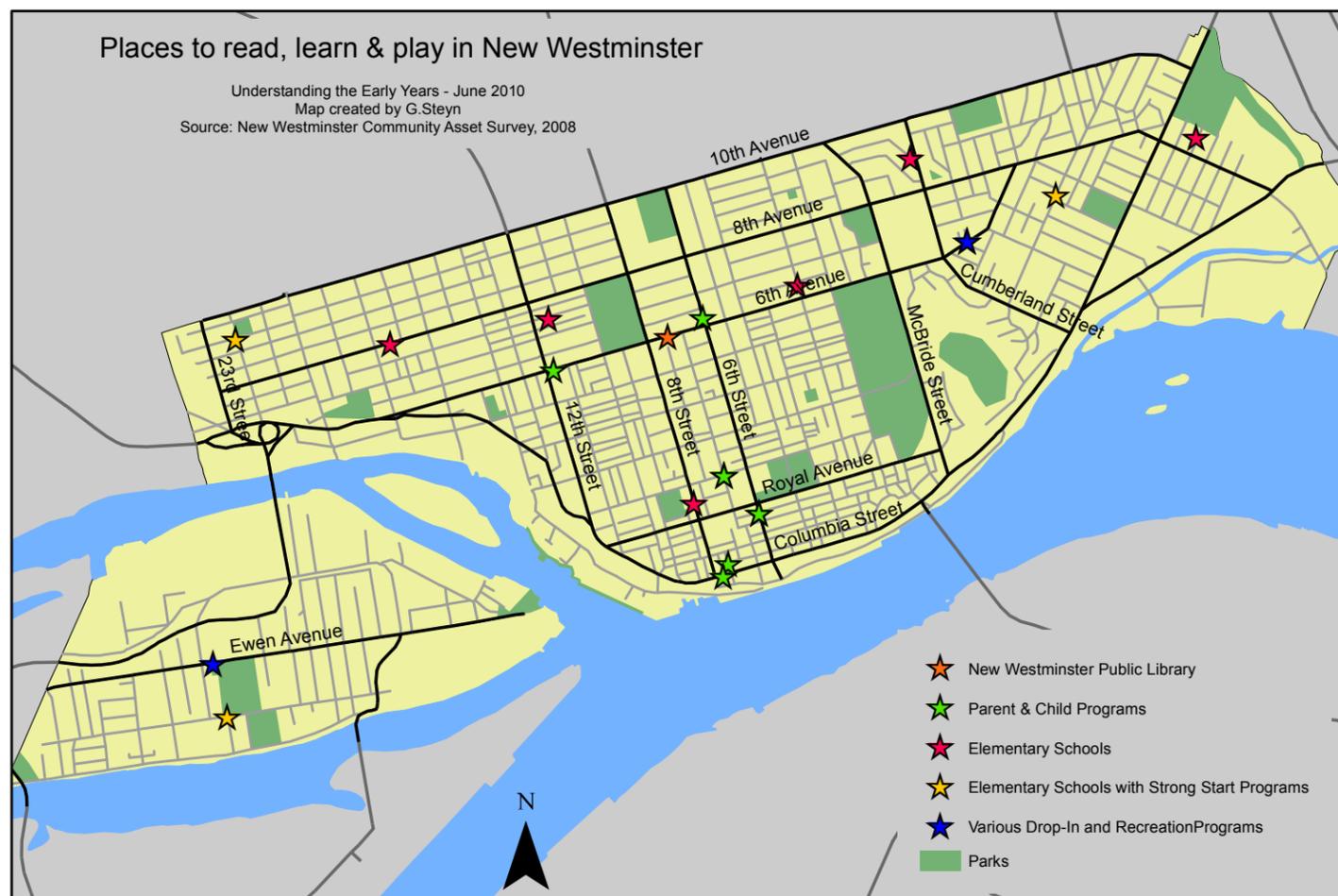


## Locations In New Westminster Where Children Can Read, Learn And Play



# Research Summary - The Early Years

## UEY New Westminster



From the moment they are born, children learn, discover, watch, listen, connect, and play. The love, nurturing and experiences that take place in the first five years last a lifetime. The communities and neighbourhoods where children grow affect their healthy development. We can all make a difference in the lives of children.

### What Is UEY?

UEY New Westminster is a community project that collects local information about young children from birth to six and their families.

This brief provides a general profile of families in New Westminster and outlines some of the key UEY research.

### Children And Families In New Westminster

#### A few statistics...

- ▶ 3520 children from birth to age 6 (2006 Census)  
This is 6% of the whole population of the city
- ▶ 16.7 % of families are lone-parent families  
23% are male lone-parent families  
77% are female lone-parent families
- ▶ 5.9% of the children under 6 in our city are immigrants  
8.3% could not communicate in English in 2001  
10.2% could not communicate in English in 2006
- ▶ 19.2% of Kindergarten children spoke English as a second language in 2009
- ▶ 665 children were born in 2008 (BC Vital Statistics)  
35 (5.3%) had a low birth weight  
54 (8.1%) were pre-term (before 37 weeks)  
9 (1.4%) were born to teenage mothers  
91 (28.7%) were born to mothers over the age of 35
- ▶ 195 or 6.7% of young children from birth to age 4 have a disability (City of New Westminster, 2009)
- ▶ 3.4% of Kindergarten students were identified as having special needs (2009 EDI)

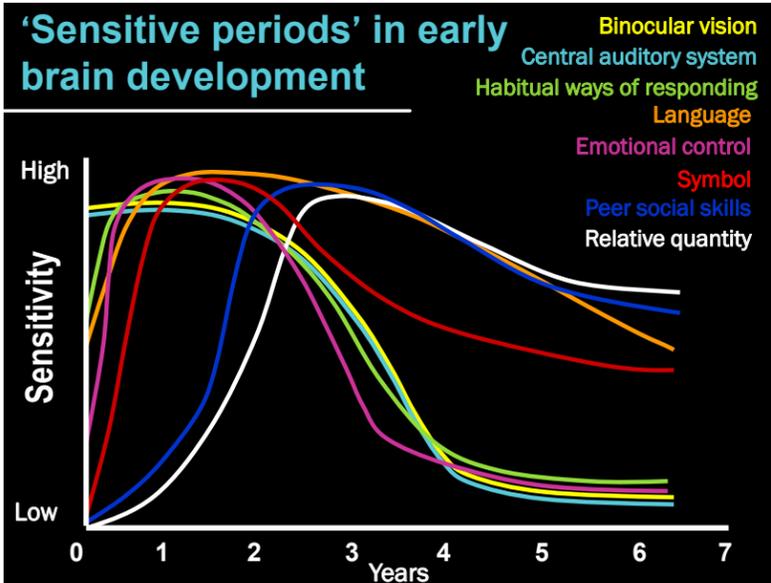
Based on the 2006 Census data, the most common languages spoken at home in New Westminster are:

- English
- Punjabi
- Tagalog
- Mandarin
- Korean
- Mandarin/Cantonese /Chinese
- Cantonese
- Spanish
- Russian
- Romanian
- and Farsi

UEY New Westminster is funded by the Government of Canada's Understanding the Early Years Initiative.

<p><b>School District #40</b> For more information call your nearest elementary school. Early Learning Program (all elementary schools) Strong Start Programs (Queen Elizabeth, Richard McBride &amp; Connaught Heights Elementary)</p>	<p><b>New Westminster Family Place</b> For more information call: 604.520.3666 Family Drop-In and Education Main Site: 93 6th St. Hospitality Project at the Food Bank: 6th Avenue Mall Satellite Program: 610 6th Street</p>	<p><b>New Westminster Parks and Recreation (and various partners)</b> For more information call: 604.777.5100 Centennial Community Centre 65 East 6th Street Queensborough Community Centre 920 Ewen Avenue</p>
<p><b>Lower Mainland Purpose Society</b> For more information call: 604.526.2522 Family Circle &amp; Pitter Patter 40 Begbie Street</p>	<p><b>New Westminster Public Library</b> For more information call: 604.527.4677 Various story times 716 6th Avenue</p>	<p><b>Spirit of the Children Society</b> For more information call: 604.524.9113 Aboriginal ECD Programs #201- 768 Columbia Street</p>
<p><b>Cameray Child and Family Services</b> For more information call: 604.520.0009 Parent Support Program Centennial Community Centre: 65 East 6th Street</p>	<p><b>Family Services of Greater Vancouver</b> For more information call: 604.525.9144 Various Family &amp; Child Programs 613 Queens Avenue</p>	<p><b>Burnaby Family Life Institute</b> For more information call: 604.659.2225 Baby and Me Program 613 Queens Avenue</p>

For more information visit us at [www.kidsnewwest.ca](http://www.kidsnewwest.ca)



### The first few years of life are vital to a child's brain development.

This graph shows the sensitive times when there is optimal potential for brain growth.

Everyday acts and activities have a powerful impact on physical and brain development.

New Westminster offers places where children can play, explore and use their imagination; where they can collect pine cones, plan picnics, attend pre-school, story time and family programs.

Parents' role is to nurture their children, keep them safe and healthy and provide lots of opportunities to play, talk, read, tell stories, and delight in their children.

*Graph by Council for Early Child Development (ref: Nash, 1997; Early Years Study, 1999; Shonkoff, 2000)*

### UEY Research: Some Highlights

UEY collected information about children, families and the neighbourhoods where children grow.

Highlights include:

- ▶ Overall, our young children are faring well
- ▶ Neighbourhoods influence children's development
- ▶ Children surveyed were doing well in assessments of their physical health and well-being
- ▶ 97% of the children surveyed used parks, play spaces and trails at least once per month
- ▶ Only 1% of children surveyed were aggressive, well below the Canadian average
- ▶ One-third of families surveyed did not consider their neighbourhood to be of high quality \*
- ▶ 20% considered their neighbourhood to be unsafe
- ▶ One-third of families did not have a high level of social support
- ▶ Kindergarten children spent 1.9 hours watching television or playing video games every day
- ▶ 85% of the kindergarten children surveyed used a library at least once a month
- ▶ Children show highest vulnerability on assessments of Communications and Language
- ▶ Children who start kindergarten with vulnerabilities are at risk for later learning and health problems
- ▶ Boys were more vulnerable on Communications and Social domains
- ▶ Girls were more vulnerable on Language and Communications domains

\* High quality neighbourhoods are safe and friendly, with easy access to resources such as parks, programs and libraries.

### The UEY Research

As part of our UEY project, information was collected using the Parent Interviews and Direct Assessments of Children Survey (PIDACS) and the Early Development Instrument (EDI).

This research gives us a glimpse of how children are doing in New Westminster.

#### All New Westminster Kindergarten Teachers

completed the EDI for each child in their class to reflect how they felt children were doing in five areas (called domains). These domains include: physical, social, emotional, language and communication. There are also 16 sub domains within these five major areas.

**199 New Westminster Parents** were surveyed about their child's development and experiences, family background and parenting style.

**217 New Westminster Kindergarten Children** were assessed in their vocabulary, number and pre-literacy skills.



### Some Specific Findings

#### Physical Health

Based on UEY research, children in New Westminster are overall fairly healthy.

- The EDI Physical Health and Well-Being Scale measures things such as motor development, energy level, daily preparedness for school, washroom independence and established handedness.
  - New Westminster had the smallest proportion of vulnerable children on this scale (7%).
  - The largest proportion (19.8%) was vulnerable on the gross & fine motor skills sub domain.
- Young children in New Westminster frequently used parks and recreational trails, swimming pools, and recreational and community centres.
  - PIDACS preliminary results showed that 97% of the children used parks, play spaces and trails at least once per month, well above the rate for other Canadian children.

#### Social and Emotional Competence

- Through the PIDACS data collection, parents provided their perceptions on how their kindergarten child behaves at home and in the community.
- This includes a measure of positive social behaviour and four behavioural problems: inattention, anxiety, depression and physical aggression.
- Preliminary results show:
  - 10% of the children displayed low positive social behaviour.
  - 17% of boys displayed low positive social behaviour compared to 4% of girls.
  - Only 1% of the children in the sample were physically aggressive.
  - In the EDI prosocial (helping) sub domain, twice as many boys as girls were vulnerable.

#### Communication

How well children learn to read in school is directly related to language development.

- Language helps with isolation, gives a sense of belonging and helps with school readiness: e.g. being able to talk, listen and ask questions, to play with friends, and to follow rules.
- The Communication Skills and General Knowledge scale measures how well children can communicate their needs, understand others in English, participate in storytelling and have general interest in the world.
  - The largest proportion of kindergarten children was vulnerable on the Communication Skills and General Knowledge scale.
  - This scale has had the highest vulnerability on all EDI data collections.
  - Communities with a large proportion of children with English as a second language generally show more vulnerability on this scale.

#### Language

- The EDI Language and Cognitive Development scale measures things such as interest in books, reading, language-related activities, and interest in simple math-related activities.
- Sub domains within this scale include basic literacy, interest and memory, complex or advanced literacy skills and numeracy.
  - The largest proportion of children was vulnerable on the complex literacy skills sub domain.
  - A significant proportion of teachers indicated a lack of interest in literacy and numeracy.
- Receptive vocabulary means the words we recognize when we see or hear them.
  - Preliminary PIDACS results show 20% of the children had low scores on the assessment of receptive vocabulary.
  - A higher percentage of boys than girls had low scores.
  - Children from low income families and immigrant families were more likely to have a low score.

To help language flourish, children need everyday things - a safe home where they are encouraged to talk, where they are listened to and where they hear and see families members interact with each other. A strong foundation in their home language will give them the tools they need to read, write and learn at school.