

Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

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

Child Health

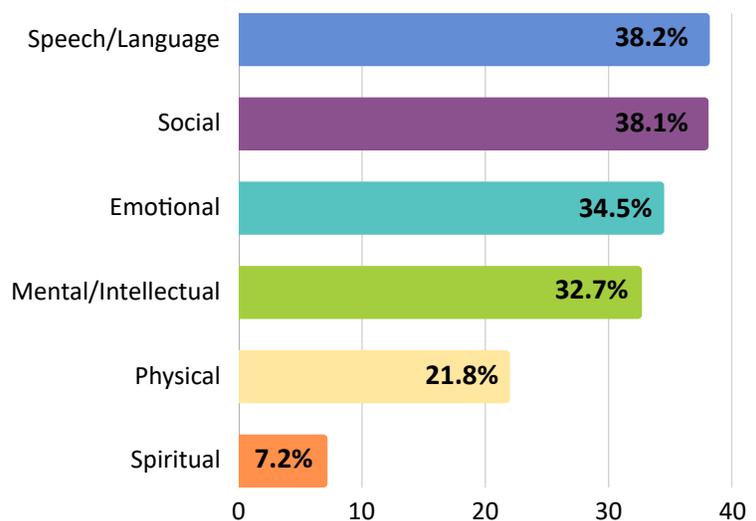
Indigenous children and their adult relatives living in urban and related homelands tend to experience poorer health outcomes when compared to the general population.^{1,2} Colonial injustices continue to impact the health and wellbeing of Indigenous children and families. This includes family disruption, past and present apprehension of Indigenous children, and the over-representation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system. This is a critical concern given the link between these impacts, children's health, and community health.³

In Balance

24% of guardians/parents of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay reported that they had concerns about the progress of their child's physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and/or social development.

22% of parents/guardians of Indigenous children living in Thunder Bay had been told by a health care professional or teaching/child care professional that their child had **speech/language difficulties or delays**.

Among parents/guardians who reported concerns around development, the areas of development they were most concerned about are in the chart below:



Accessing Supports

33% of guardians/parents of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay encountered barriers in accessing supports for their child's social and developmental wellbeing.

The most commonly accessed supports for child development concerns included:

- **Doctors/Nurse practitioners (53%)**
- **Speech-language therapists (35%)**

Immunizations

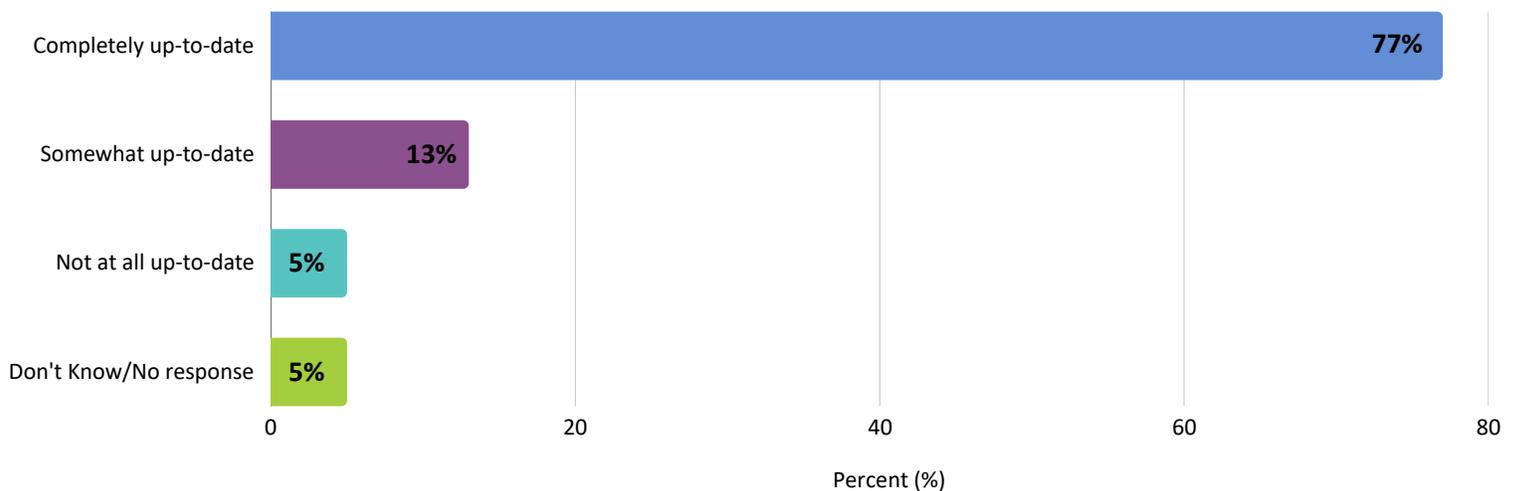
Over 4 in 5

Indigenous children 6 years of age and younger in Thunder Bay had received immunizations.



39% of Indigenous parents/guardians in Thunder Bay indicated that a health care provider **did not** discuss their child's immunizations with them in the past year.

77% of Indigenous children 6 years of age or younger, who had received their immunizations, had completely up-to-date immunizations.



Injury

6% of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay were injured seriously enough to require medical attention by a health professional (e.g., doctor, nurse, or dentist) in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Among children who experienced a serious injury requiring medical attention, the most commonly reported injuries were **Minor cuts, scrapes or bruises (46%)** and **Broken or fractured bones (23%)**

Physical Activity

74% of Indigenous children in Thunder Bay, aged 5 to 14 years, met the recommended amount of physical activity per day outlined by the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology.⁴

The recommended amount of physical activity for children 5-17 years is 1 hour or more of moderate to vigorous activity per day.⁴



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. Increase equitable access for Indigenous children in Thunder Bay to health care professionals, including physicians, nurse practitioners, and speech-language therapists.
2. Map and address barriers to healthcare access for Indigenous children in Thunder Bay with developmental concerns.
3. Actively recruit Indigenous health care providers and professionals, including physicians, nurse practitioners and speech-language therapists in the region.
4. Actively support and implement Indigenous-led vaccine education and services for Indigenous children and families.
5. Mandate anti-Indigenous racism policies at a systems level and Indigenous cultural safety training for professionals delivering healthcare and child development supports in Thunder Bay.

Implement TRC Call to Action 19: to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.⁵

Implement TRC Call to Action 23: Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the healthcare field; Ensure the retention of Aboriginal healthcare providers in Aboriginal communities; Provide cultural competency training for all healthcare professionals.⁵

Definitions	Indigenous children: persons 1 to 14 years self-identified as Indigenous by their parent or guardian, such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit or other Indigenous nations, living or using services in the City of Thunder Bay
Sources	1. Graham et al., (2023); 2. UNICEF (2009); 3. Okpalauwaekwe et al. (2022); 4. Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (2012); 5. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)
Authors	Julia Iannace, Marcie Snyder, Lisa Avery, Stephanie McConkey, Raman Brar, Michael Rotondi, Janet Smylie
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Population-based estimates created using respondent-driven sampling



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Our Health Counts Thunder Bay

Child Health 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)
Have you ever had a concern about the progress of your child's physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and/or social development?	
Yes	24.2% (18.9, 29.5)
No	74.8% (68.7, 80.6)
If yes, what areas of development were you concerned about?	
Physical	21.8% (12.6, 32.7)
Mental/Intellectual	32.7% (20.0, 45.4)
Speech/Language	38.2% (25.4, 50.9)
Emotional	34.5% (21.8, 47.2)
Social	38.1% (25.4, 50.9)
Spiritual	7.2% (1.8, 14.5)
Other	7.2% (1.8, 14.5)
Did you access any of the following supports for your health concern?	
Doctors/Nurse practitioners	52.7% (40.0, 65.5)
Speech-language therapists	34.5% (21.8, 47.3)
Did you encounter barriers in accessing these supports?	
Yes	32.7% (20, 45.4)
No	58.1% (45.4, 70.9)
Not applicable	9.0% (1.8, 16.3)
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?	
Speech/language difficulties or delays	21.5% (16.2, 26.4)
Within the past year, did any health care provider discuss your child's immunizations with you?	
Yes	59.0% (45.4, 70.9)
No	39.0% (29.5, 48.5)
Don't know	0.9% (0.0, 2.8)



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Child Health Reference

Survey Question	RDS Prevalence Estimate (95% Confidence Interval)
Has your child ever received immunizations?	
Yes	88.5% (81.9, 94.2)
No	7.6% (2.8, 13.3)
Don't know	2.8% (0.0, 6.8)
To the best of your knowledge, how up-to-date is your child on the immunizations recommended for their age?	
Completely up-to-date	77.1% (68.5, 84.7)
Somewhat up-to-date	13.3% (7.6, 20.0)
Not at all up-to-date	4.7% (0.9, 8.5)
Don't know	3.8% (0.9, 7.6)
In the past 12 months, was child injured seriously enough to require medical attention by a health professional?	
Yes	5.7% (3.0, 8.8)
No	92.9% (84.4, 96.0)
Don't know	0.4% (0.0, 1.7)
For the most serious injury (if more than one), what type of injury did your child have?	
Minor cuts, scrapes or bruises	46.1% (23.0, 69.2)
Broken or fractured bone	23.1% (0.0, 46.1)
On average, how many minutes of physical activity would you say your child got in total each day in the past week?	
Less than/equal to 1 hour	25.2% (13.6, 36.7)
More than 1 hour	74.2% (62.6, 85.8)
Don't know	0.7% (0.4, 0.9)



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