

# Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay

## Child Chronic Health Conditions

Similar to Indigenous adults, Indigenous children are more likely to experience chronic health conditions than non-Indigenous children. Diagnosis of a chronic health condition at a young age increases the likelihood of having multiple health conditions in adulthood.<sup>1</sup> Determinants of health, such as food security/sovereignty, systemic discrimination, and exposure to environmental pollution, tend to exacerbate the prevalence of chronic diseases.<sup>2</sup> Indigenous children are more likely to experience these factors due to inequities in access to health/social services and barriers faced by families to meet optimal healthy living environments. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission highlights the importance of addressing health inequities by regularly collecting and reporting on health outcome data for Indigenous adults and children.<sup>3</sup>

**23%** of Indigenous children (14 years and under) in Thunder Bay had at least one chronic health condition

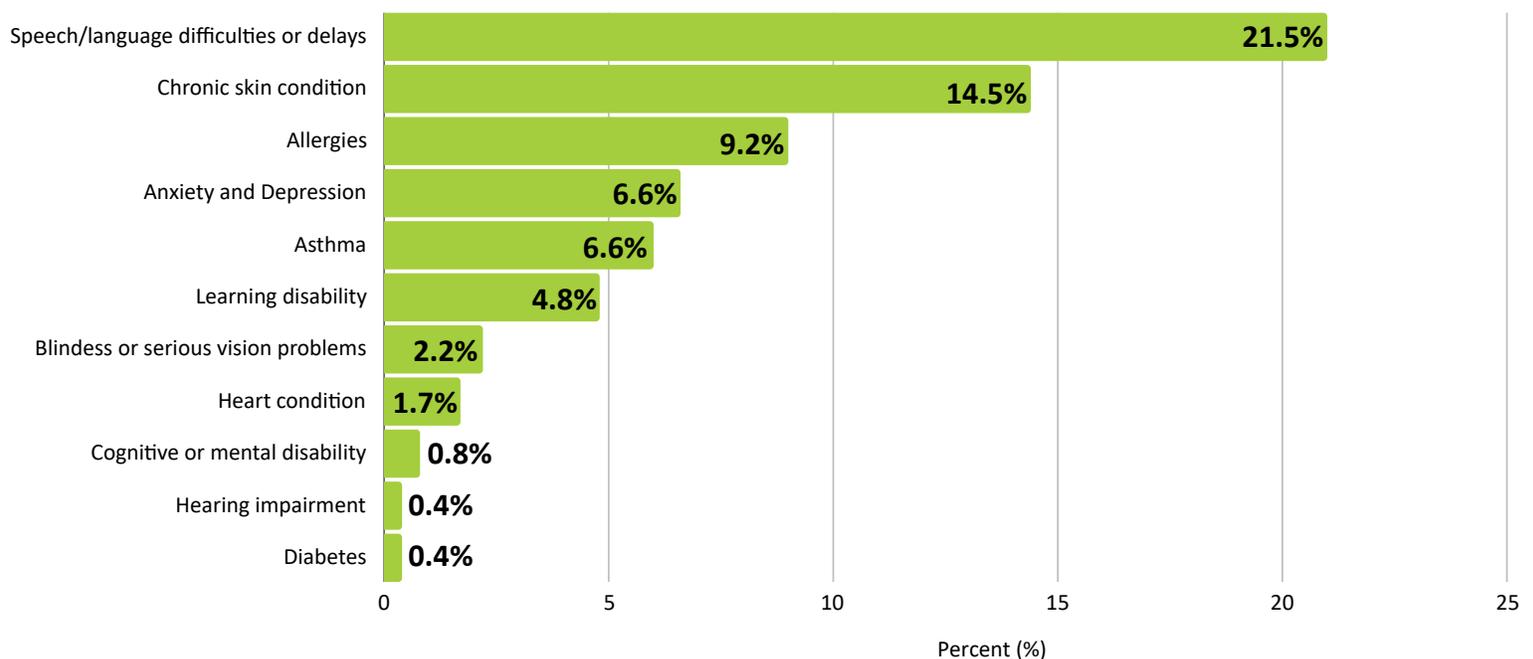
**17%** of Indigenous children (14 years and under) in Thunder Bay had two or more chronic health conditions

## More than 3 in 10

Indigenous children with chronic health conditions **were prevented or limited from participating in school and/or other activities** as a result of their reported health conditions.

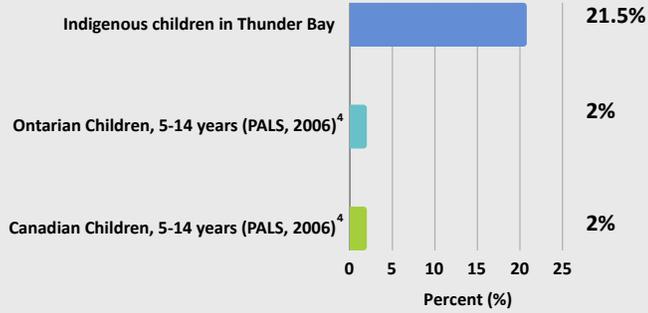


**Have you ever been told by a healthcare professional or teaching/child care professional that your child has any of the following conditions?**

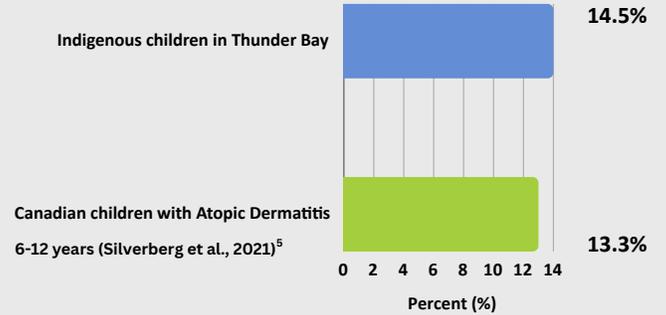


## Chronic Health Conditions: Demographic Comparisons

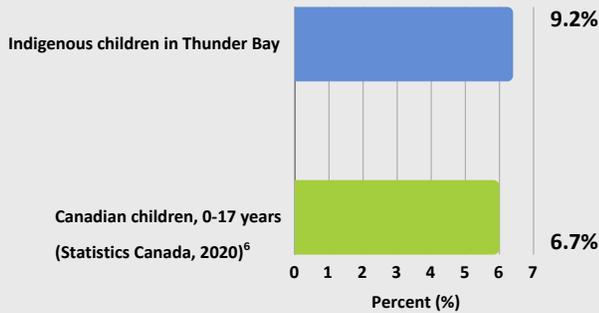
### Speech/Language Difficulties or Delays



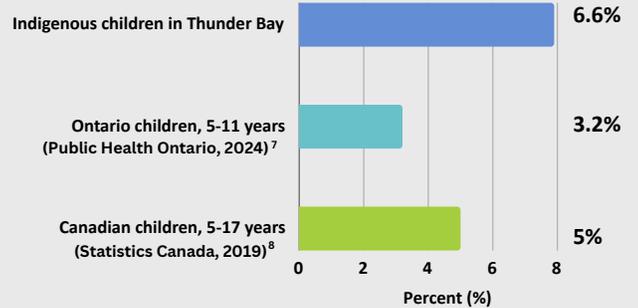
### Chronic Skin Condition



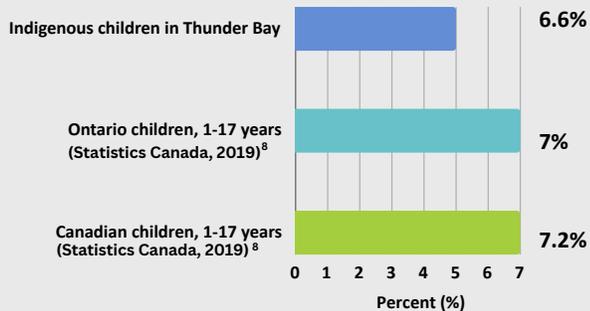
### Allergies



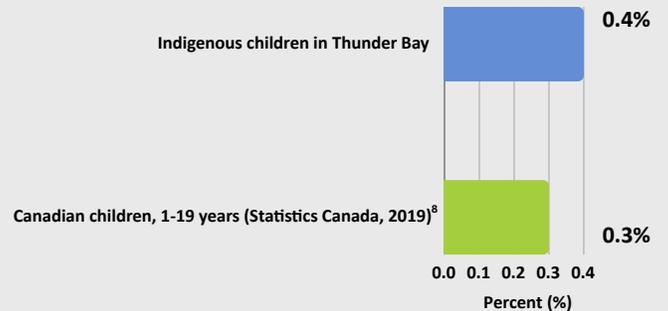
### Anxiety and Depression



### Asthma



### Diabetes



## Community Priority: Increasing Speech and Language Services

**21.5%** of Indigenous children living in Thunder Bay reported having speech and/or language delays diagnosed by a healthcare professional. This is 10x higher than that of the general child population.<sup>4</sup> Research shows that, internationally, there is an absence of culturally and linguistically sensitive speech-language assessments and services that can support Indigenous children, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families.<sup>9</sup>

### Policy Implications

We call on the city of Thunder Bay, provincial, and federal governments to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples living in urban and related homelands and urban-based Indigenous organizations to:

1. Address barriers in accessing programs and services, including culturally relevant public health and health promotion programs to address modifiable chronic disease risk factors. For example, reducing commercial tobacco use, improving nutrition such as access to traditional foods, and increasing safe environments for physical activity
2. Provide funding to undertake longitudinal research to better understand chronic health conditions among the Indigenous communities.

**TRC Call Action 19:** We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Indigenous peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as chronic diseases and the availability of appropriate health services.<sup>3</sup>

**TRC Call to Action 21:** We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Indigenous healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms.<sup>3</sup>

**MMIWG Report Calls to Justice 3.2:** We call upon all governments to provide adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centred and community-based health and wellness services that are accessible and culturally appropriate, and meet the health and wellness needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.<sup>10</sup>

<b>Definitions</b>	Indigenous children: persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, and/or Inuit) by their parent or guardian, and living or using services in the City of Thunder Bay.	Population-based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling
<b>Sources</b>	1. Pavela & Latham (2016); 2. Cockerham et al. (2017); 3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015); 4. PALS, (2006); 5. Silverberg et al., (2021); 6. Statistics Canada (2020); 7. Public Health Ontario (2024); 8. Statistics Canada (2019); 9. Salins et al., (2022); 10. MMIWG (2019)	
<b>Authors</b>	Julia Iannace, Marcie Snyder, Lisa Avery, Stephanie McConkey, Raman Brar, Michael Rotondi, Janet Smylie	
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# Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

## Child Chronic Health Conditions Reference

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay is an inclusive community-based health survey for Indigenous peoples of Thunder Bay and is part of the largest Indigenous population health study in Canada.

Adult 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.

Child surveys were completed by OHC Thunder Bay adult survey participants who were parents/custodial relatives/guardians of children 14 years of age or younger. Children resided with them and were under their care.

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>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?</b>	
Allergies	9.2% (5.7, 12.7)
Anemia	2.2% (0.4, 4.4)
Anxiety/Depression	6.6% (3.5, 10.3)
Asthma	6.6% (3.5, 10.3)
ADD/ADHD	3.0% (0.8, 5.2)
Autism spectrum asperger's or related	2.2% (0.4, 3.9)
Blindness or serious vision problems	2.2% (0.4, 4.4)
Cognitive or Mental disability	0.8% (0.0, 2.2)
Chronic skin condition	14.5% (10.1, 18.9)
Fetal alcohol disorder	2.2% (0.4, 4.4)
Hearing impairment	0.4% (0.0, 1.3)
Heart condition	1.7% (0.4, 3.5)
Learning disability	4.8% (2.2, 7.5)
Speech/language difficulties or delays	21.5% (16.2, 26.8)
Physical disability	0.8% (0.0, 2.2)
<b>Does this/do these conditions or health problems prevent or limit your child's participation in school, at play or any other activity for a child his/her age?</b>	
Yes	35.4% (25.8, 46.2)
No	60.2% (49.4, 70.9)
Don't know	1.0% (0.0, 3.2)
No response	3.2%
<b>Have you ever been told by a health care professional that your child has diabetes?</b>	
Yes	0.4% (0.0, 1.3)
No	98.2% (96.4, 99.5)
No response	1.3%
<b>Multimorbidity among Indigenous children (children less than 15 years of age)</b>	
No chronic health conditions	60.3% (53.7, 66.5)
One chronic health condition	22.9% (17.6, 28.2)
Two or more chronic health conditions	16.7% (11.8, 22.0)



Well Living House

