



Children and
Families who
are **supported,**
succeed.

Success By 6[®]

Year End Report

March 31, 2014

Web: successby6edmonton.info



@successby6ed

The early years are full of opportunity, creativity and wonder. Research demonstrates that these first years set a foundation for lifelong learning, health and well-being.

Currently, in Alberta, only 46 percent of kindergarten-aged children are developing appropriately in all five areas of development. Alberta EDI results (2009 -2013) Ecmmap.ca

The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood. Children learn best in safe environments and strong, nurturing relationships where attempts to interact with adults are met and returned much like serving and returning a ball in a game of tennis.

In the absence of supportive environments, some kinds of stress are toxic to the developing brain and have long-term effects on health and wellness. Toxic stress is one explanation for how adversity and inequity gets “under the skin” and built into the body. When children grow up in chronically stressful conditions, such as communities characterized by high levels of violence or untreated mental health issues, their risk of toxic stress increases.

Did you know?

In Edmonton, 10,780 children, six years of age and younger, are living below the low income measures (after tax) – Edmonton Social Planning Council (Tracking the Trends 2013)

Experiencing poverty can increase family stress, which impacts children.

As a community, we all have a role to play to ensure children have the environments and experiences they need to help them learn, develop and thrive.

Success By 6[®] is a community initiative managed by United Way focused on ensuring all children in Edmonton have the supports they need for a lifetime of healthy growth and development.

The focus on Early Learning and Development is a priority for United Way so that all children and youth can achieve their full potential, complete high school, and set a course toward a bright future.

Strategic priorities:

- High public awareness of the importance of the early years for children’s growth and development;
- An accessible, comprehensive and cohesive range of supports and services;
- Social policy that supports a stable early childhood system and increases long-term success of young children and their families; and
- Strong links within communities and between early childhood and school age initiatives and services.

An overview of the work of Success By 6® to achieve impact in the areas of priority includes:

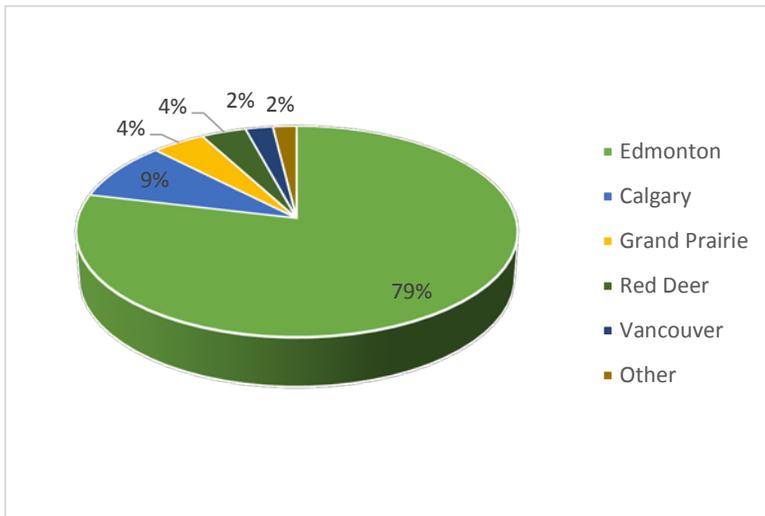
Raising Awareness of the Importance of the Early Years

Communicating with the Public

This year, Success By 6® invested both time and resources, and reached audiences through the print and multimedia opportunities. Our website has been one of our strongest communication tools. Content on the website has been updated to provide a gathering place for research, reports and information on child development.

Between April 1, 2013 and March 31, 2014, Success By 6® had **2,014 unique visitors** with almost **8,000** pageviews on the website. 69.5% were new visitors, and 30.5% were returning visitors, which indicates a good percentage of loyalty.

Where is our audience located?



A Few Interesting Stats:

40% of web visitors find the site through a Google search for “Success By 6 Edmonton”.

25% come directly using the web address, and 11% come through myunitedway.ca

We reached more than 680 followers on Twitter – an increase of 180 since last year.

131 website visits were to access posted Blogs related to healthy child development.

[Great New Resources for Parents](#)

[\(Click to view blog post\)](#)

Photo: (L-R) AHS Medical Officer of Health, **Dr. Richard Musto**; Director of United Way, Success By 6, **Ilene Fleming**; Director, Healthy Children and Families at Alberta Health Services, **Maureen Devolin**; Executive Director, Healthy Living, Population and Public Health, AHS, **Sara Jordan**; Associate Minister of Wellness, **Dave Rodney**



Raising Awareness of Children's Rights and Current Barriers

It's Our Right to Be Heard!

Success By 6[®] has co-chaired the National Child Day Collaborative since 2008. This year, the Collaborative expanded to include both regional and provincial efforts.

Our partners include:

- City of Edmonton,
- YMCA of Northern Alberta,
- REACH Edmonton,
- Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research,
- Alberta Recreation & Parks Association,
- Alberta Resource Centre for Quality Enhancement,
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Alberta Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area,
- Edmonton Public Library,
- EMap Coalitions,
- Upstart/United Way of Calgary, and
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.



The goals of the collaborative are to:

- Educate children and all Albertans about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Highlight the voices of children and youth;
- Raise awareness about the reality for children in our community; and
- Engage people in supporting children to have protection, be provided for and to fully participate in our community.

Activities to promote National Child Day this year included:

390 people
attended free swim
events

74 people attended
the Poverty
Simulation

270 participants
attended Library
Programs
highlighting National
Child Day

239 people followed
National Child Day
on Twitter

- A free swim for families Sunday, November 24 at all YMCAs of Edmonton;
- United Way Poverty Simulation on November 20;
- National Child Day proclamation event at the Stanley Milner Library including speeches from dignitaries, a presentation by students from City Hall School, and the launch of a video "[We Have a Voice](#)" ([click to view](#)) created by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate; and
- On Saturday, November 23 the Edmonton Public Library promoted National Child Day at 15 of their children's programs reaching approximately 270 participants.

Schools, communities and families were encouraged to "[Get Involved](#)" in National Child Day through a variety of print materials, and for the first time, some were translated into French and distributed in schools. A Twitter campaign was used to share celebration stories.

Hashtag #NCDAlberta2013

Engaging Children and Youth

How Would You Like to Celebrate National Child Day?



This Wordle was created from children's comments collected at the YMCA Family Swims!

Increasing Access to a Comprehensive Range of Supports and Services

Success By 6[®] provided **\$90,400** in funding to programs, supporting access for **1,158** preschool age children.

Funding for Early Childhood Programs

Success By 6[®] has been focused on supporting young children and their families to have the best possible foundation prior to school entry since 1998. In recent years, with the provincial collection of child development information on a community wide basis, we now have access to information on children's development in five domains at kindergarten age.

Through the collection of information using the Early Development Instrument (EDI), we know that **31.15%** of children in Edmonton are experiencing great difficulty in one or more areas of development when they enter kindergarten.

The five developmental domains and percentage of children experiencing challenges in each area are:

- **Communication Skills & General Knowledge: 33.01% are not developing appropriately**
Child is able to communicate needs and wants in socially appropriate ways, can tell stories and has general knowledge about the outside world that is age appropriate.
- **Emotional Maturity: 28.39% are not developing appropriately**
Child is able to express emotions at an age-appropriate level and empathize with others.
- **Physical Health & Well-being: 27.2% are not developing appropriately**
Child is well-rested, well-nourished and can sustain energy levels during kindergarten activities; is physically independent (can look after own basic needs); has gross motor skills (e.g., able to catch and throw a ball) and fine motor skills (e.g., able to handle crayons and pencils).
- **Social Competence: 23.19% are not developing appropriately**
Child plays and gets along with others, is curious and likes to explore, respects adult authority and is able to control own behaviour.
- **Language & Thinking Skills: 21.06% are not developing appropriately**
Child is interested in reading and writing, and can count and recognize some shapes and colours.

For more information on child development in Edmonton, please visit www.ecmap.ca

Success By 6® funding is provided to four different programs. The developmental domains that would be supported through each program are included in the description of the program and impact stories that follow.

Literacy Classroom on Wheels \$62,500



Supports:

- Language & Thinking Skills;
- Communication Skills & General Knowledge;
- Social Competence;
- Physical Health & Well-being; and
- Emotional Maturity.

Program Description: The Literacy C.O.W. bus, delivered through the Centre for Family Literacy, is an ideal venue for families to start their literacy journey in a fun, unique way.

Parents and caregivers are supported in learning about their child's literacy development and their role as their child's first teacher.

Children are engaged in language and literacy learning activities that are age appropriate and fun with their parent/caregiver, which helps to foster positive relationships. Parents also learn about other resources available in the community to help their child(ren) be successful in future learning. The C.O.W. bus currently visits 10 sites in communities around Edmonton, where it stops for 1.5 hour visits to do programming and allow families to borrow books.

This past year, **355 adults** and **527 children** accessed the program in 10 communities, and **4,317 books** were borrowed from the COW bus.

Impact Story:

When Jennifer first came on board the C.O.W. bus, she was exceedingly shy and lacking self-confidence. Week by week, as she and her younger daughter joined in the program, she blossomed into a chatty, delightful young woman. The C.O.W. bus gave Jennifer a safe place to interact with other parents who modeled family literacy skills while playing with their children. She became more comfortable, her confidence grew so she was able to take on a more active parenting role.

Jennifer faces many challenges in her life. She is raising two daughters on an AISH income, lives in subsidized housing and has not finished high school. She does not drive, and has limited family support. She keeps trying her best to be a good parent and to make things better for her children.

Jennifer was chosen as the recipient of the Lois Hole Literacy -Family Learner Award, in 2013 and gave a heartfelt and stirring speech at the breakfast. She praises Local C.O.W. Bus program with giving her the confidence to continue to make a better life for her children and to not give up on her personal goals.

Early Science Discovery Program - \$5,000

Supports:

- Communication Skills & General Knowledge
- Social Competence

Program Description: TELUS World of Science Edmonton, through its Early Science Discovery Program, provides young children science discovery learning. The goal of the program is to foster excitement for science and life-long learning. Pre-school and kindergarten students from high risk areas, identified by the Edmonton Catholic School Division, the Edmonton Public School Board and Success By 6®, have an opportunity to attend the Science Centre. This opportunity includes time in the Discoveryland Gallery, designed for the learning styles and for the developmental level of ages 8 and below. As well as either an interpretive program designed for pre-school/kindergarten or an age appropriate Full-Dome show to teach them about space and our place in it.

The outcome of this program is for students in high risk areas to be given a chance to learn science and be inspired about learning and science in general, in a place which encourages safe, hands-on opportunities. These opportunities would not be available to the students in their regular classroom or typically through their families. This year, **485 children** accessed this program.



Impact Story:

The funding has exposed the participants, their teachers and parents, to the joys and wonders of science. In keeping with our vision to inspire voyages of life-long discovery, this program helps to plant the seed of how learning can be fun! As much as the children are impacted by the program, the effect on their parents is as impactful. In our ever increasing knowledge-based economy, inspiring participants' parents to find new ways to learn and grow is crucial to the future success of our community.

Preschool Learn To Skate and Swim Program- \$7,900

Supports:

- Communication Skills & General Knowledge;
- Social Competence;
- Physical Health & Well-being; and
- Emotional Maturity.

Program Description:

The Preschool Learn to Skate and Swim program, offered by the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, provides preschool age children from immigrant families the opportunity to be active while learning preliminary skating and swimming skills. The program helps new Canadians to connect with community resources, develop the skills needed to participate in the activity, and participate more fully in the community. Program coordinators guide families through the registration process and help them become more aware of the local recreation facilities in their communities.

82 children accessed the program in the past year.

This is a unique program that helps immigrant families to integrate into Canadian society. It reduces isolation and helps kids to get opportunity to participate in Canadian sports.



“Families gathered at the Glengarry Arena (13340 85 St) as she takes part in a learn-to-skate program for new families last weekend. The program is a joint effort between the Fliteway Figure Skating Club and the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. TREVOR ROBB Edmonton Examiner”

Impact Story:

One 6-year old boy had separation anxiety about getting into the water, and the YMCA staff allowed the mother to go in with him until he gained more confidence. The majority of the children come from families who want their children to be exposed to sports that they themselves have many fears about: namely ice and water. They are so very grateful for the support the whole family gets in this program in finding a safe place to overcome their fears.

Books for Children \$15,000

Supports:

- Language & Thinking Skills;
- Communication Skills & General Knowledge;
- Social Competence;
- Physical Health & Well-being; and
- Emotional Maturity.

Program Description:

Increasing early literacy is the main focus of the Books for Children program at Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre.

Books for Children offers three main family literacy programs: Books for Babies, Books for Toddlers and Books for Preschoolers. The program encourages parents and caregivers to share books with their babies and preschool age children by showing them ways to engage young children through books, songs and rhymes. Additionally, the program helps families to feel more connected to their community and helps to enhance the literacy skills of parents.



64 children and 55 parents/caregivers accessed the program in 2013.

Impact Story:

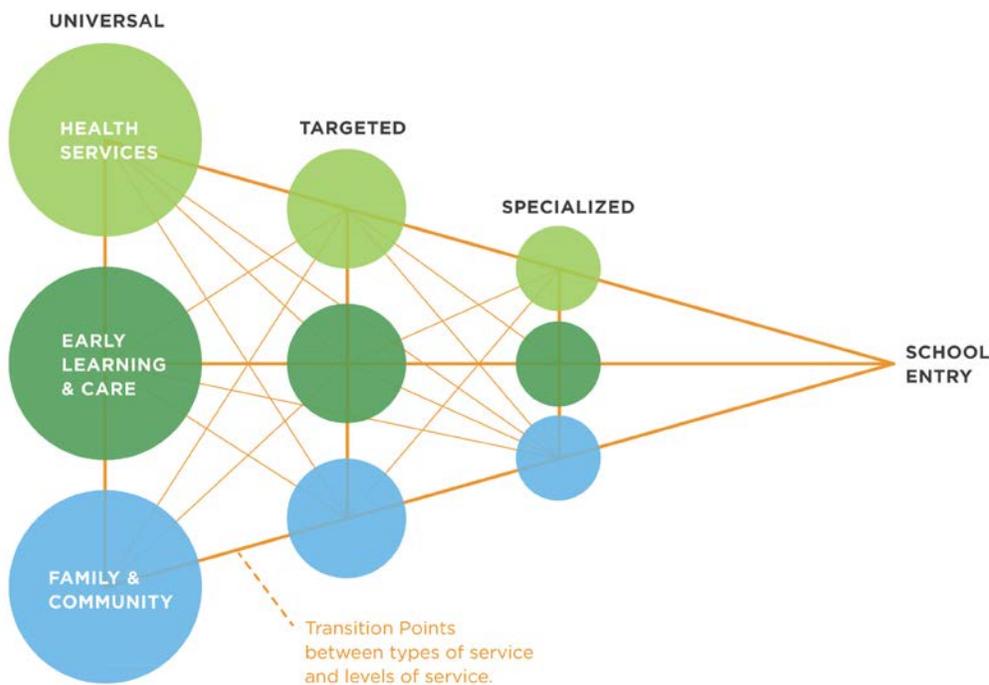
Although many achievements stand out during this reporting period, the “periphery” literacy opportunities that complemented our Books for Children program created a rich tapestry of literacy-based experiences for our families.

Unique to each family that attends our Books for Children program(s) are literacy practices that are grounded in culture, context and the many different traditions in which oral and print communication skills and other literacies are passed on from one generation to another. Cultural values and experiences frame our ways of learning and perceiving the world, and are integral to how individuals learn, acquire language and express themselves. Experiences shared between families in our programming, whether through reading stories, story-telling or expressing literacy in their first language, provide opportunities that contribute to strengthening the overall literacy development of family members.

Books for Children programming has the ability to empower newcomers in Edmonton by providing opportunities to network with others in the community, learn about resources and services available, and practice speaking English while meeting new people. In doing so, the program helps to reduce risks leading to social isolation and emotional loneliness commonly faced by newcomers.

Influencing Social Policy to Support a Range of Supports in the Early Years

Early Years Continuum Project



A continuum of supports and services for young children and their families is essential to meeting the broad range of needs families' experience in creating the best possible foundation prior to formal schooling. In addition to increasing families' awareness of the services and supports available and how to access them, a more formal and linked continuum (or system) could provide a basis for investments in the early years to have more significant impact.

Through the Early Years Continuum Project, we were able to learn from communities as they explored strategies to increase access to positive experiences, and decrease barriers for families with young children so they are able to connect easily and effectively across a continuum of supports from birth to school entry and beyond.

The learning and recommendations from this project are intended to increase the ability of communities, service providers and policy makers to best support the healthy development of young children prenatal through school entry, and beyond. The essential voice of parents have been captured to inform decisions about how to best support the unique and evolving needs of families in our province.

“It is clear that the work you have done has immediately benefitted children and families in the communities involved in the project. The desire to find better ways to coordinate Early Years services continues to be a priority and the work you have done will inform that direction.”

Alberta Education

Overarching Goals:

- Families and children have access to a comprehensive range of early learning and care services in their communities;
- Children have opportunities to build a strong foundation of learning and development prior to beginning school; and,
- Parents needs and interests inform decisions regarding environments to support their child’s healthy development.

Unique Community Focus:

High Prairie, Northern Alberta - Building Community Capacity

- Increase collaboration and co-ordination across partners and communities;
- Support healthy pregnancies and link to pre/post natal local services; and
- Support seamless service delivery in community, increased access to the right services at the right time.

Knottwood, Edmonton, Alberta - Parents as Champions

- Increase parental confidence in parenting capacity;
- Building Connections and creating parent events to strengthen parent networks; and
- Increase community/parent leadership capacity.

Lymburn and Area, Edmonton, Alberta - Leveraging and Strengthening Connections

- Create a cross-sectoral community service provider network and meetings;
- Provide cross-sectoral “Appreciative Inquiry” training for community conversations/strengthening; and
- Develop centers of community collaboration for information sharing/support e.g. Schools, health centers, etc.

Two of the project sites, Lymburn and High Prairie, focused on intentional connections between and within services and service providers for children. High Prairie had an additional focus on better supporting children with developmental delays and those at risk for developmental delays prior to school entry.

The third site, Knottwood, focused on parent engagement and strengthening continuums based on what the parents identified.

More than simply starting “one off programs”, the project focused on engaging communities around a common goal – to learn how to better support families with young children through a system that links programs and experiences in ways that make sense to families.

A strong Developmental Evaluation tracked the outcomes over the duration of the project.

“We are no longer drowning in the dark of our own silos.”

Service Provider

Highlights of Impact Based on Goals:

Children have access to resources and supports:

Increased ability to help families' access resources they need – 72%

Increased ability to make successful referrals - 72%

Communities provide opportunities:

Increased collaboration in providing supports and services - 73%

Services are more supportive of a continuum of services – 55%

Improved networking and information sharing among early learning services - 93%

Parents inform decisions:

Increased understanding of what parents want in services – 80%

Increased parent input into program planning and delivery – 65%

Throughout the project, **525 parents** were engaged to inform the project through surveys, focus groups and photo voice.

Additional information and final report documents can be accessed on the website:

successby6edmonton.info

ALL THAT KIDS CAN BE

It is critical that communities support the development of a strong foundation for young children prior to entering school. We know that when children start behind, they often have difficulty catching up and may have challenges throughout their schooling. The activities of Success By 6® over the past year have been dedicated to championing the early years and helping all children succeed for life.

The work of Success By 6® fits within United Way's commitment to Education. From the early years to high school completion, United Way is supporting the full path of development to help children and youth achieve their potential.

Early Childhood Desired Results:

- Increase access to quality, early childhood development opportunities for children aged 0 – 3; and
- Increase the number of children entering school with age-appropriate pre-literacy skills.

United Way recognizes that education is a stepping stone to future success. By ensuring there are strong supports in the early years, communities can prevent challenges that may be more costly and difficult to overcome later on. Collectively, we can use our time, energy and resources today to ensure all students have educational success, which benefits us all.