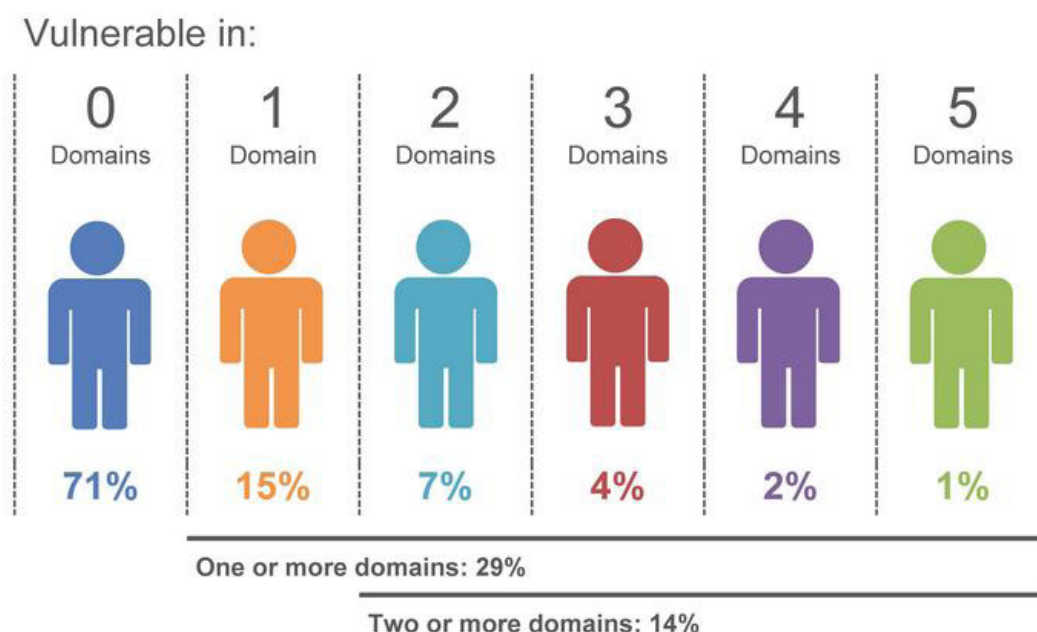


Not all children in Toronto with multiple vulnerabilities get the interventions and support they need for the best possible start in life.



RESEARCH SUPPORT: Approximately 50% of pregnancies are unplanned, placing children at greater risk for poor health and long term health consequences¹. Children who experience vulnerabilities early are more likely to experience additional long term negative outcomes including being less likely to graduate from high school, more likely to be depressed, and have poorer relationships². Access to high quality childhood services can promote early development, health and learning and can positively influence long-term outcomes³.

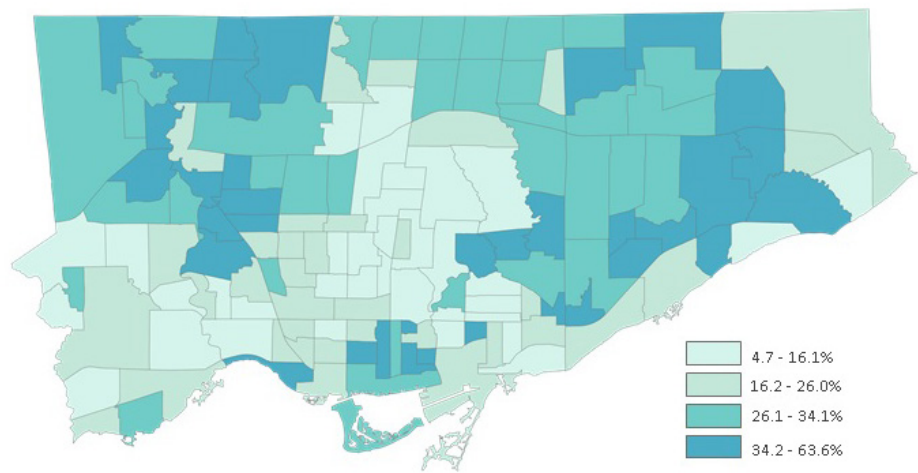
In Toronto, **14%** of children are vulnerable on multiple (2 of more) Early Development Instrument (EDI*) domains:



Further, **29%** of children in Toronto live in **low-income** households making Toronto the child poverty capital of Canada. Living in poverty influences all areas of child development. For example, beginning in the preconception and prenatal periods, individuals living in poverty with limited access to healthy food and primary health care are at greater risk of having a low birth weight baby.

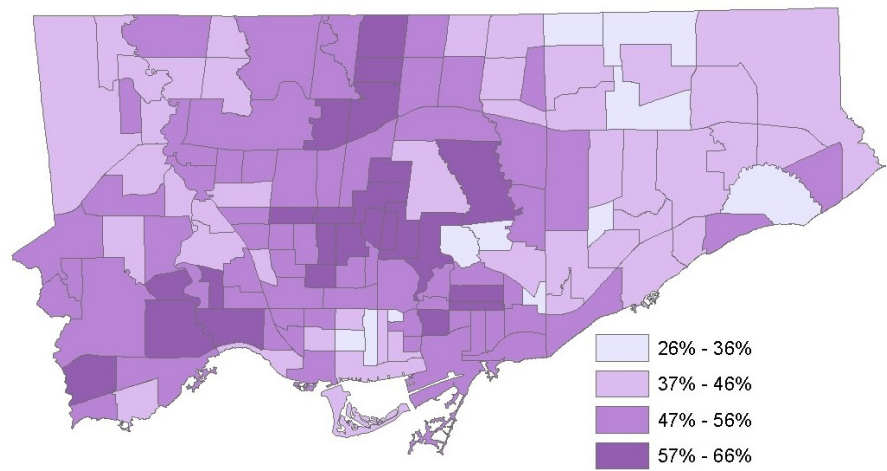
There are stark **geographic** variations in poverty and child development indicators. Further, across all our indicators we see vulnerabilities based on where a child lives, **race** and **income**.

Percent of children living below the Low-Income Measure - After Tax by neighbourhood, Tax-filer, 2013*

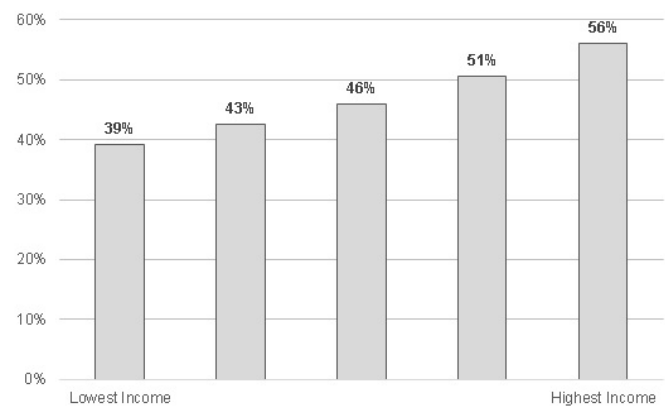


The 18-month well-baby visit is an important way to identify children at a young age who may be in need of additional services and supports. The rate of uptake of this visit varies **geographically** and by **income**.

Rate of 18-month well-baby visit by neighbourhood, children aged 1 to 2 years. Toronto, 2010 to 2013 combined*



Rate of 18-month well-baby, children aged 1 to 2 years. Toronto, 2010 to 2013 combined



What can parents and communities do to ensure all children have the best possible start?

What can policy and system planners do to ensure all children have the best possible start?



Share your thoughts: @TOChildOutcomes or #ChildFriendlyTO

1. Best Start. (2016). Ontario Prenatal Key Messages. <http://www.ontarioprenataleducation.ca/health-before-pregnancy/>
2. McCain, M & Mustard, J. F. (1999). Early years study: Reversing the real brain drain. Toronto, ON: Ontario Children's Secretariat
3. Braveman P, Sadegh-Nobari T, Egerter S. Issue brief 1: Early childhood experiences and health. Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2008 June.



Growing up in Toronto: Challenge 2: THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

Children in Toronto do not have equitable opportunities to participate in programs outside of school.

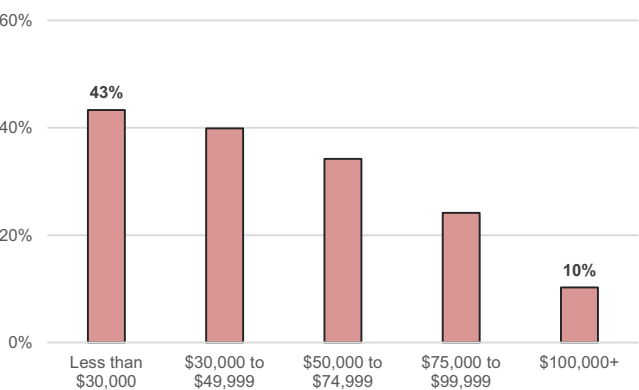


RESEARCH SUPPORT: Participating in early learning or care programs and activities outside of school can increase children’s holistic development and protect against risk factors that improve outcomes well into adolescence and young adulthood¹.

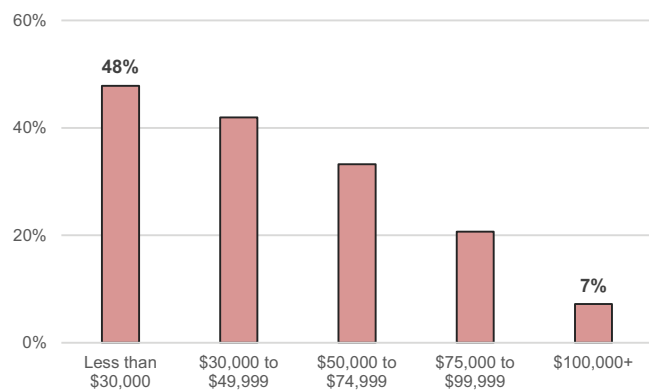
Many children in Toronto do not participate regularly in programs outside of school. Prior to entering school, 31% of children did not participate in early learning or care programs. Further, 56% of students do not participate in arts programming and 42% do not participate in sports.

Participation in these programs varies greatly based on **income**, telling us that a lack of socioeconomic resources may contribute to this gap.

Percent of students not participating in an early learning or care program by family income, TDSB (Grades K to 6), 2012*



Percent of students not participating in arts or sports by family income, TDSB (Grades K to 6), 2012*



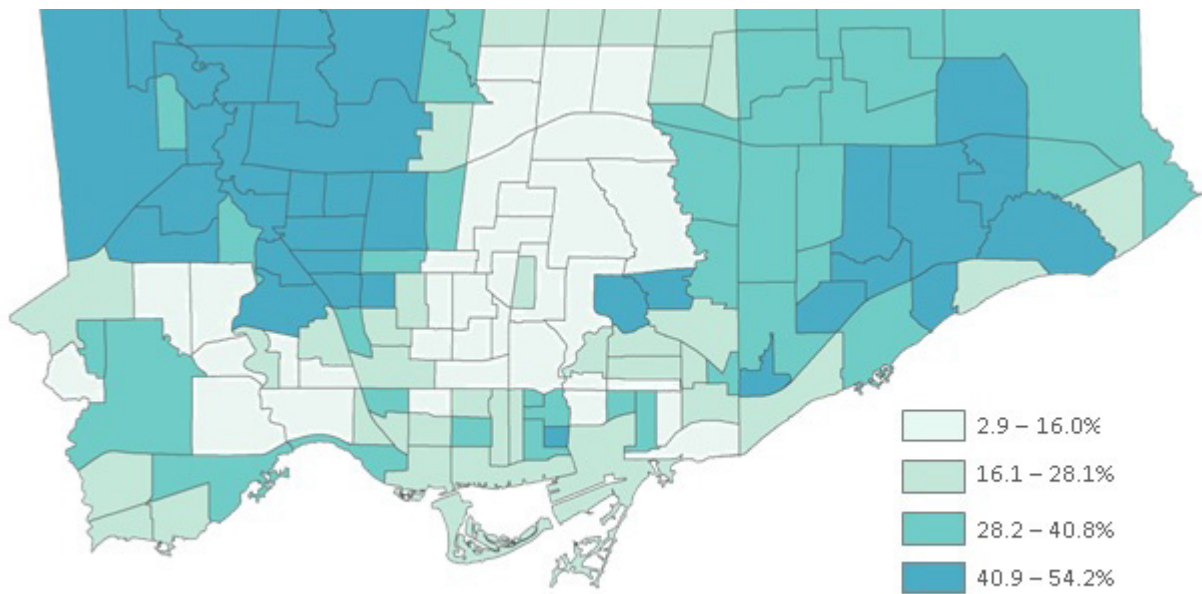
Participation in these programs also varies based on **race**, indicating that some families may not be familiar or feel welcome at these programs.

TDSB Parent Census (Kindergarten – Grade 6) Indicators by Race												
Percent of students who:	Aboriginal	Black	East Asian	Latin American	Middle Eastern	Mixed-Race	South Asian	Southeast Asian	White	Faring most favourably	Faring least favourably	By how much*
Don't participate in an early learning or care program	31.3%	30.0%	31.3%	40.7%	45.3%	22.3%	45.1%	55.3%	16.3%	White	Southeast Asian	3.4
Don't participate in sports or arts	18.6%	23.3%	12.8%	19.9%	22.2%	10.2%	21.8%	25.7%	5.5%	White	Southeast Asian	4.7

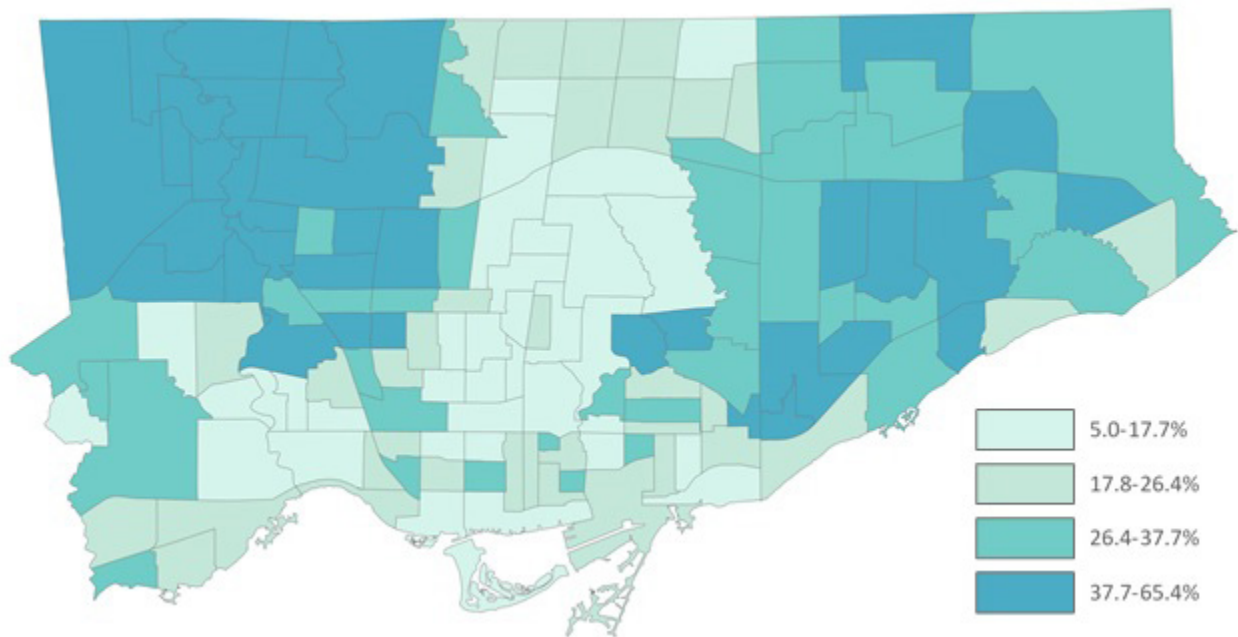
* Information about all data sources can be found online at www.toronto.ca/raisingthevillage under “Highlights”

We also see **geographic** variations in participation, indicating that where a child lives in Toronto may influence their opportunity to participate.

Percent of students who do not regularly participate in arts or sports by neighbourhood, TDSB (Grades K to 6), 2012*



Percent of students who did not participate in an early learning or care program, TDSB (Grades K to 6), 2012*



CALL
TO
ACTION

What can parents
and communities
do to close the
opportunity gap?

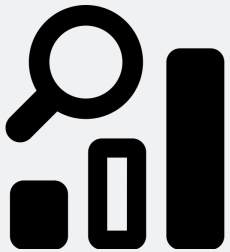
What can policy
and system
planners do
to close the
opportunity gap?



Share your thoughts:
[@TOChildOutcomes](#)
or [#ChildFriendlyTO](#)

1. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2007). The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the gap between what we know and what we do.
2. Darling, Nancy (2005). Participation in extracurricular activities and adolescent adjustment. J Youth Adolesc. Vol. 34, no. 5: 493-505.

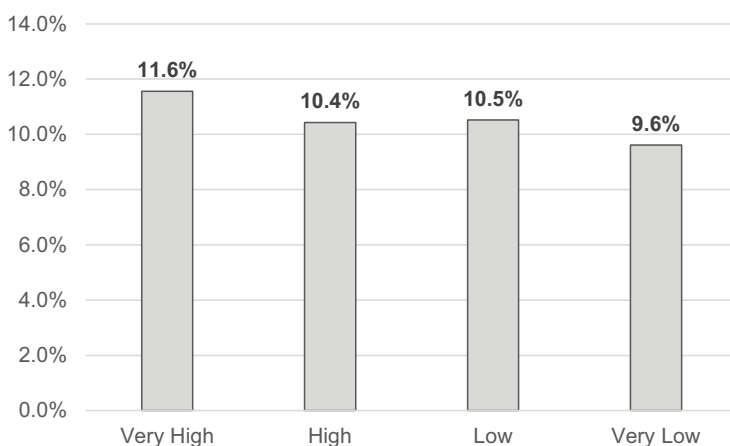
Mental health is a key determinant of overall health and development, yet continues to be overlooked across the child & family system.



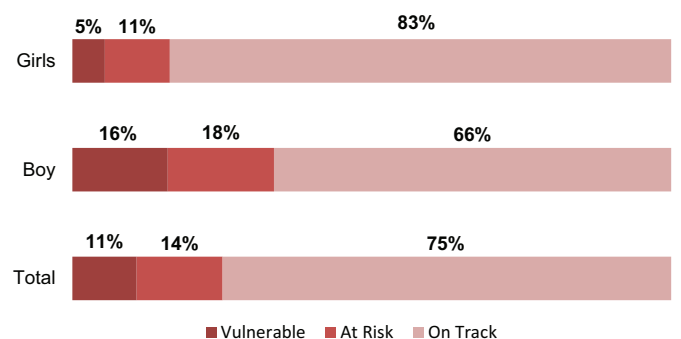
RESEARCH SUPPORT: Positive mental health and emotional development begins at the earliest stages of a child's life and can impact future outcomes including academic success and the formation of healthy relationships¹. Social determinants of health, such as gender, poverty, and ethnicity can influence a child's exposure to stress and their ability to access quality mental health resources².

10.7% of children in Toronto are vulnerable in Emotional Development. In Toronto, the percent of children vulnerable in this domain has increased over time while there has been a decrease across all other domains. This vulnerability varies slightly by family **income** but largely by **gender**.

Percent vulnerable in Emotional Development by Child & Family Inequities Score, Toronto, EDI, 2014/15*

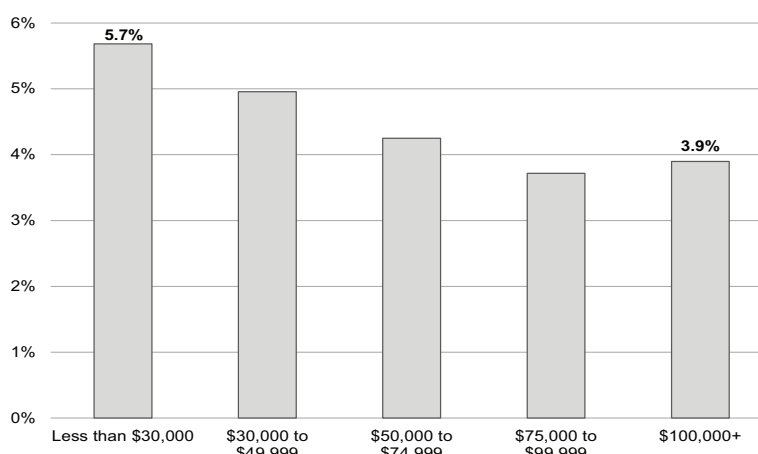


Percent vulnerable, at risk, and on track in Emotional Development by gender, Toronto, EDI, 2014/15*



In elementary school, some parents report that their child seems nervous or anxious all the time or often. This varies slightly by **income**.

Percent of students who seem nervous or anxious by family income, TDSB (Grades K to 6), 2012*



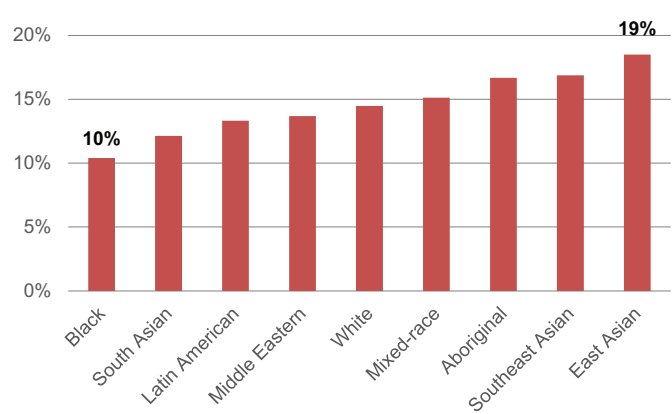
* Information about all data sources can be found online at www.toronto.ca/raisingthevillage under "Highlights"

During adolescence children face additional stresses that contribute to poor mental health. 14% of Grade 7 and 8 students had low emotional well-being as measured through self-reported feelings of loneliness, anxiousness, and hopelessness and this varied by **gender** and **race**.

Emotional well-being by gender, TDSB (Grades 7 and 8), 2011*

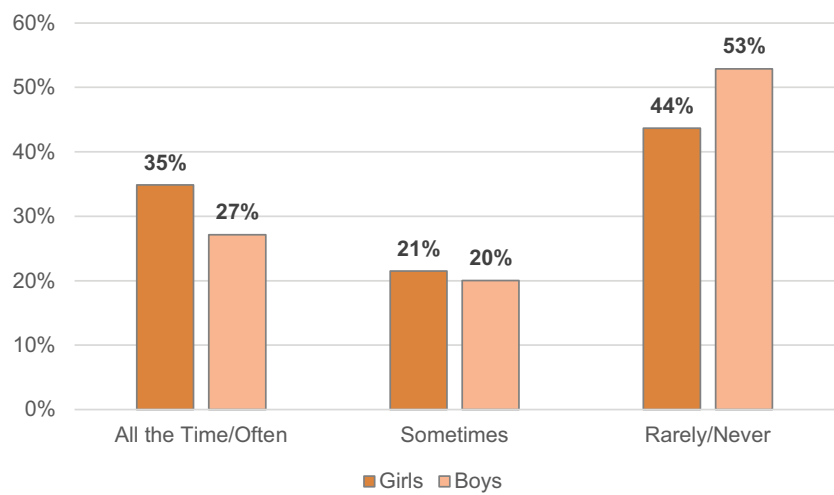
	Total	Boys	Girls
Low	14%	11%	17%
Middle	50%	49%	51%
High	36%	40%	32%

Student’s low emotional well-being scores by race, TDSB (Grades 7 and 8), 2011*



It can be difficult for children to communicate to parents and caregivers about mental health. In fact, about 1 in 2 grade 7 and 8 students rarely or never talk to their parents about relationships or problems. This may lead to a discrepancy between parent’s perception of their child’s mental health and a child’s self-reported emotional well-being.

Responses to the question “how often do you talk to your parent/caregiver about relationships or problems?”, TDSB (Grades 7 and 8), 2011*



These discrepancies also exist based on race suggesting a cultural component to perceptions of emotional well-being and mental health. For example, parents of East Asian students were the least likely to report that their child seems nervous or anxious, while East Asian students were the most likely to score low on the well-being index.



What can parents and communities do to make room for feelings?

What can policy and system planners do to make room for feelings?



Share your thoughts: @TOChildOutcomes or #ChildFriendlyTO

1. National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004). Children’s Emotional Development Is Built into the Architecture of Their Brains: Working Paper No. 2. <http://www.developingchild.net>
2. MHASEF Research Team. (2015) The Mental Health of Children and Youth in Ontario: A Baseline Scorecard. Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences.

Growing up in Toronto

Challenge 4:

ROAD BLOCKS TO HEALTH

The ability for children and their families to make healthy choices is constrained by many factors.



RESEARCH SUPPORT: Families and children with health inequities have less access to nutritious foods, are more likely to live in polluted environments, are less likely to receive proper dental and eye care, and more likely to be obese¹. Mother's with lower levels of education and income were less likely to plan to breastfeed². Health outcomes are often not a choice.

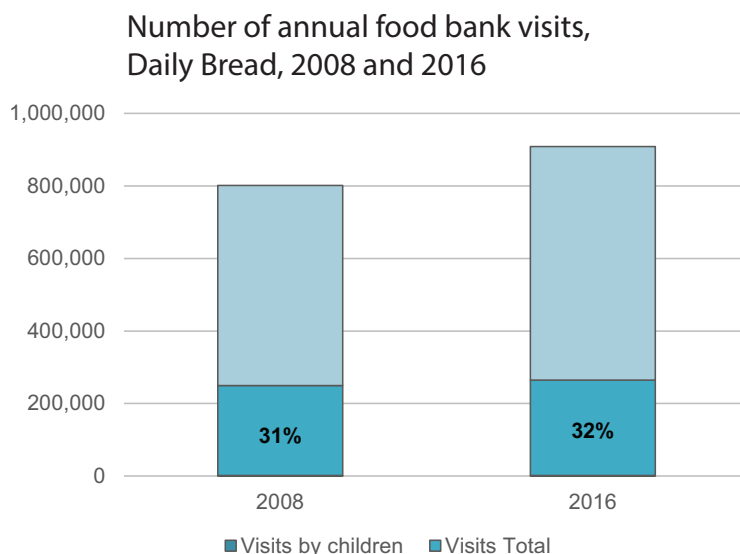
Many children experience poor health outcomes. For example, only 1 in 5 students get the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables and 62% of students engage in over 2 hours of screen time.

On average, students eat 3 to 4 servings of fruit or vegetables a day out of the recommended 6 servings.



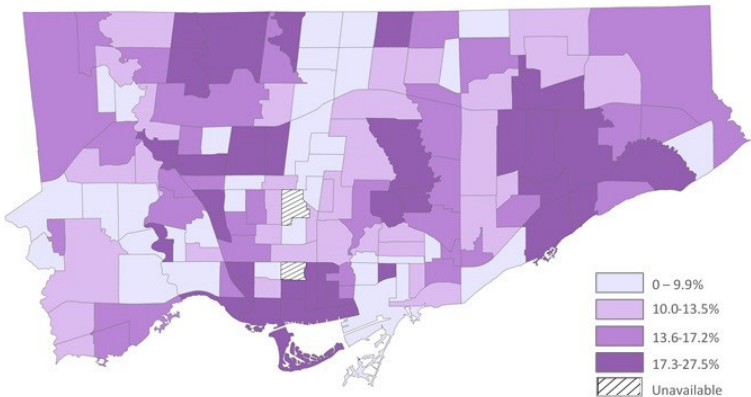
Early in a child's life, breastfeeding provides the nutrition necessary for optimal physical health and development. Although the majority of mothers (71%) intended to exclusively breastfeed, only 44% were exclusively breastfeeding at the hospital or after home birth.

There are children in Toronto who do not have access to adequate or nutritious foods which is important for physical and mental health and development. Approximately 1 in 3 food bank visits are made by children.

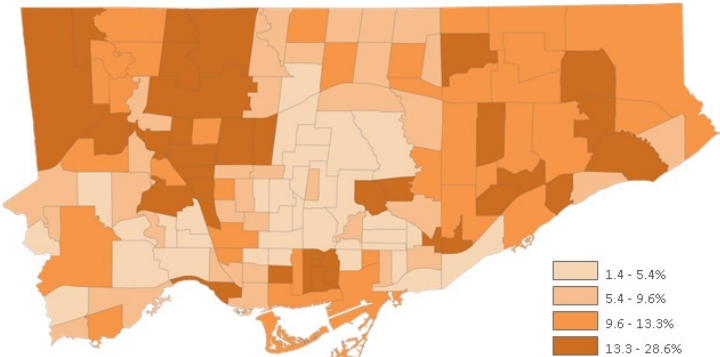


Where you live matters. We see that there are some areas of Toronto where children are less likely to feel safe outside in their community and are more likely to be vulnerable in physical development.

Percent of children who are vulnerable in Physical Development by neighbourhood, Toronto, 2014/15

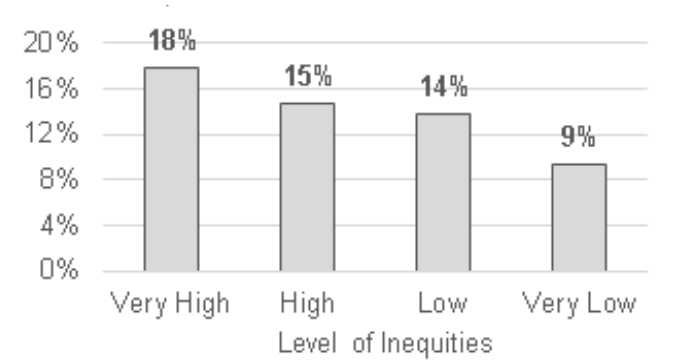


Percent of students who feel unsafe in their community, TDSB (Grades K to 6), 2012

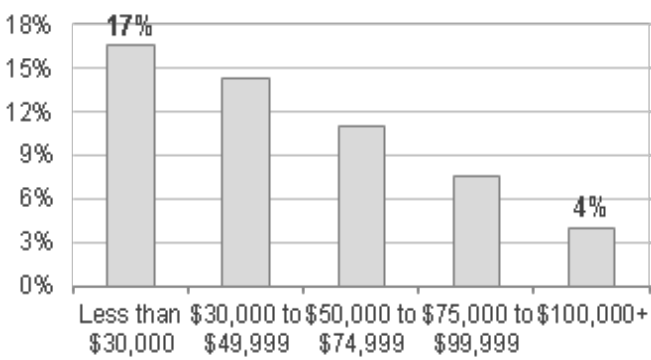


The percent of children who are vulnerable in physical activity and who feel unsafe in their neighbourhood increases as **income** decreases.

Percent of children who are vulnerable in Physical Development by Child & Family Inequities Score, Toronto, 2014/2015



Percent of students who feel unsafe by income, TDSB (Grades K to 6), 2012



There are also differences based on **race**, black children are the most likely to feel unsafe both in their neighbourhood and at school and Southeast Asian children are the most likely to not participate in arts or sports outside of school.

Percent of students who:	Aboriginal	Black	East Asian	Latin American	Middle Eastern	Mixed-Race	South Asian	South-east Asian	White	Faring most favourably	Faring least favourably	By how much*
Rarely or never feel safe at school	7.7%	8.5%	4.3%	6.2%	6.3%	5.0%	6.1%	6.9%	3.6%	White	Black	2.4
Don't participate in sports or arts	18.6%	23.3%	12.8%	19.9%	22.2%	10.2%	21.8%	25.7%	5.5%	White	Southeast Asian	4.7



What can parents and communities do to remove road blocks to health?

What can policy and system planners do to remove road blocks to health?



Share your thoughts: @TOChildOutcomes or #ChildFriendlyTO

1. The Best Start Resource Centre. 'I'm Still Hungry': Child and Family Poverty in Ontario, 2010. Pg. 16-17

2. Breastfeeding in Toronto: Promoting Supportive Environments. Toronto Public Health. 2010

Growing up in Toronto:

Challenge 5:

THE LEARNING CONNECTION

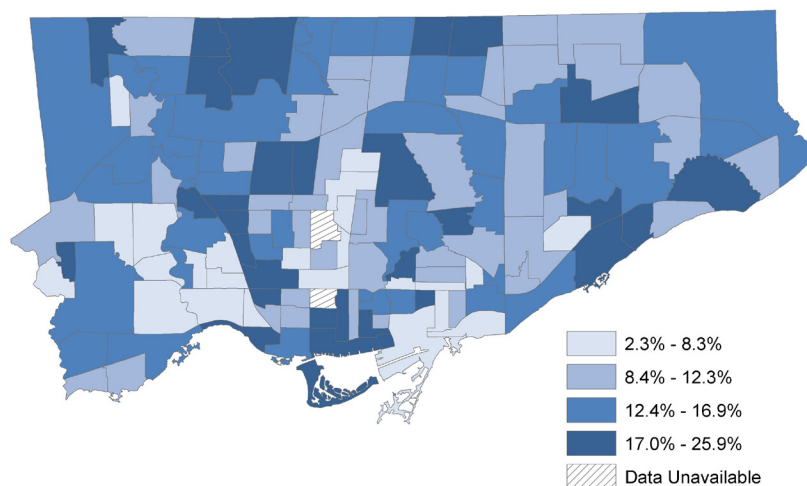
Stronger networks and relationships can support the learning outcomes of Toronto's children.



RESEARCH SUPPORT: Educational outcomes depend on children having strong relationships beyond the classroom that actively support their learning and development¹. Healthy early development lays the foundation for learning and relies on quality relationships early in a child's life². Strong attachment through communication and support provide the building blocks for nurturing relationships.

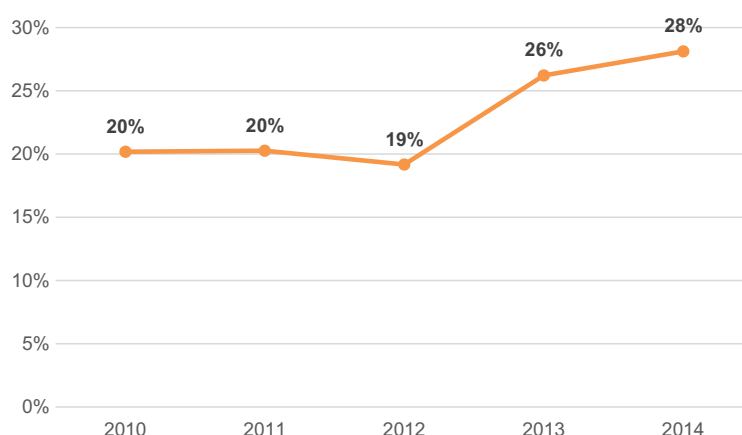
Strong relationships in a child's early years support all aspects of development that in turn support positive learning outcomes. There are inequities in early development across Toronto.

Percent of children who were vulnerable on two or more domains by neighbourhood, Kindergarten students, Toronto, 2014/2015*



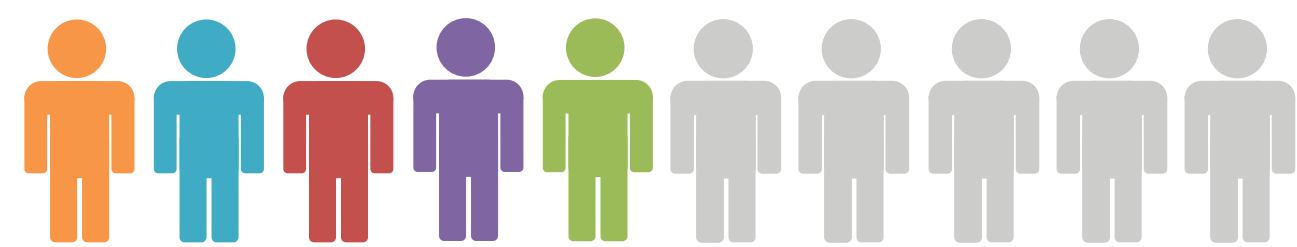
Parental involvement in a child's education is key to learning outcomes. This can include reading together, attending child & family programs, and communicating regularly with teachers and caregivers. In 2014, only 28% of Grade 3 children read with a caregiver every day or almost every day. While this number has increased from 20% in 2010, it is still low.

Percent of students who read with their caregivers every day or almost every day, Grade 3, EQAO, 2010 to 2014*



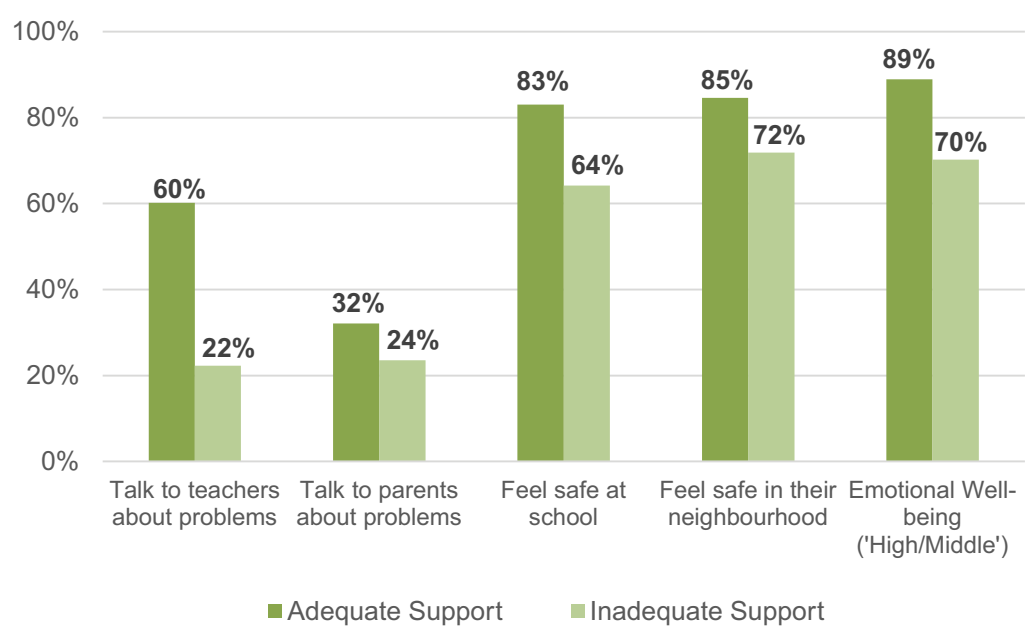
* Information about all data sources can be found online at www.toronto.ca/raisingthevillage under "Highlights"

By the time children are transitioning into adolescence, only half said they talk to their parents often about relationships or problems.



Children who feel they get the support they need in school, are also more likely to talk to teachers or parents about problems, to feel safe in their school or neighbourhood, and to feel well emotionally, suggesting that all of these factors are related.

Student’s feelings of support at school as compared to other indicators, TDSB (Grades 7 and 8), 2011*



RESEARCH SUPPORT: In addition to relationships with caregivers, engagement in community and other social networks also matter. Participation in services and literacy programs directly benefit a child, and help parents build networks and skills that support their child’s learning³. There are also many positive effects on child development through the social capital built when children and families are connected to their broader community⁴.



**CALL
TO
ACTION**

What can parents and communities do to support a learning connection?

What can policy and system planners do to support a learning connection?



Share your thoughts:
@TOChildOutcomes
or **#ChildFriendlyTO**

1. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press;
2. National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004). Young children develop in an environment of relationships. Working Paper No. 1. Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.net>
3. Yau, Parekh and Luo (2013)
4. Shonkoff, J. & Phillips, D., Editors (2000) From Neurons to Neighborhoods. Washington: National Academic Press