brothers and Sisters, pregnancy centres, other community agencies, faith groups, organized sport and recreational clubs for children are just a few of the numerous resources available our community that optimize children's development and support parents.

Access to books and being read to on a daily basis are key to developing a child's vocabulary and communication skills; however, for families in economically disadvantaged situations and those with low literacy skills, providing those opportunities for their children can be more challenging as they face more barriers such as not having transportation to go to the library or the OEYC, the lack of resources to afford to buy books or the inability to read to their children.<sup>20,21</sup>

Children from low income families are also more likely to have a lower knowledge of numbers and symbols which is "strongly linked to how well they do in school."<sup>22</sup> Research shows that children and youth from economically disadvantaged families are less likely to attain education beyond high school,<sup>23</sup> and are also less likely to co-operate with others when playing and therefore need opportunities to socialize and participate in free play with other children, which is critical for their development.

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<sup>20</sup> Hart, B., & Risley, T. American Educator. (2003). *The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>, pp. 7

<sup>21</sup> Thomas, E. Statistics Canada Special Surveys Division. (2006). *Readiness to learn at school among five-year-old children in Canada*. Retrieved from: <http://everykid.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/readiness-to-learn-2006.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Campaign 2000. (2014). *Child poverty, 25 years later: we can fix this*. Retrieved from: <http://www.campaign2000.ca/anniversaryreport/CanadaRC2014EN.pdf>, pp. 9

For all children, but especially for those growing up in poverty, it is important that the framework to provide support is available. The Best Start Resource Centre is a health promotion organization that “supports service providers who work in preconception health, prenatal health and early child development.”<sup>24</sup> Within section 4 of the Best Start Resource Centre’s On Track guide, it was noted that the following goals should be supported to ensure that children are ready for school:

- All children have access to high quality early learning and care environments with highly qualified professionals
- All families have access to a wide range of social supports within their community, such as dental and medical care, child and family programs, and more. The need is especially acute for families who live in poverty or families who are unfamiliar with resources that may be available to them
- Professionals working with children from zero to six continue to seek out free or subsidized programs, resources or services to support children and families in need
- Schools are part of the community hub that supports healthy child development and each child’s transition to school
- Schools are ready for all children and continue to support healthy child development of the whole child<sup>25</sup>

As children transition to school age, programs that assist children from a low income household should continue to be supported. For example, the School’s Cool program has been shown to be effective at increasing the preparedness of children to be successful at transitioning into Kindergarten.<sup>26</sup> School’s Cool is a 72 hour program for children that are 3 to 5 years old prior to entering Kindergarten. It emphasizes a play-based methodology that focuses on math, language, psychological, self-help and social skills.<sup>27</sup> For children that do not have the opportunity to participate in a licensed child care setting, programs such School’s Cool assist those children in making the transition to school easier to allow them to take full advantage of the learning opportunities in Kindergarten.

During the summer of 2015 the Ontario Early Years Centre partnered with the Trillium Lakelands District School Board to offer “Kindie Camp” at King Albert Public School in Lindsay.

The main purpose of Kindie Camp is to have fun, while getting comfortable with the school. We believe that in learning and exploring through play, children will develop a positive self-image, strong self-esteem and grow to their fullest potential. The program will be play-based with a focus on school routines and the

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<sup>24</sup> Best Start Resource Centre. (2015). *Who we are*. Retrieved from: <http://en.beststart.org/about-us/who-we-are>

<sup>25</sup> Best Start Resource Centre. (n.d.). The on track guide. Retrieved from: [http://www.beststart.org/OnTrack\\_English/pdf/OnTrack\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/OnTrack_English/pdf/OnTrack_PDF.pdf), section 4

<sup>26</sup> Chuang, S. University of Guelph. (2008). *School’s cool program: An effective transition program for young children in various socio cultural contexts* , pp. 4

<sup>27</sup> SchoolsCool.com. School’s Cool Inc. (2015). *Welcome to school’s cool!* Retrieved from: <http://www.schoolscool.com/>

development of age-appropriate social and emotional skills. The program will include literacy, sensory, gross and fine motor activities.<sup>28</sup>

## **School Age 6-18**

According to the Pascal Early Learning Report, full time kindergarten, starting at age 4, will show improved results in the Grade 3 and 6 provincial literacy and numeracy tests, higher graduation rates from secondary school, see more students attend post-secondary educational institutions, have better health, reduced youth violence and reduced family poverty.<sup>29</sup> According to the report:

More than one in four children enter Grade 1 significantly behind their peers. Too many never entirely close the gap and go on to be disruptive in school, fail to graduate, and are unable to fully participate in and contribute to society. Too many live lives of misery, harmful to themselves and others. While our schools work hard to help these children catch up, research has shown that it is more difficult and more costly to intervene later than it is to address a child's needs in the early years.

There is a strong link between the EDI results, which are completed in senior kindergarten, with the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) scores in Grade 3. Students with low EDI scores are less likely to meet the provincial standard on the Grade 3 EQAO reading, writing and mathematics assessment compared to those with high EDI scores who are ready to learn in kindergarten.”<sup>30</sup> It is therefore imperative that children, who are identified as vulnerable in one or more domains on the EDI, get the help they need and continue to be supported so they can be as successful in school. Similarly, it is imperative that as a community, vulnerable neighbourhoods are identified and supports and programs are put in place so that children are ready to learn by the time they are in senior kindergarten.

Specific research on the relationship between EDI and EQAO as well as the relationship between family income and the selection of applied versus academic streams in high school are shown in the following sections.

## **EDI to Grade 3 EQAO Results**

Barrie Region's Managing Information for Student Achievement Professional Network Centre (MISA PNC) evaluated the relationship between school readiness indicators and EQAO results in grade 3. The overall vulnerability rate identifies the percentage of children who are vulnerable in one or more domains (Figure 7).

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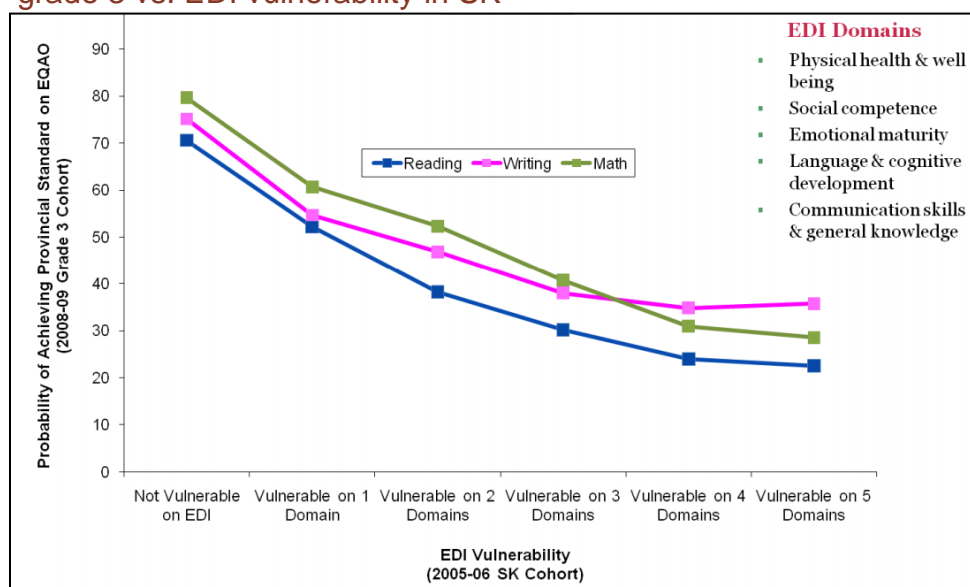
<sup>28</sup> Ontario Early Years Centre, Haliburton-Victoria-Brock Inc. (2015). *Getting Ready for School at King Albert Public School Parent Handbook*

<sup>29</sup> Pascal, C. Report to the Premier by the Special Advisor on Early Learning. (2009). *With our best future in mind: Implementing early learning in Ontario*. Retrieved from: [http://ywcacanada.ca/data/research\\_docs/00000001.pdf](http://ywcacanada.ca/data/research_docs/00000001.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Callum, R., Crawford, P. Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). (2013). *Starting early teaching learning and assessment: Linking early childhood development with academic outcomes - a detailed look*. Retrieved from: [http://www.eqao.com/en/research\\_data/Research\\_Reports/DMA-docs/starting-early.pdf](http://www.eqao.com/en/research_data/Research_Reports/DMA-docs/starting-early.pdf)



Figure 7: Probability of achieving provincial standard on EQAO in grade 3 vs. EDI vulnerability in SK <sup>31</sup>



According to the MISA PNC the greatest difference in probability occurs between students who are vulnerable on no domains and those vulnerable on one domain only, suggesting that vulnerability in even a single area is predictive of later achievement. <sup>32</sup>

From the 2012 EDI / KPS results for the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County showed that children growing up in households earning less than \$ 30,000 per year are more likely to be vulnerable in one domain or more on the EDI.

## EDI to Grade 3 EQAO Results

The next two figures represent children's EDI scores and their likelihood to meet the provincial standard in both grade 3 mathematics and reading. What is striking is that it doesn't matter which of the five EDI domains is being compared against the math and reading standard, it is shown to be a predictor of achievement.

- Vulnerable – Score in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile against the provincial baseline
- At Risk – Score between the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentile against the provincial baseline
- Ready – Score between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> percentile against the provincial baseline
- Very Ready – Score in the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile against the provincial baseline

<sup>31</sup> MISA Professional Network Centre. (n.d.). *Early learning inquiry: Executive summary report*. Retrieved from: <http://misabarrie.curriculum.org/storage/281/files2/RegionalInquirySummary.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> MISA Professional Network Centre. (n.d.). *Early learning inquiry: Executive summary report*. Retrieved from: <http://misabarrie.curriculum.org/storage/281/files2/RegionalInquirySummary.pdf>



Figure 8: Relationship Between EDI Results in the five domains (2005–2008) and Percentage of Students at or above the Provincial Standard in Grade 3 Mathematics (2008–2011). Source: February 2014 – Tracking the Longitudinal Performance of Students in Mathematics [http://www.eqao.com/en/research\\_data/Research\\_Reports/DMA-docs/bulletin-cohort-tracking-math-2012.pdf](http://www.eqao.com/en/research_data/Research_Reports/DMA-docs/bulletin-cohort-tracking-math-2012.pdf)

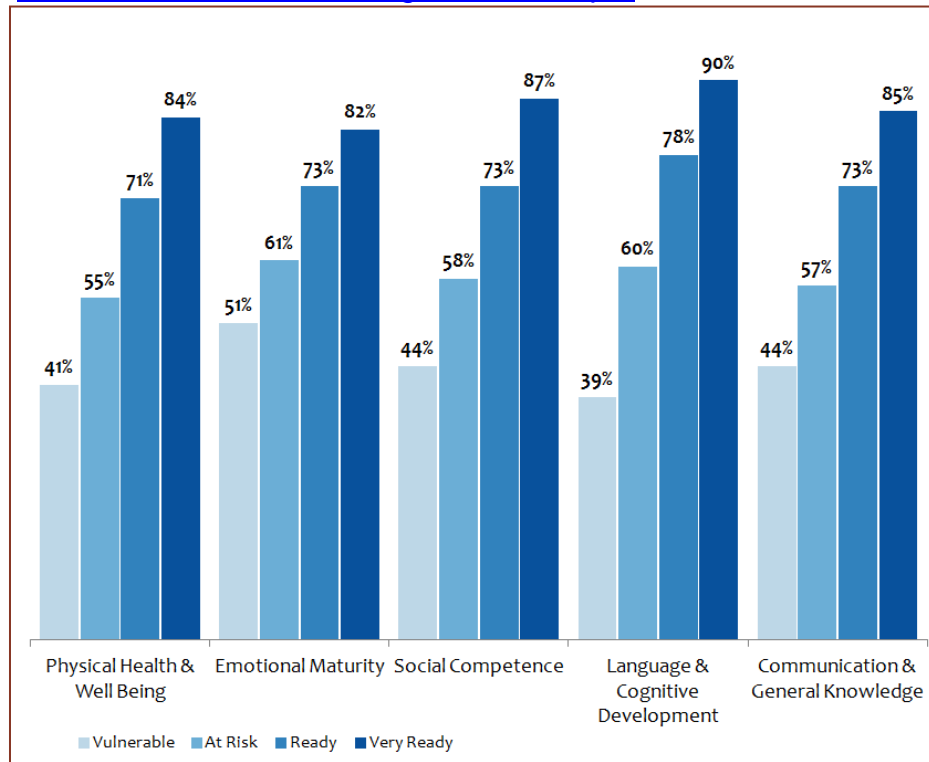
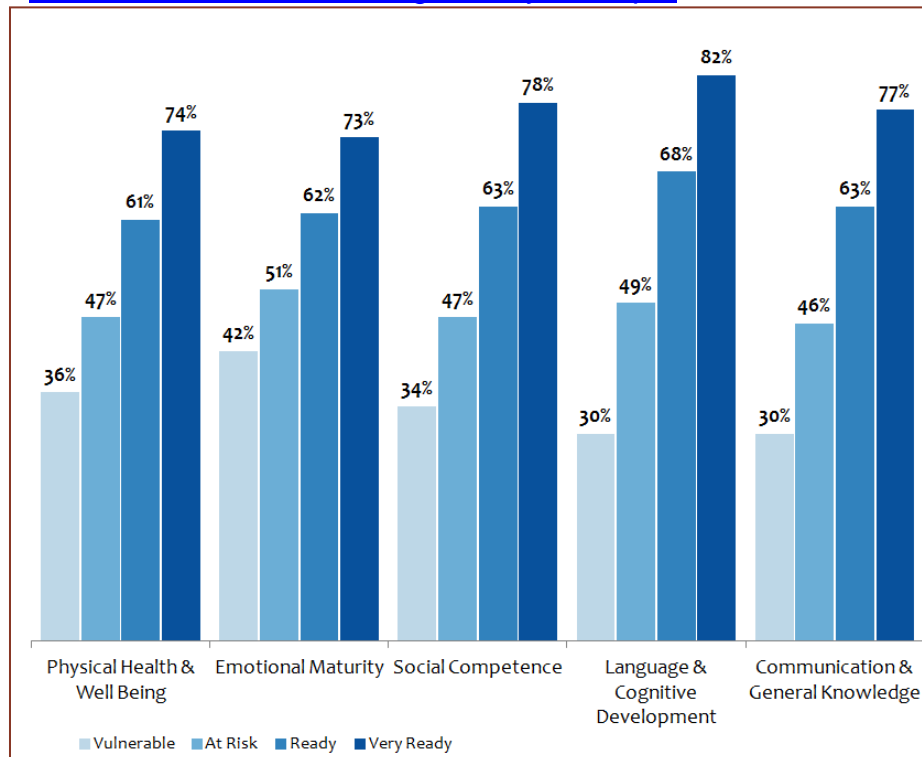


Figure 9: Relationship Between EDI Results in the five domains (2005–2008) and Percentage of Students at or above the Provincial Standard in Grade 3 Reading (2008–2011). Source: February 2014 – Tracking the Longitudinal Performance of Students in Literacy [http://www.eqao.com/en/research\\_data/Research\\_Reports/DMA-docs/bulletin-cohort-tracking-literacy-2012.pdf](http://www.eqao.com/en/research_data/Research_Reports/DMA-docs/bulletin-cohort-tracking-literacy-2012.pdf)



Research has also been done on the effects of summer school break on learning in elementary school. In one of the most extensive studies conducted on the effects of the summer learning gap, the Baltimore Beginning School Study, researchers from Johns Hopkins University tracked students from grade 1 in 1982 until they were 28 or 29 years old.<sup>33</sup> By examining the children's scores using the California Achievement Test in both the fall and the spring, the researchers found that regardless of socio-economic status children made similar academic gains during the school year. However, between the spring tests and the fall tests, children from the lowest socio-economic group over the four summers between grades 1 and 5 made no academic gains over the break period.

<sup>33</sup> Rosen, J. Hub, Johns Hopkins Magazine. (2014). *Study: Children's life trajectories largely determined by family they are born into*. Retrieved from <http://hub.jhu.edu/2014/06/02/karl-alexander-long-shadow-research>

Children from the highest socio-economic group in the study managed a near 50 point gain (from an initial test score in grade 1 of nearly 300).<sup>34</sup>

In many middle and upper income families, children are given opportunities throughout the summer break to read, go to the library, go to camp and participate in other activities that assist them in their development. These types of opportunities are often not available for children growing up in a low income family due to barriers related to cost and lack of transportation. Without the opportunity to participate in activities, children entering school in the fall are a little further behind than when they started summer break; this incremental gap continues to grow every summer during their childhood years. Supports that can be put in place to assist children's learning over the summer months are beneficial.

Currently, there are a few summer camp programs offered by agencies in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County which are subsidized. Although the programs are beneficial, barriers for families to participate exist, especially with respect to transportation.

It is important to remember that as children enter the middle years, they begin to extend their circle of influence to include friends, neighbours, teachers, coaches and other community members. These relationships are vital for children to grow socially and emotionally, and help them prepare to make the transition to high school and the teenage years. Summer camps are a great opportunity to help them grow and develop their social and emotional skills. Participating in sport and recreational activities and participating in programs such as after school programs provide children with, caring relationships with non-parental adults, a mix of programs to meet children's developmental needs, a place to belong and contribute to the community and encourage academic achievement.<sup>35</sup>

### **Applied vs. Academic Course Selection**

Once children have completed Grade 8 and move on to high school they must give consideration to their career aspirations and determine if they will take the applied or academic courses. Youth growing up in financially disadvantaged households continue to face odds that are stacked against them as they mature into young adults and make key decisions about their educational and career paths. Schools found in more economically disadvantaged areas are more likely to have a greater number of students taking applied courses versus academic courses.<sup>36</sup> In the People for Education 2015 annual report on publicly funded schools in Ontario it was noted that in the Toronto District School Board only 6% of students from affluent neighbourhoods were taking

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<sup>34</sup> Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., & Olson, L. American Sociological Review. (2007). *Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vanneman.umd.edu/socy789b/AlexanderEO07.pdf>, Vol. 72, pp. 170

<sup>35</sup> Trypuc, B., & Heller, A. Charity Intelligence Canada. (2008). *Breaking the cycle of failure: A funder's primer in understanding Canada's school drop-out epidemic*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci\\_EducationReport\\_08.pdf](https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci_EducationReport_08.pdf), pp. 10, 11.

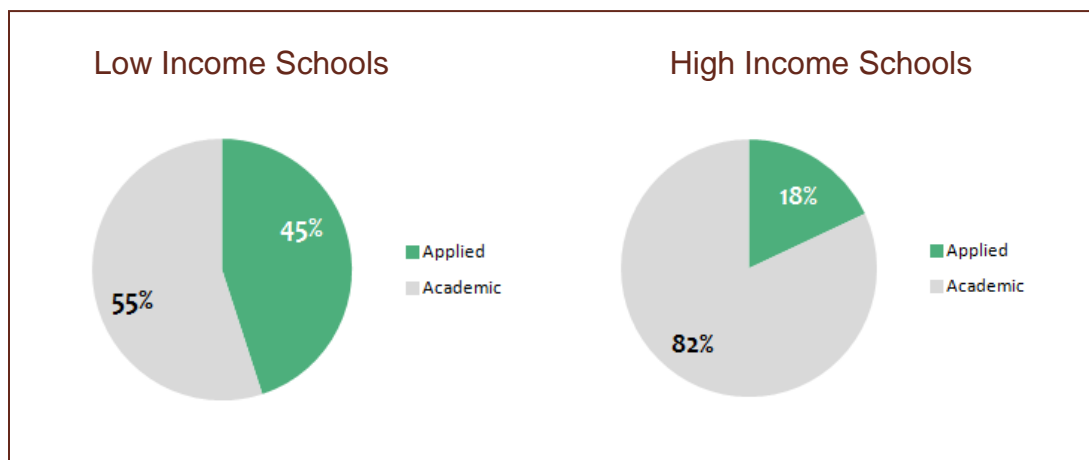
<sup>36</sup> People for Education. (2013). *The trouble with course choices in Ontario high schools. Should low income = high applied?* Retrieved from: <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/trouble-with-course-choices-in-high-school-2013.pdf>

applied courses a majority of the time, while 33% of students from the lowest income areas were.<sup>37</sup> The report also found that for students who failed to meet EQAO requirements in grades 3 and 6, but took academic mathematics, 47% met the grade 9 EQAO standard. Meanwhile, students who did not meet the EQAO requirements in grades 3 and 6, and took applied mathematics, only 30% met the grade 9 EQAO standard.

In addition, the same study found that students enrolled in applied courses in grade 9 were also found to be less likely to graduate within four or five years and less likely to pursue post-secondary education. The Toronto District School Board reported 29% more students enrolled in academic courses graduate in five years (88.1%) compared to students in applied courses (59.1%). And fewer than half of students in applied courses confirmed receiving an offer of admission to university or college, relative to those in academic programs.”<sup>38</sup>

Figure 10 below illustrates the percentage of students in applied vs. academic grade 9 mathematics based on the relative family incomes of the school population while Figure 11 illustrates the relationship between the percentage of applied students per school compared to the schools’ average family income.

Figure 9: Percent of students in applied and academic grade 9 math<sup>39</sup>

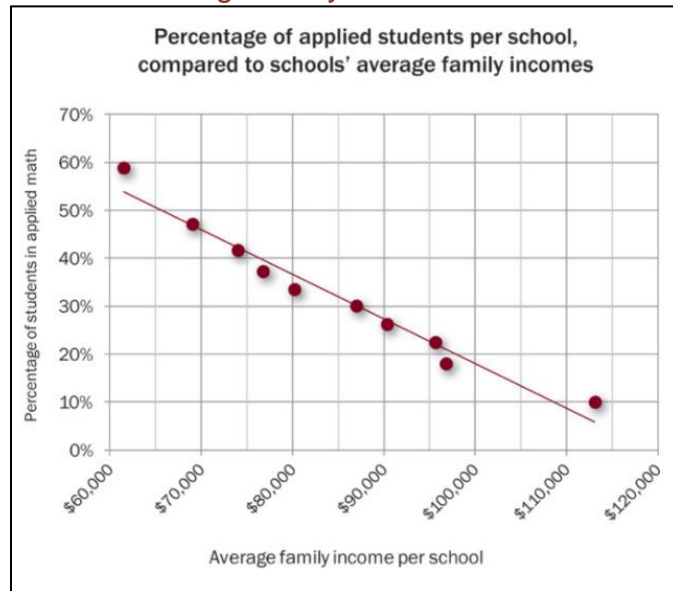


<sup>37</sup> People for Education. (2015). Ontario’s schools: *The gap between policy and reality*. Retrieved from: <https://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/P4E-Annual-Report-2015.pdf>, pp. 27-28.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> People for Education. (2013). *The trouble with course choices in Ontario high schools. Should low income = high applied?* Retrieved from: <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/trouble-with-course-choices-in-high-school-2013.pdf>

Figure 10: Percentage of applied students per school, compared to schools' average family incomes<sup>40</sup>



### **Grade 3 to Grade 6 to Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics Results**

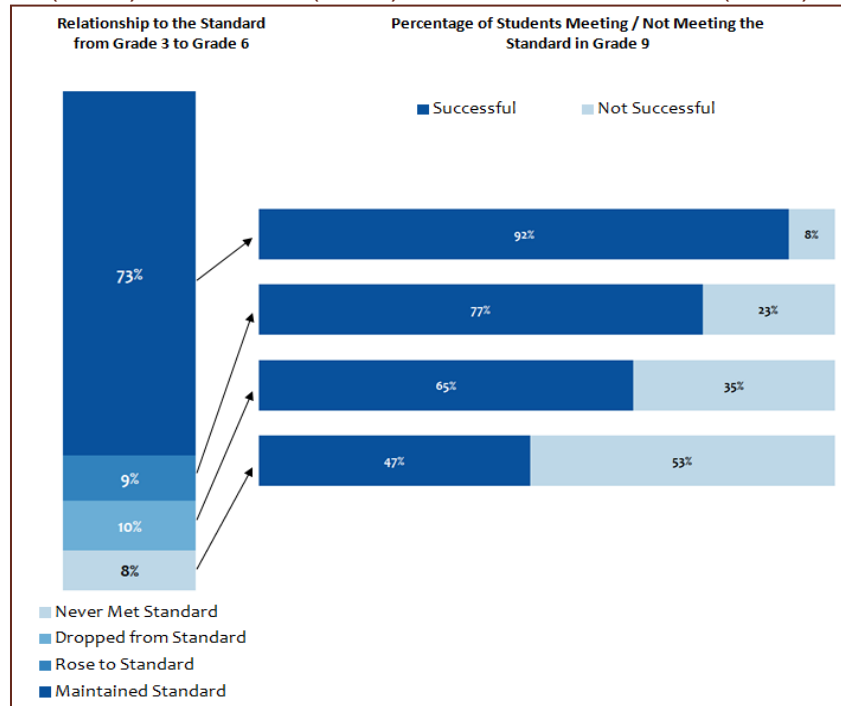
These next two graphs show children's outcomes in math related to the provincial standard in grade 9. Figure 12 is based on students who took grade 9 academic math courses, while Figure 13 is students who took grade 9 applied courses.

What stands out is that in the four cases they have broken down, students are more likely to reach the provincial standard when they take academic courses in grade 9, rather than applied courses.

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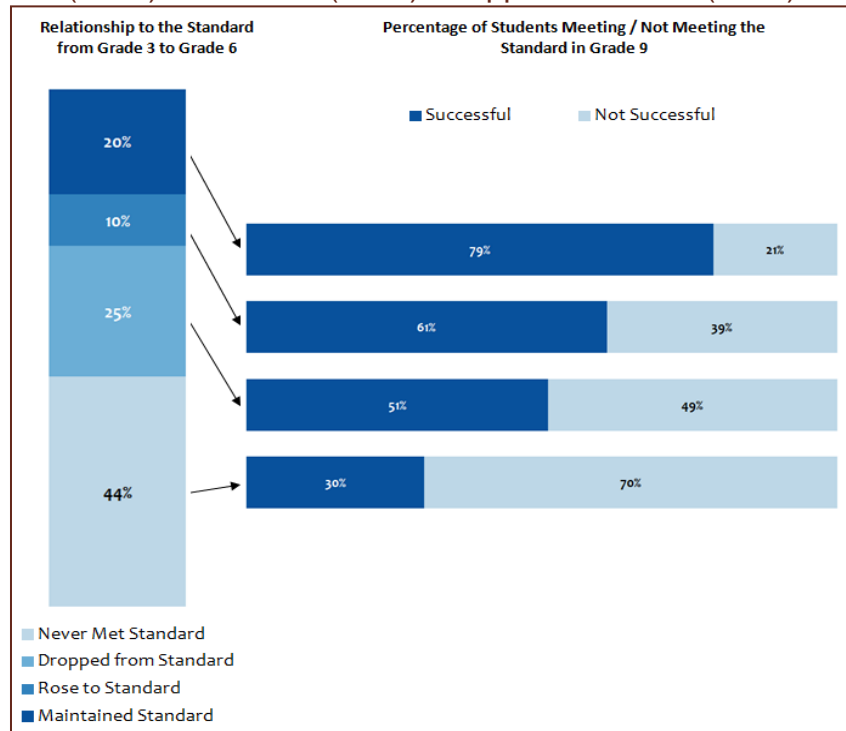
<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Figure 12: Student Achievement in Mathematics over Time  
Grade 3 (2006) to Grade 6 (2009) to Academic Grade 9 (2012) Cohort<sup>41</sup>



<sup>41</sup> Source: [http://www.eqao.com/en/research\\_data/Research\\_Reports/DMA-docs/bulletin-cohort-tracking-math-2012.pdf](http://www.eqao.com/en/research_data/Research_Reports/DMA-docs/bulletin-cohort-tracking-math-2012.pdf)

Figure 13: Student Achievement in Mathematics over Time  
Grade 3 (2006) to Grade 6 (2009) to Applied Grade 9 (2012) Cohort<sup>41</sup>



Policies that affect life outcomes for children and youth such as applied vs. academic streams in school must continue to be evaluated with the impact to the most vulnerable students understood in order to reduce inequality and provide every child the opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve their life goals.

## Stay in School Initiatives

The economy requires a skilled workforce. In order to pursue a trade, college diploma or university degree, completing high school with a diploma is essential. To prevent youth from economically disadvantaged households being forced into jobs that pay wages that keep them in poverty, as a community we need to support and nurture our youth to develop a desire and determination to graduate from high school.

The 2014 high school graduation rates for our two local school boards are shown in the figure below.



Figure 11: Local school board high school graduation rates, 2014

School Board	4 Year Graduation Rate	5 Year Graduation Rate
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board	85%	90%
Trillium Lakelands District School Board	75%	82%

In 2014, the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board (PVNCCDSB) had a four year graduation rate of 85% and a five year graduation rate of 90%. The Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) had a four year graduation rate of 75% and a five year graduation rate of 82%.<sup>42</sup> As a majority of youth in our area attend high school within TLDSB, we can expect our graduation rate for youth in our community to be closer to the TLDSB figures than those from PVNCCDSB.

It is important that students complete high school; over the course of a lifetime, those without a high school diploma earn \$200,000 less than those with a diploma.<sup>43</sup> This gap only increases when comparing those without a high school diploma to those with post-secondary education, including those with trade certificates. It is imperative that students gain more than a high school diploma. Youth need to be encouraged to pursue post-secondary education.

The Human Services Department of the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County offers the Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) program for young parents on Ontario Works in attaining their high school diploma. The LEAP program provides financial support for child care, transportation, school supplies and other incentives to graduate.

Further avenues to a high school diploma provide a different pathway for those where the traditional high school setting is not suitable, such as adult education, alternative setting programs and Contact North in Haliburton County.

Fleming College provides an academic upgrading centre at their campuses in Lindsay and Haliburton. This program is free to most residents and allows individuals to finish obtaining their high school diploma, upgrade credits to have the prerequisites for college courses, refresh their knowledge of education before entering college, update their math, computer or communication skills for re-entering the workforce, or obtain Grade 12 equivalency to improve career prospects.

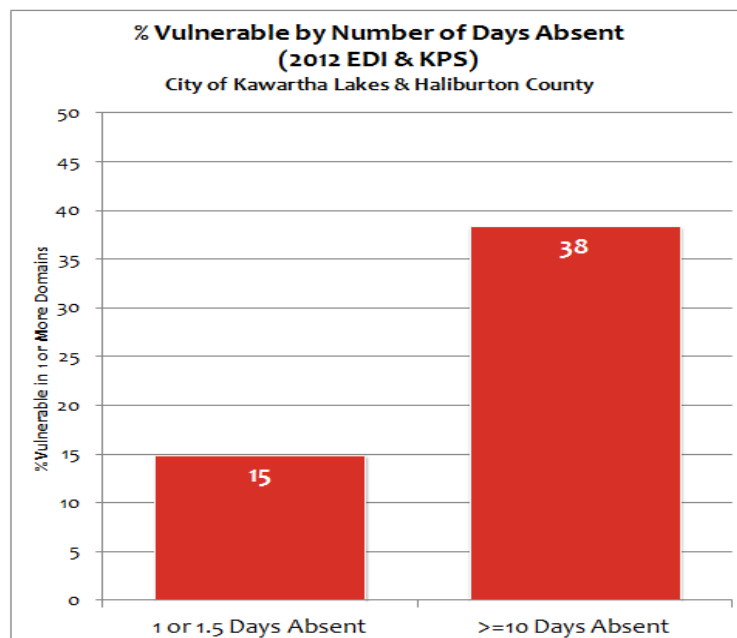
<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Education. Government of Ontario. (2015). *2014 graduation rates across the province*. Retrieved from <http://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2015/04/2014-graduation-rates-across-the-province.html>

<sup>43</sup> Trypuc, B., & Heller, A. Charity Intelligence Canada. (2008). *Breaking the cycle of failure: A funder's primer in understanding Canada's school drop-out epidemic*. Retrieved from: [https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci\\_EducationReport\\_08.pdf](https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci_EducationReport_08.pdf), pp. 4

A research paper published by Charity Intelligence Canada, “Breaking the cycle of failure: A funder’s primer in understanding Canada’s school drop-out epidemic” identified several factors on why youth failed to complete high school. They found that children with very low grade 4 test results made up one-third of those that didn’t complete high school; the transition from grade school to high school is a challenge for some students. Starting in senior grades of elementary school, attendance becomes a stronger predictor of not completing high school than academic performance and finally, engaging schools help promote student attendance, and attendance makes a difference.<sup>44</sup> The Charity Intelligence Canada paper identifies the reduction in absenteeism as the most important step to prevent youth from dropping out.<sup>45</sup>

Our local results from the 2012 EDI and KPS show that children who are absent more frequently during their senior kindergarten year score poorer on the EDI when compared to those students who have been absent less.

Figure 12: EDI vulnerability rate and total EDI score of children who were absent 1 or 1.5 days and those that were absent 10 or more days when the EDI was completed.



<sup>44</sup> Trypuc, B., & Heller, A. Charity Intelligence Canada. (2008). *Breaking the cycle of failure: A funder’s primer in understanding Canada’s school drop-out epidemic*. Retrieved from: [https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci\\_EducationReport\\_08.pdf](https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci_EducationReport_08.pdf), pp. 10

<sup>45</sup> Trypuc, B., & Heller, A. Charity Intelligence Canada. (2008). *Breaking the cycle of failure: A funder’s primer in understanding Canada’s school drop-out epidemic*. Retrieved from: [https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci\\_EducationReport\\_08.pdf](https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci_EducationReport_08.pdf), pp. 10

Studies have also shown that regular school attendance becomes more difficult for families that are economically disadvantaged. The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), a division of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, published a report in 2008 that discussed addressing chronic absence in early grades. In the report it was noted:

Attendance suffers when families are struggling to keep up with the routine of school despite the lack of reliable transportation, long work hours in poorly paid jobs with little flexibility, unstable and unaffordable housing, inadequate health care and escalating community violence.<sup>46</sup>

Students from households with annual incomes that are less than \$25,000 per year are only attending post-secondary institutions at a rate of 25%, while students from households with annual incomes greater than \$100,000 are participating at a rate of 81%.<sup>47</sup> It is imperative that we engage youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, encourage them to pursue post-secondary education and link them to supports (such as bursaries and assistance with applications for bursaries) that will help them achieve this goal.

It has been found that more than 70% of Canadians who enter federal prisons are high school dropouts.<sup>48</sup> This statistic also highlights the importance of helping youth to stay in school, graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education. One method to keep youth in school is for children and youth to have access to peer mentors and positive role models.<sup>49</sup> Programs that offer safe spaces for youth to gather within the presence of positive peer and adult mentors is a way to assist youth in poverty to stay in school and stay out of the criminal justice system.

In an ongoing study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada, initial findings have shown that:

- Girls with a Big Sister are two and a half times more likely to be confident in their academic abilities
- Boys with a Big Brother are three times less likely to suffer peer pressure.
- Boys with a Big Brother are two times more likely to believe that doing well academically is important and that school is fun.

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<sup>46</sup> Chang, H., & Romero, M. National Center for Children in Poverty. (2008). *Present, engaged and accounted for: The critical importance of addressing chronic absence in the early grades*. Retrieved from:

[http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text\\_837.pdf](http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_837.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada. (2008). *Creating positive alternatives for Canadian youth: Creating positive alternatives for Canadian youth*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.bgccan.com/en/Resources/Research/Documents/roots\\_of\\_youth\\_violence\\_e.pdf](https://www.bgccan.com/en/Resources/Research/Documents/roots_of_youth_violence_e.pdf), pp. 1

<sup>49</sup> Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada. (2008). *Creating positive alternatives for Canadian youth: Creating positive alternatives for Canadian youth*. Retrieved from:

[https://www.bgccan.com/en/Resources/Research/Documents/roots\\_of\\_youth\\_violence\\_e.pdf](https://www.bgccan.com/en/Resources/Research/Documents/roots_of_youth_violence_e.pdf), pp. 1

- Boys with a Big Brother are two times less likely to bully, fight, lie, cheat or lose their temper.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, programs that provide assistance for youth in gaining summer employment, mentorship and soft skills building have been shown to be effective in supporting youth in communities with high unemployment rates, high dropout rates and high violence.<sup>51</sup> Through deliberate effort to support youth living in poverty, dropout rates can be decreased and opportunities for youth to pursue their goals in life can be increased

## **Nutrition Supports**

Food insecurity amongst children and youth in Canada is a serious and troubling issue. Food security is when “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”<sup>52</sup> In 2012, 15.2% children in Ontario were growing up in households that were food insecure.<sup>53</sup> When children and their families are worried about not having enough food to eat, the inability to purchase healthy food and the possibility of actually missing meals, their health suffers. There is now evidence available that hunger in childhood can lead to both depression and asthma in adolescence and early adulthood.<sup>54</sup>

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPR) calculates the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket each May. The chart below shows that with the cost of nutritious food during the month, a family of four supported by Ontario Works has consumed all of their income on rent, hydro, heat and food. Inevitably, in order to find ways to reduce cost, the quality of the food purchased will suffer. The cost of rent is fixed, and the prices for heat and hydro can only be reduced so far. However, food costs can be controlled and therefore less nutritious foods are often purchased to reduce expenses. Regardless of the amount of education regarding the importance of healthy food for children, without an adequate income families are not able to purchase an adequate amount of healthy food.

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<sup>50</sup> Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada Foundation. (n.d.). *Impact on youth: CAMH and Big Brothers Big Sisters – national mentoring study early findings*. Retrieved from

<http://www.bigbrothersbigsistersfoundation.ca/en/Home/mentoringworks/ImpactYouth.aspx>

<sup>51</sup> Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada. (2014). *Successful transitions, prosperous futures: House of Commons standing committee on finance submission to the study on youth employment in Canada*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.bgccan.com/en/AboutUs/PublicPolicy/Documents/Sucessful%20transitions,%20prosperous%20futures%20-%20BGCC%20Youth%20Employment%20Brief%202014.pdf>, pp. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., & Dachner, N. PROOF (2014). *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2012*. Retrieved from:

[http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_in\\_Canada-2012\\_ENG.pdf](http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household_Food_Insecurity_in_Canada-2012_ENG.pdf), pp. 5

<sup>53</sup> Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., & Dachner, N. PROOF (2014). *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2012*. Retrieved from:

[http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_in\\_Canada-2012\\_ENG.pdf](http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household_Food_Insecurity_in_Canada-2012_ENG.pdf), pp. 13

<sup>54</sup> Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., & Dachner, N. PROOF (2014). *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2012*. Retrieved from:

[http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_in\\_Canada-2012\\_ENG.pdf](http://nutritionalsciences.lamp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Household_Food_Insecurity_in_Canada-2012_ENG.pdf), pp. 5

### May 2015 - Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios <sup>a</sup>

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
	Family of Four, Ontario Works	Family of Four, Full-Time Minimum Wage Earner <sup>m</sup>	Family of Four, Median ONTARIO Income (after tax) <sup>n</sup>	Single Parent Household with 2 Children, Ontario Works
<b>Monthly Calculations</b>				
<b>Income</b>				
Income from Employment		\$ 1,540.00	\$ 7,317.00	
Basic Allowance <sup>b</sup>	\$ 463.00			\$ 339.00
Maximum Shelter Allowance <sup>b</sup>	\$ 710.00			\$ 655.00
Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement <sup>c</sup>				
Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System <sup>d</sup>				
Canada Child Tax Benefit <sup>e</sup>	\$ 811.00	\$ 801.00	\$ 114.00	\$ 811.00
GST/HST credit <sup>f</sup>	\$ 68.00	\$ 68.00		\$ 68.00
Ontario Trillium Benefit <sup>g</sup>	\$ 162.00	\$ 162.00		\$ 133.00
Working Income Tax Benefit <sup>h</sup>		\$ 78.00		
Employment Insurance paid <sup>i</sup>		\$ (36.00)	\$ (135.00)	
Canada Pension Plan paid <sup>j</sup>		\$ (80.00)	\$ (344.00)	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 2,214.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,533.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,952.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,006.00</b>
<b>Selected Expenses</b>				
	(3 Bdr.)	(3 Bdr.)	(3 Bdr.)	(2 Bdr.)
Average Monthly Rent (may or may not include heat/hydro) <sup>k</sup>	\$ 1,222.67	\$ 1,222.67	\$ 1,222.67	\$ 920.25
Food <sup>l</sup>	\$ 877.39	\$ 877.39	\$ 877.39	\$ 662.52
<b>Total Selected Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,100.06</b>	<b>\$ 2,100.06</b>	<b>\$ 2,100.06</b>	<b>\$ 1,582.77</b>

Source: Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit 2015

When children experience food insecurity or poor nutrition, their health, development and learning are compromised; they are less able to concentrate and their school performance and achievement suffer. Children and youth are unable to fully and actively participate in a classroom when they are hungry or worried about being hungry. We must ensure that programs that support healthy food options for children and youth, such as breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack programs at schools and local agencies are available for children and youth. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack programs at the school or at community agencies need to be filled with healthy options following the recommendations of the Canada Food Guide for children and youth, otherwise these programs are simply exacerbating health problems for children and youth growing up in poverty.

There are many reasons why children go to school hungry. There may be insufficient food in the home, families may have hurried morning routines, there may be a lack of parental supervision at mealtime and some children are not hungry and do not eat breakfast before leaving for school.

When children and youth eat a nutritious morning meal at their local student nutrition program (SNP), they are better able to focus in class and score higher marks in reading, math, and science. Student nutrition programs also help with:

- Improved classroom behaviour / fewer discipline problems

- Improved school atmosphere
- Improved food knowledge and healthier food choices
- Reduced absenteeism
- A reduction in tardiness
- Increased learning readiness
- A decrease in health risks related to poverty and obesity<sup>55</sup>

Nutrition programs have become a highly used and necessary component of the academic landscape in City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County schools. These programs offer nutritious meals to children and youth who may not receive one otherwise. There is a growing need for these programs throughout the area as seen by the increasing number of student participants.

In the City of Kawartha Lakes, student nutrition programs are supported by the Food for Kids Program. CKL Food for Kids serves over 10,000 children, with breakfast, snack and lunch programs. Last year 585,489 healthy meals were served to students in the City of Kawartha Lakes.

In Haliburton County, the student nutrition program is supported by Haliburton Food for Kids. The program serves nutritious meals to over 1,400 children with over 170,000 meals prepared and served during the school year.

These nutrition programs are designed to meet provincial standards, but are tailored to meet local needs. They are offered in a universally accessible and non-stigmatizing environment. All foods served are in compliance with the nutritional guidelines set forth by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. The nutrition programs have become a highly used and necessary component of the academic landscape in CKL and Haliburton schools.

Funding for student nutrition programs comes from a variety of sources, including government grants, school boards, parental contributions, local fundraising, and community donations. Over the years however, the level of government funding has remained constant while the cost of food and the number of participating children and youth has increased.

Seed funding is provided to all student nutrition programs by the province, which covers a small portion of total program costs; however, most local student nutrition programs find it challenging to operate with the existing funding model. Local programs receive approximately 13% of their funding from provincial government funds, leaving the remaining 87% for the local program to fund. Locally in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County, CKL Food for Kids and Haliburton Food for Kids conduct annual fundraising to support all student nutrition programs. The Trillium Lakelands District School Board provides funds to support the student nutrition program in each of their schools. The student nutrition programs also receive food donations including milk and

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<sup>55</sup> De Wit, Y. Toronto Public Health. (2012, June). *Nourishing Young Minds*. Retrieved from: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-48313.pdf>, pp. 21



fruit from the Kawartha Lakes Food Source as well as financial donations from the community.

Many municipalities across Canada provide monetary support to the student nutrition programs in their area i.e. City of Toronto, Regional Municipality of York, Region of Durham etc. Student nutrition programs require adequate and sustainable funding to maintain long-term program viability. Municipal investment in these regions has been a significant source of funds and has been able to increase access to nutritious food for students.

Since a municipality's commitment to support local Student Nutrition Program can play a key role in the development of healthy and successful children in our community, it is recommended that the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County partner with their respective Student Nutrition Program Steering Committees and school boards and provide funding support to local student nutrition programs.

## **Recreation, Arts and Culture**

Recreation, culture and the arts play a large role in children's development and well-being. Recreation whether it be a playground, participating in an after school program, team sport or walking on a nature trail, contributes positively to physical, mental and social well-being. For example, preschoolers are developing their motor skills when they climb up a ladder to go down the slide or playing with a ball. Whether it is through participation in a sport, taking dance, art lessons or being a member of a club, friendships are made, new skills are learned and they learn to co-operate with one another. Evidence also shows that those who participate in recreation have higher self-esteem and can be protected from emotional and social problems.<sup>56</sup> For youth, recreation helps deal with boredom, builds character and reduces the likelihood of deviant behaviour.<sup>57</sup>

Research also shows that "participation in cultural and artistic programs has been shown to promote social connectedness and social cohesion, and positively influence civic behaviour, mutual caring and voluntarism."<sup>58</sup>

Community events and activities provide opportunities for families to spend quality time together and engage with their neighbours and other community members. Events that are based on the interests of children and youth, accommodate a range of ages, are cross-sectoral and inclusive are great ways to create positive learning experiences and memories for children and their families.

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<sup>56</sup> Canadian Council on Social Development. Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. (2001). *Recreation and children and youth living in poverty: Barriers, benefits and success stories*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cpra.ca/UserFiles/File/EN/sitePdfs/initiatives/EGTP/literature.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. (2014). *Pathways to well-being: A national framework for recreation in Canada*. Retrieved from: [http://www.cpra.ca/UserFiles/File/EN/sitePdfs/initiatives/National%20Framework/Recreation%20Framework%20April%202014\\_ENR2.pdf](http://www.cpra.ca/UserFiles/File/EN/sitePdfs/initiatives/National%20Framework/Recreation%20Framework%20April%202014_ENR2.pdf)



There are many barriers that prevent access to recreational, cultural and artistic opportunities such as registration and user fees, equipment and travel expenses, lack of transportation, lack of programming in rural communities or there is a lack of safe places to play. Evidence shows that children from low-income families are far less likely to participate in these programs which are vital for their health and development and may experience isolation and exclusion.

In 2013 the Parent Needs Assessment Survey Report, was released by the HKPR District Health Unit for the Children and Youth Community Planning Table of the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County. The purpose of the Parent Needs Assessment Survey was to assess how parents want to receive information, what is preventing parents from accessing information or services and what information or services parents want offered in their community.<sup>59</sup>

The results of the survey showed that parents want to access information from a variety of sources including websites, health care providers and schools. Barriers that prevent parents from accessing services or programs were found to include the timing, the cost, the lack of child care and a lack of programming in their community. Finally, parents identified wanting more family events, sports and recreation activities and parent education pertaining to healthy child development.

As a result of the survey, a number of recommendations were made including;

- Offer programs, including recreational and family activities, at low or no cost
- Provide programming in rural communities
- Consider and address transportation barriers in program planning<sup>60</sup>

Following up on the survey recommendations, community hubs have the potential to fill important needs in our community. “A community hub can be a school, a neighbourhood centre or a another public space that offers co-located or integrated services such as education, health care and social services. Each hub is as unique as the community it serves.”<sup>61</sup>

Lady Eaton Elementary School in Omemee is a great example of a community hub. Along with the elementary school, the Omemee Children Centre operates a child care within the school. The Ontario Early Years Centre offers an early learning drop-in program each Wednesday at Lady Eaton too. There are many opportunities where intentional planning to integrate not only educational services, but health and recreational programs would serve our children and families more effectively.

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<sup>59</sup> Taylor, K., MacDonald, C., Spry, M., & Holt, A. Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit. (2013). *Parent needs assessment survey report: For City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hkpr.on.ca/Portals/0/PDF%20Files/PDF%20Files%20-%20Resources/CKI-Hal%20PNAS%20Report%20Final%20May%208,%202013.pdf>, pp. 9

<sup>60</sup> Ibid p.21

<sup>61</sup> Government of Ontario. (2015). *About community hubs*. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/community-hubs>

To support our many rural communities, a mobile hub could also be considered. The mobile hub would assist in reducing the transportation barrier that many low income families may experience in accessing services. Also, the mobile hub has the potential to increase the social capital of our communities by nurturing community involvement and improving cross sectoral partnerships to meet the identified programming and service needs for parents and children within our communities.<sup>62</sup>

This mobile hub could travel to communities throughout the City and County to offer any number of health and social services, sports and games equipment, food, arts and cultural activities, etc. Specific examples include a mobile dental unit in Springfield, Missouri<sup>63</sup>, the Toronto Public Library bookmobile,<sup>64</sup> the City of Boise mobile recreation van,<sup>65</sup> and the ArtVan that provides art access to communities in Maine.<sup>66</sup>

In Ontario's first Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2008, the provincial government identified community hubs as a method to improve access to services and supports for low income Ontarians.<sup>67</sup> The provincial government has continued to investigate the potential for expanding community hubs and in early 2015, Premier Kathleen Wynne appointed Karen Pitre as Special Advisor to the Premier on Community Hubs.<sup>68</sup>

In January 2016, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care released a letter to Premier Kathleen Wynne on the results of their key mandate priorities from 2014-15. In that letter the Ministry is helping to develop a policy on community hubs that focus on health and wellness. They are “supporting the government's work to establish community hubs, which will provide a central access point for a range of needed health and social services, along with cultural, recreational and green spaces to enhance community life.”<sup>69</sup> To achieve this goal they are working “in partnership with the Ministers of Education and of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness), and others — and in consultation with stakeholders.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Loewen, G. Tamarack. (2009). *A compendium of poverty reduction strategies and frameworks*. Retrieved from: [http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/Poverty\\_Reduction\\_GL\\_042209.pdf](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/Poverty_Reduction_GL_042209.pdf), pp. 21

<sup>63</sup> Jordan Valley Community Health Center. (2016). *Trudi's kids: Mobile health services*. Retrieved from <http://jordanvalley.org/services/trudiskids/>

<sup>64</sup> Toronto Public Library. (2015). *Bookmobile*. Retrieved from <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/bookmobiles/index.jsp>

<sup>65</sup> Boise Parks & Recreation. City of Boise. (2016) *Mobile recreation*. Retrieved from: <https://parks.cityofboise.org/activities,-classes-and-sports/mobile-recreation/>

<sup>66</sup> ArtVan. (2016). *ArtVan: Keep the kids rolling*. Retrieved from <http://artvanprogram.org/>

<sup>67</sup> Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Government of Ontario (2008). *Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's poverty reduction strategy*. Retrieved from: [http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/breakingthecycle/Poverty\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/breakingthecycle/Poverty_Report_EN.pdf), pp. 20

<sup>68</sup> News Release. Office of the Premier, Government of Ontario. (2015). *Premier Wynne appoints special advisor on community hubs*. Retrieved from: <http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/03/premier-wynne-appoints-special-advisor-on-community-hubs.html>

<sup>69</sup> Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Government of Ontario. (2016). *Mandate letter of progress*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/mandate-letter-progress-health-and-long-term-care>

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

Research has also indicated that social capital has an impact on poverty reduction.<sup>71</sup> Community events and a community hub are examples of activities and programs with a deliberate plan to grow social capital. Social capital can be viewed as a community asset that can be built and strengthened through directed and committed action.<sup>72</sup>

A component of community events for children and youth are recreational activities. The Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families has identified the physical health and psycho-social benefits from participating in recreational activities. This task group has indicated that:

Recreation can foster life skills for success at school, work and home; reduce emotional problems and risky behaviour, improve self-esteem, create positive peer and family relationships and increase opportunities for fun and enjoyment.<sup>73</sup>

Children and youth living in poverty who regularly participate in community-based recreation programs build self-esteem that can assist them in building resilience to offset potential difficulties in school.<sup>74</sup> This indicates that it is critically important that there are policies and programs in place that are affordable in our community so that all children and youth have the opportunity to participate.

Support for and the cultivation of recreational programs across the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County that give all children and youth an opportunity to participate regardless of economic status is essential. Where fees are required, there should be non-stigmatizing subsidies available as complex application procedures to gain subsidy can deter low-income families from pursuing opportunities to register for activities.

Recently, the City of Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan has identified an exceptional quality of life as a strategic priority. Within the improved wellness, well-being and community health objective it was identified that accessible recreation and youth access to recreational services are actions that can be taken.

An example is the program 'Feel Free to Feel Fit!' developed by the Parks and Recreation department in the City of Greater Sudbury. This program offers a free 1.5 to 2 hour swim at each of the city's five pools once per week during the school year. The program is open to all residents and Greater Sudbury offers free transportation using

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<sup>71</sup> Santini, I., & De Pascale, A. Sapienza Universita Di Roma. (2012). *Social capital and its impact on poverty reduction*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.memotef.uniroma1.it/sites/dipartimento/files/wpapers/documenti/FullTextWP101.pdf>, pp. 3

<sup>72</sup> Santini, I., & De Pascale, A. Sapienza Universita Di Roma. (2012). *Social capital and its impact on poverty reduction*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.memotef.uniroma1.it/sites/dipartimento/files/wpapers/documenti/FullTextWP101.pdf>, pp. 4

<sup>73</sup> Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families. (2006). *Affordable access to recreation for Ontarians: Policy framework, everyone plays*. Retrieved from: [http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci\\_id/3681.htm](http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci_id/3681.htm), pp. 5

<sup>74</sup> Ontario Task Group on Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families. (2006). *Affordable access to recreation for Ontarians: Policy framework, everyone plays*. Retrieved from: [http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci\\_id/3681.htm](http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci_id/3681.htm), pp. 5

the public bus system following the free swims for those who participated. This program allows all residents, including lower income residents, to participate in a healthy, community based activity where they can ride transit for free to get home.<sup>75</sup> Other valuable programs to consider are free skate and bike exchanges.

Local communities also need to investigate whether the opportunities set out by the Ministry of Education's Community Use of Schools (CUS) program can be further utilized; both PVNCCDSB and TLDSB offer their space for rental at subsidized rates. Between municipal and school board spaces that are publicly funded, collaboration amongst community groups with the City of Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton County and the local school boards should produce tangible results to ensure affordable spaces for all children and youth.

The Kawartha Lakes Sport and Recreation Council (KLSRC) is a group that represents community partner agencies including the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department from the City of Kawartha Lakes. The KLSRC was formed through the work of the Join in CKL committee.<sup>76</sup> "The partners believe that removing barriers to access and creating opportunities and conditions where everyone can thrive is a shared responsibility. We recognize that as community leaders we will continue to build partnerships at the local level to remove barriers and create opportunities for everyone, especially low-income individuals and families, to join in!"<sup>77</sup> They advocate for policies within our communities that support better access for all children and youth regardless of their ability, or their family's wealth or social status and are committed to:

- Developing / implementing open access policies with physical activity providers
- Eliminating access to equipment as a barrier
- Promoting free opportunities for physical activity
- Streamlining the process to access financial support relating to participation
- Promoting the benefits of physical activity as a foundation for a healthy community
- Building social ties in neighbourhoods

In Haliburton County, all four member municipalities invest in free opportunities for recreation and physical activity such as trails, parks, playgrounds, and beaches. Some municipalities maintain outdoor ice rinks and skateboard parks. Municipalities also offer a range of recreation programs such as soccer, softball, swimming lessons, and ball hockey. Some programs are free, some are subsidized through grants/sponsorships and others charge based on cost-recovery in order to keep fees as low as possible. At least one municipality offers sibling discounts on registration, as well as discounts for children of volunteer coaches. Referrals are also sometimes made to Canadian Tire's 'Jump Start' program for financial support.

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<sup>75</sup> Feel Free to Feel Fit! City of Greater Sudbury. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.greatersudbury.ca/living/pools1/public-wwimming/feel-free-to-feel-fit/>

<sup>76</sup> Kawartha Lakes This Week. (2015, June 4). *Kawartha Lakes Sport and Recreation Council Launches in Lindsay*. pp. 15

<sup>77</sup> Join in CKL. (2015). *About*. Retrieved from <http://www.joininckl.ca/about.html>

Point in Time Centre for Children, Youth and Adults offers a free after-school recreation program from October to May for elementary students once a week in three communities. Because programs take place in or very close to the schools right after the school day finishes, programs are easy to access. The focus is on active recreation. Point in Time also offers a low-cost summer day camp program at locations across the county.

Libraries are an important community resource where all residents and especially children and youth can gather, learn and socialize. They build social capital within our communities and provide opportunities for economically disadvantaged children to participate fully without prejudice. The City of Kawartha Lakes Library and Haliburton County Public Library have branches in many communities. Along with the traditional free access to books for children and youth, the libraries offer a range of programming that includes writing and craft workshops, reading clubs, animal discovery activities and many other unique and creative events that all children and youth can participate in at no expense.

Through partnership with the municipality, the Dysart Branch of the Haliburton County Public Library has an equipment lending program, where people can use their library card to borrow recreational equipment for free. Available equipment includes pedometers, balls, Frisbees, skipping ropes and badminton equipment. In Minden Hills, a similar program is in the works for bicycle-lending. It is not only the equitable access to all citizens regardless of their social or financial status that libraries offer, in 2013, the Martin Prosperity Institute prepared a report where they concluded that for every dollar invested in the Toronto Public Library there is \$5.63 of economic impact.<sup>78</sup>

An interesting concept that could be considered to build social capital and further participation of economically challenged families in community events and activities is a program similar to the Vancouver Inspiration Pass.<sup>79</sup> This program is open to all residents regardless of their socio-economic background who have a valid Vancouver Public Library card. Similar to placing a hold on a book at the library, library card holders can place a hold on a Vancouver Inspiration Pass. The library contacts residents two weeks before the Inspiration Pass is available to them and then the card is picked up at the library. With the Vancouver Inspiration Pass the holder and their family gain access to a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for free within a two week period. One of the goals of the program is to 'increase community engagement and inclusivity and support lifelong learning.'<sup>80</sup> There are 27 arts, culture and recreation partner venues. The program sponsors are the Vancouver Public Library, the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Park Board.

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<sup>78</sup> Silk, K., & Stolarick, K. Martin Prosperity Institute & The Joseph L. Rotman School of Management (2013). *So Much More: The Economic Impact of the Toronto Public Library on the City of Toronto*. Retrieved from: [http://martinprosperity.org/media/TPL%20Economic%20Impact\\_Dec2013\\_LR\\_FINAL.pdf](http://martinprosperity.org/media/TPL%20Economic%20Impact_Dec2013_LR_FINAL.pdf), pp. 22

<sup>79</sup> Vancouver Inspiration Pass. (2015). Retrieved from: <http://pwp.vpl.ca/inspirationpass/>

<sup>80</sup> Vancouver Inspiration Pass. (2015). Retrieved from: <http://pwp.vpl.ca/inspirationpass/>



## **Engaging Youth**

Youth face numerous challenges as they move from childhood to adulthood. Trying to find out who they are, what they want to become and what their passions really are while navigating the problems of bullying, confidence and self-esteem. These are challenges for all youth, but youth with the added weight of poverty, can feel more challenged and the effects of poverty can prevent them from pursuing their life goals.

It is important that youth become engaged. Youth engagement is defined as “empowering all youth as valued partners in addressing, and making decisions about issues that affect them personally and/or that they believe to be important. It is about adults working with youth to create opportunities for young people to become involved in and contribute to the betterment of an organization and/or community in which they live.”<sup>81</sup>

Engaging youth and especially marginalized youth is necessary to ensure youth feel connected to their communities and supported if they need help. Research shows that when youth are engaged many benefits occur including, improved self-confidence, career aspirations, better relationships with peers, adults and the elderly, participation in the community and have lower rates of school failure and drop-out, decreased alcohol and drug use, lower rates of depression, antisocial and criminal behaviours and lower rates of sexual activity and pregnancy in girls.<sup>82 83</sup> The community benefits as the policies and programs that are developed by municipalities and organizations that are targeted at youth are more successful as they take into account their experiences, needs and challenges. It also helps with youth retention in the community which is attracts and retains youth and is fundamental to the local economy.<sup>84</sup>

At a youth engagement conference in Haliburton facilitated by the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health in May 2015, youth indicated that the lack of a space to gather and socialize in a safe space was an issue. Youth also indicated that barriers to participation in activities included transportation, lack of community support, scheduling conflicts with school, employment and confidence in attending. In order to address these barriers youth need to be partners in the planning process, sharing decision making on programs and involved in the planning and implementation of programs.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Pereira, N. The New Mentality Children’s Mental Health Ontario & Ottawa: The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth mental health at CHEO. (2007). *Ready... set... engage! Building effective youth/adult partnerships for a stronger child and youth mental health system*. Retrieved from: <http://thenewmentality.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Ready-Set-engage.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> Centres of Excellence for Children’s Well-Being. (n.d.). *What is youth engagement?* Retrieved from: [http://www.engagementcentre.ca/files/whatis\\_web\\_e.pdf](http://www.engagementcentre.ca/files/whatis_web_e.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> Halifax Regional Municipality. (2013). *The toolkit: Resources, tools and strategies for youth engagement*. Retrieved from: <http://heartwood.ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/ToolKitIntroduction.pdf>

<sup>84</sup> Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (n.d.). *The municipal youth engagement handbook*. Retrieved from: [https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/FCM/Municipal\\_Youth\\_Engagement\\_Handbook\\_EN.pdf](https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/FCM/Municipal_Youth_Engagement_Handbook_EN.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> Dyer, C., & Pereira, N. Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health. (2011, August). *The Art of Youth Engagement*: Ottawa, ON, pp. 12

There are community groups that are working to address this problem. The Warehouse, through the Boys and Girls Club of Kawartha Lakes, The Coffee House in Haliburton and Stay Bright – Unlit through the HKPR District Health Unit are examples of groups that are focused on engaging youth in our communities. Support for these groups and youth engagement activities is important for all youth and especially those with additional barriers in their lives such as poverty.

In the past, TLDSB, Point in Time and the HKPR District Health Unit partnered to support a Coffee House in Haliburton. It was an open mic night with music, poetry, comedy and art, with free taxi rides home afterward.<sup>86</sup>

The Warehouse at the Boys and Girls Club of Kawartha Lakes is an example of a gathering space for youth that is welcoming of all youth and is at no cost to participants. The space includes a kitchen, a technology space, a recording studio, a quiet living room space and an open gathering area. On a regular basis at least 78 youth are signing in. Of those 78 youth, 21% live in foster or kinship care, 44% have or are currently involved with CAS, 28% have been diagnosed with developmental needs and 35% are struggling in school (i.e. failing classes, frequent detention/suspension).<sup>87</sup>

Some youth who attend are not able to call any particular location home and are making due finding places to stay on a regular basis. The Warehouse is something that they rely on for support, consistency and in some cases, dinner. For the Lindsay community this is an important resource that provides a safe space for youth. An example of the positive impact that youth engagement programs can have on young people is demonstrated in an Ipsos-Reid survey of Boys and Girls Clubs alumni.

- 81% say the club had a positive impact on their life
- 97% say that their involvement with the club made them better off today
- 95% say the club provided them with valuable life skills
- 73% say that their involvement in club activities helped them avoid trouble with the law, and 69% that it really saved their life<sup>88</sup>

## **Children's Charter**

Many communities have developed a Children's Charter to embrace the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child and its meaning within those communities. This convention, adopted by the UN in 1989 identifies children's rights through 54 articles. Examples include Article 3: "All organisations concerned with children should

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<sup>86</sup> Smith, A. My Haliburton Now. (2015). *Youth Coffee House Tonight Offering Free Admission, Food and Taxi Rides*. Retrieved from: <http://www.myhaliburtonnow.com/7361/youth-coffee-house-tonight-offering-free-admission-food-and-taxi-rides/>

<sup>87</sup> Boys and Girls Club of Kawartha Lakes. (2015, January). Youth Warehouse participant snap shot.

<sup>88</sup> Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. (2005). *Boys and Girls Clubs across Canada make a lasting positive impact on generations of Canadian children and youth*. Retrieved from <https://www.bgccan.com/en/WhatsNew/NewsListings/Pages/Boys-and-Girls-Clubs-across-Canada-make-a-lasting-positive-impact-on-generations-of-Canadian-children-and-youth.aspx>



work towards what is best for each child”; and Article 6: “Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.”<sup>89</sup>

The Early Learning Sub-committee of the Community Planning Table for Children and Youth of the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County is creating a Children’s Charter with the shared understanding that all children who are supported and nurtured within their families and communities can reach their full potential. When investments are made in families and children, our communities benefit from a healthier, better educated and productive population.

The endorsement of a Children’s Charter by the City and County Councils would provide the opportunity for each municipality to declare their support for their children.

## **Conclusion**

To alleviate child and youth poverty in our community, we must invest in early learning programs; adequate and accessible nutrition; recreation, arts and culture opportunities; and stay in school initiatives throughout the continuum of the childhood years, starting prenatally. We must support policies to address these needs.

...failure to protect children from poverty is one of the most costly mistakes a society can make. The heaviest cost of all is borne by the children themselves. But their nations must also pay a very significant price – in reduced skills and productivity, in lower levels of health and educational achievement, in increased likelihood of unemployment and welfare dependence, in the higher costs of judicial and social protection systems, and in the loss of social cohesion.

Source: Measuring child poverty: New league tables of child poverty in the world’s rich countries. UNICEF.

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<sup>89</sup> UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child  
[http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/Child\\_Rights\\_Flyer\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/Child_Rights_Flyer_FINAL.pdf)

## **Action Plan Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Implement the recommendations from the Housing, Transportation, Employment & Education and Food Security Action Plans of the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County Poverty Reduction Strategy to address the root causes of child poverty.**

#### *Activity*

- Support a community led poverty reduction team to implement the recommendations outlined in each component of the poverty reduction strategy.

#### *Process*

- Establish a poverty reduction steering committee and working groups.

#### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton
- Community members
- Community agencies

#### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 to establish committee and working group
- 2016 and onwards for implementation of recommendations

#### *Resources Required*

- Staff (City and Agency) and community engagement in committee and working groups
- Financial support for committee and working groups

#### *Measurable Indicators*

- Poverty reduction steering committee and working groups created
- Number of recommendations implemented.

## **Recommendation 2:**

**Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for increased income and social supports for families with children, including the removal of child support as a deductible income source for families in receipt of social assistance.**

### *Activity*

- Meet with government officials to advocate for greater income supports for families with children
- Create a strategic communications plan in support of advocacy

### *Process*

- Develop and implement a strategic communications plan
- Meet with Ministry officials, MPPs and MPs

### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton
- Community members

### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 and onwards

### *Resources Required*

- City staff time

### *Measurable Indicators*

- Number of meetings held with government officials
- An established communications plan
- Increases in income supports or available income for families
- Removal of child support as deductible income for families in receipt of social assistance

### **Recommendation 3:**

**Continue to fund the dental cleaning program for pregnant women on Ontario Works (OW) and expand free or reduced cost dental service to low-income women who do not have dental benefits.**

#### *Activity*

- Continue to fund dental cleaning for pregnant women on social assistance
- Explore ways to reduce the cost for dental service for other low-income women who do not have dental benefits

#### *Process*

- Analysis and costing of the program
- Analysis of existing models
- Meet with Ministry officials, MPPs and MPs

#### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes / Haliburton County
- Community agencies

#### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2017

#### *Resources Required*

- Staff (City and Agency) engagement

#### *Measurable Indicators*

- Number of women served through the OW program
- Number of new no cost / low cost programs
- Number of meetings held with government officials.

## **Recommendation 4:**

**Support early learning programs, child activities and social supports for young children (0 to 6 years of age) and their families.**

### *Activity*

- Explore the types of early learning programs, child activities and social supports for young children and investigate the potential for a community hub
- Continue to support and expand early learning programs, child activities and social supports for young children.

### *Process*

- Identify the supports already provided, identify gaps
- Explore the potential of community hubs to optimize space and streamline service delivery
- Investigate funding opportunities

### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes / County of Haliburton
- Community Planning Table for Children and Youth
- Community agencies

### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2019

### *Resources Required*

- Staff (City and Agency) engagement

### *Measurable Indicators*

- Number of supports currently available
- Number of gaps identified
- Number of community partnerships
- Hubs developed

## **Recommendation 5:**

### **Advocate for a universal child care system.**

#### *Activity*

- Advocate for a universal child care system with provincial and federal governments and politicians.

#### *Process*

- Develop a strategic communications plan
- Meet with Ministry officials, MPPs and MPs
- Analysis of existing models
- Collaborate with the Economic Development departments

#### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes / County of Haliburton
- City of Kawartha Lakes Human Services
- Community Planning Table for Children and Youth
- Community agencies
- Provincial and Federal Governments

#### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2018

#### *Resources Required*

- Time commitments of staff and agencies

#### *Measurable Indicators*

- Number of meetings held with government officials
- Development and implementation of a universal child care system

## **Recommendation 6:**

### **Increase the number of licensed child care spaces.**

#### *Activity*

- Advocate for funding to the early learning and child care sector with both provincial and federal governments and politicians in order to ensure that affordable, high quality, licensed child care is available to those families that need it.
- Expand the number of licensed home child care providers.

#### *Process*

- Develop a strategic communications plan
- Meet with Ministry officials, MPPs and MPs
- Analysis of existing models
- Link to workforce development activities and collaborate with Economic Development departments and agencies

#### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes / County of Haliburton
- Economic Development departments and agencies
- City of Kawartha Lakes Human Services
- Licensed child care agencies
- Community Planning Table for Children and Youth
- Community agencies
- Provincial and Federal Governments

#### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2018

#### *Resources Required*

- Time commitments of staff and agencies

#### *Measurable Indicators*

- Number of new licensed child care spaces created
- Number of new licensed home care providers
- Number of strategies developed with the Economic Development department
- Number of meetings held with government officials



## **Recommendation 7:**

**Support subsidised, no- or low-cost recreational opportunities, library programs and community events for children and youth and their families.**

### *Activity*

- Determine options to provide financial support for no cost / low cost summer camps, library programs and community events for children and their families.
- Provide financial support recreational programs.
- Explore the potential for a community hub to include free recreational programs.
- Explore the more effective use of the Community Use of Schools program.

### *Process*

- Analysis and costing of the program
- Analysis of existing models
- Explore the possibility of subsidies or no- or low-cost options

### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes / Haliburton County
- Community Services / Recreation Departments
- Community agencies
- School boards
- Other key stakeholders

### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2017

### *Resources Required*

- Time commitments of staff and agencies

### *Measurable Indicators*

- Completed inventory of programs
- Number of children served through the programs
- Number of available subsidies or free / low cost programs available
- Number of programs offered at schools during off-school hours

## **Recommendation 8:**

**Increase the number of health, recreational, social and educational program supports and services available in the community.**

### *Activity*

Complete an environmental scan of neighbourhoods and communities across the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County to assess health, well-being, income and children's development indicators and services available.

### *Process*

- Identify priority neighbourhoods
- Analysis of health, well-being, income and children's development indicators
- Analysis of services available
- Analysis of gaps in service
- Analysis of improvement opportunities
- Develop and/or implement additional programs and services

### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes Economic Development
- City of Kawartha Lakes Human Services
- Community agencies
- Community Planning Table for Children and Youth
- School Boards

### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2018

### *Resources Required*

- Time commitments of staff and agencies
- Funding commitments from funding bodies

### *Measurable Indicators*

- Services available identified
- Gaps in service identified
- Number of supports and services developed
- EDI results
- EQAO results
- Health, well-being, income and children's developmental indicators established

### **Recommendation 9:**

**Support and expand student nutrition programs (SNPs) both during the school year and in the summer months.**

#### *Activity*

- Complete an inventory of available SNPs in every school and availability of programs during school break periods
- Determine options to provide financial support for student nutrition programs (SNPs) during the school year and in the summer months
- Advocate to Ministry of Education for increased funding

#### *Process*

- Analysis and costing of the programs
- Analysis of existing models
- Communications with Ministry of Education and School Boards

#### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes / Haliburton County
- Community agencies
- School Boards
- Business community
- Provincial Government

#### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2017

#### *Resources Required*

- Time commitments of staff and agencies

#### *Measurable Indicators*

- Number of children served through the program
- Number of meals served
- Number of children served in the summer
- Number of meals served in the summer

## **Recommendation 10:**

### **Support and promote mentorship programs for children and youth.**

#### *Activity*

- Provide support for mentorship programs for children and youth.

#### *Process*

- Analysis and costing of the program
- Analysis of existing models
- Development of a mentorship model or program

#### *Responsibility*

- City of Kawartha Lakes / Haliburton County
- Human Services department
- Economic Development departments and agencies
- School Boards
- Community agencies

#### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016 - 2017

#### *Resources Required*

- Time commitments of staff and agencies

#### *Measurable Indicators*

- Number of children and youth served through the program

## **Recommendation 11:**

### **Municipal Council endorsement of a Children's Charter.**

#### *Activity*

- Develop a Children's Charter for Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County
- Presentation to Councils

#### *Process*

- Develop a vision of the rights that all children in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County should enjoy.
- Present to Councils
- Endorsement by Councils

#### *Responsibility*

- Early Learning Sub-Committee of the Community Planning Table for Children and Youth for the City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County

#### *Timeline(s)*

- 2016

#### *Resources Required*

- Time commitments of staff and agencies

#### *Measurable Indicators*

- Charter created
- Presented to City and County Councils
- Endorsement by City and County Councils

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