

Our Health Counts Toronto

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Toronto

Child Development

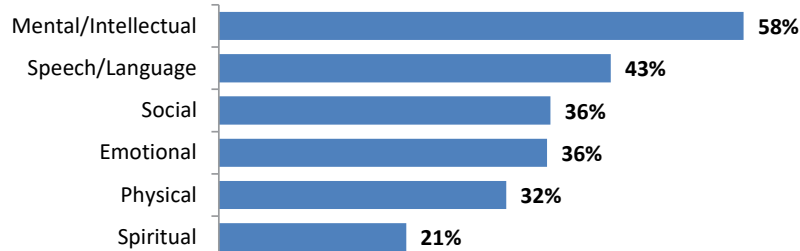
Access to quality supports and community resources for children helps to provide a foundation for future healthy development. Children's earliest experiences have a great impact on overall health and well-being as they grow up. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples described early childhood as the foundation on which identity, self-worth, intellect and strengths are built.¹

Developmental Challenges



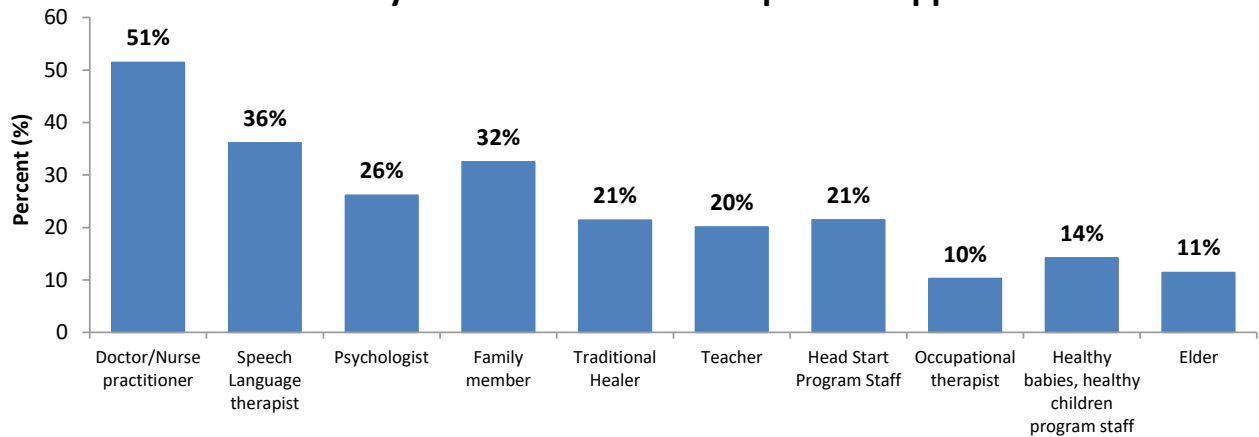
1 in 4 Indigenous caregivers in Toronto have been concerned about their child's development.

Of those concerned, the most commonly cited reasons included:

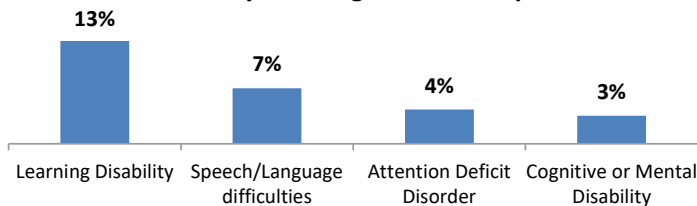


3% of Indigenous children in Toronto have been referred to a behavioural or developmental specialist.

Commonly Accessed Child Development Supports



Most prevalent child developmental and learning challenges that have been identified by teaching/health care professionals:



Other developmental challenges identified included:

- Autism Spectrum
- Blindness/Vision Problems
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Hearing Impairment
- Physical Disability

Child Development

Parenting

Indigenous parents in Toronto *agreed or strongly agreed* that:

- whatever they do, their child will remain difficult **14%**
- they are able to do things to improve their child’s behavior **96%**
- in most situations they know what to do to ensure their child behaves **98%**

Barriers to Accessing Supports

18% of parents **experienced barriers to accessing supports** for concerns about their child’s development. Some barriers identified included:

- The support was not culturally safe
- Lack of trust in the provider
- Waiting list was too long
- Could not afford transportation to the support or service
- The provider was not available

Policy Implications

Implement TRC Call to Action 12:

We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments to develop culturally safe early childhood education programs for Indigenous families, including training for early childhood and developmental service providers to deliver respectful services in the community.

Additional Recommendations:

City of Toronto, provincial and federal policy makers work in partnership with urban Indigenous peoples and organizations to:

- Develop and implement Indigenous specific programs and services to ensure Indigenous children with developmental challenges have access timely access to comprehensive assessments and appropriate school and community supports.
- Sustain and expand Indigenous culture based early childhood education programs.
- Develop and implement Indigenous specific community hubs across for parents of children with behavioural and developmental concerns to access support, resources and social connection.
- Ensure that non-Indigenous specific early childhood education programs and early learning centres are culturally safe for Indigenous children and their families by hiring Indigenous staff, including Indigenous programming, and requiring non-Indigenous staff to take Indigenous culture safety training.

Definitions

Indigenous adults: persons 15 years or older self-identifying as Indigenous, such as First Nations, Métis, Indigenous children: Indigenous children aged 0-6 years living in the City of Toronto. Parent: biological and non-biological parent and/or caregiver.

Population based estimates were created using respondent driven sampling (see Methods and Design Factsheet for more details)

Sources

1.Canada et al. (1996)



For the full OHC Toronto report visit: www.welllivinghouse.com

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Child Culture and Identity Reference

Our Health Counts Toronto is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Toronto and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada. Participants were selected using respondent-driven sampling, a statistical method which uses social networks in the community to recruit Indigenous people living in the city.

Survey Question

RDS Prevalence Estimate
(95% Confidence Interval)

Have you ever had a concern about the progress of your child's physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and/or social development?

Yes	24.6% (16.4, 32.7)
No	75.4% (67.3, 83.6)

What areas of development were you concerned about?

Physical	31.6% (15.7, 47.4)
Mental/Intellectual	57.7% (41.3, 74.0)
Speech/Language	43.1% (26.1, 60.0)
Emotional	36.1% (19.6, 52.6)
Social	36.4% (20.7, 52.2)
Spiritual	20.6% (7.6, 33.6)
Other	3.9% (0.0, 9.9)
Child that have been referred to a behavioural/development specialist in the past 12 months	2.7% (0.6, 4.8)

Did you access any of the following supports for your child for developmental concerns?

Doctor/nurse practitioner	51.5% (34.5, 68.4)
Speech language therapist	36.1% (18.8, 53.4)
Psychologist	26.1% (10.8, 41.5)
Family member	32.5% (15.9, 49.1)
Traditional healer	21.4% (7.8, 35.0)
Teacher	20.1% (6.9, 33.3)
Head start program staff	21.5% (5.1, 37.8)
Occupational therapist	10.3% (0.3, 20.2)
Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program staff	14.2% (0.0, 29.5)
Elder	11.4% (0.0, 24.1)
Midwife	
Physiotherapist	
Ontario Early Years Centre program staff	
CAP-C program staff	
Other program staff	
Other	24.5% (10.6, 38.4)

Have you ever been told by a health care professional or teaching/child care professional that your child has any of the following health conditions?

Learning disability	12.7% (4.6, 20.8)
Speech/language difficulties	6.9% (2.5, 11.2)
Attention deficit disorder (ADD)/Attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	4.2% (0.8, 7.6)
Cognitive or mental disability	3.4% (0.5, 6.4)
Autism spectrum	
Blindness or serious vision problems	1.6% (0.0, 3.3)
Fetal Alcohol Disorder (FASD, FASE, FAS)	1.2% (0.0, 2.6)
Hearing impairment	1.6% (0.0, 3.2)
Physical disability (other than visual and/or hearing impairment)	

Please indicate if you are in agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

In most situations I know what I should do to ensure my child behaves...	
Strongly agree or agree	98.2% (96.1, 100.0)
Disagree or strongly disagree	1.8% (0.0, 3.9)
I am able to do things that will improve my child's behaviour	
Strongly agree or agree	95.9% (91.7, 100.0)
Disagree or strongly disagree	4.1% (0.0, 8.3)
Whatever I do my child will remain difficult	
Strongly agree or agree	13.9% (7.5, 20.4)
Disagree or strongly disagree	86.1% (79.6, 92.5)

Did you encounter barriers in accessing supports for concerns on your child's development

Yes	18.4% (5.8, 31.0)
No	74.3% (60.0, 88.6)

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Our Health Counts: Community health assessment by the people, for the people ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆



For the full OHC Toronto report visit:
www.welllivinghouse.com

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