



Building Blocks of Change

SUCCESS **B**Y **6**TM
OTTAWA

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Helping children *succeed* for life

Dear policymaker, parent, community leader:

We know that a child's home, family and neighbourhood help determine success in early childhood development. These environments, in turn, are strongly influenced by broader society ...

We believe that families, schools, neighbourhoods, the community and governments all have a role to play in enabling children to achieve their optimal development. Healthy physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual development requires:

- safe and caring environments;
- meeting fundamental needs;
- opportunities to develop competencies; and
- stable and nurturing relationships.

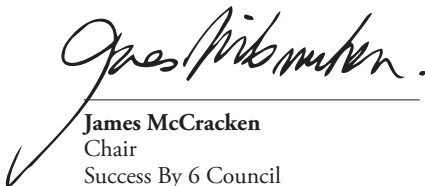
Last year we launched a "Framework for Action" based on research and community consultations. In order to assess how well our community is doing to **increase** the **school readiness** of **children**, we are setting the following target:

By 2015, the proportion of children not ready for school will fall by 20%.

It's an ambitious goal that can be achieved if we continue to work as a collective voice for children and their families. We are eager to move forward together, focused on changing policy, systems and practices.

Many Success By 6 partners are involved in a wide range of valuable initiatives and offer programs and services that are essential to children 0 to 6 years and their families. It is important that we build on this knowledge and gain insight into where we can have an impact as a collective and where we can support others in their work in the community.

Achieving improved outcomes for children and their families requires commitment, coordinated effort, shared learning, expertise and resources. Working across jurisdictions, with a wide range of sectors and professionals, can be challenging but can also lead to significant community change.



James McCracken
Chair
Success By 6 Council



Barb McKinnon
Vice-Chair
Success By 6 Council

Success By 6 Ottawa

Success By 6 is a collaborative community initiative committed to the success of every child in Ottawa. It is made up of partners from the public, private and non-profit sectors in Ottawa with a shared vision of every child in Ottawa reaching their full potential.

Success By 6 Council

The Council provides leadership and direction to ensure Success By 6 (SB6) works within the community to actively support the SB6 initiative and articulate the goals of SB6.

Chair	James McCracken , Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB)
Vice-Chair	Barbara MacKinnon , Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
Past Chair	Shirley Westeinde , Westeinde Group

Members

Michael Allen	United Way Ottawa
Suzanne Gagnon	Ministry of Community & Social Services, Ministry of Children and Youth Services
François Benoit	Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
Michel Bilodeau	Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO)
Aaron Burry	City of Ottawa
Peggy Austen	United Way Ottawa
Shauna Graham	Co-chair, Ottawa Network for Children (ONC)
Louise Hanvey	Vice-chair, Research & Evaluation Action Group (REAG)
Judith Hoye	Community Representative
Diane Jackson	Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB)
Dr. Vera Etches	Ottawa Public Health
Sue O'Sullivan	Ottawa Police Services
Suzanne Pinel	Community Representative
Jocelyne Raymond	Child Care Sector / Chair, Le Regroupement des services éducatifs à l'enfance d'Ottawa
David Ross	Chair, Research & Evaluation Action Group (REAG)
Bernard Roy	Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est (CECLFCE)
Ian Sterling	Kiwanis Club of Ottawa
Lyall Thomson	Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)
Jacques Torjman	Ministry of Education



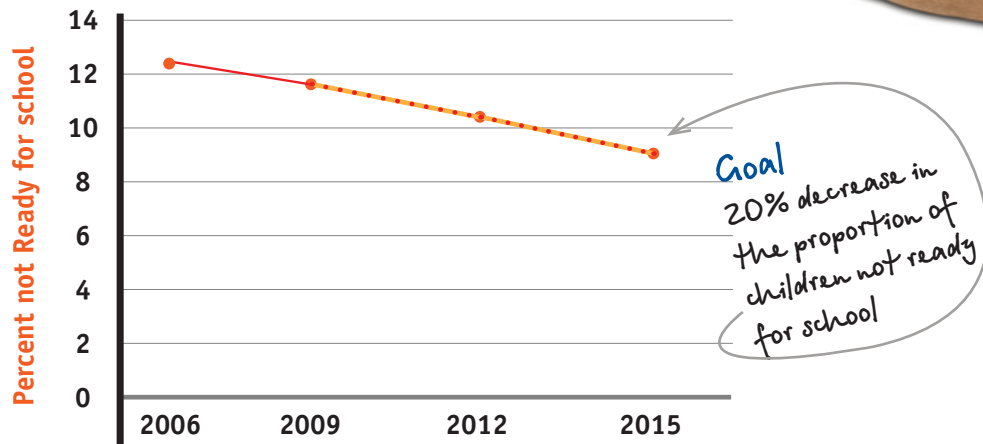
Member organizations - Ottawa Network for Children (ONC)

Algonquin College	Ministry of Education
Better Beginnings Better Futures	Ministry of Children and Youth Services/Ministry of Community and Social Services
Birth & Parent Companion Program	Ontario Early Years Centres Coalition
CAPC/CPNP	Ottawa Public Health Early Years Health
Centre Psychosocial services de santé mentale pour enfants, jeunes et familles	Ottawa Public Health, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children
Child Care Council	Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB)
City of Ottawa, Best Start	Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre
Crossroads Children's Centre	Ottawa Head Start Association of Preschools
Children's Integration Support Services	Ottawa Children Treatment Centre
Children's Aid Society of Ottawa	Ottawa Public Library
Child and Youth Health Network of Eastern Ontario	Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario	Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeast Ontario (PPPEO)
First Words/Blind Low Vision/Infant Hearing Screening	Research & Evaluation
Coalition of Community Resource Centres and Community Health Centres of Ottawa	Regroupement des services éducatifs à l'enfance d'Ottawa
Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario(CEPEO)	The Ottawa Childcare Association / Licensed Group Child Care
City of Ottawa	The Ottawa Hospital
Licensed Home Child Care Network	United Way Ottawa
La Cité Collégiale	Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
Military Family Resource Centre of the National Capital Region	Young Single Parents Support Network



Our goal: Decrease the proportion of children not ready for school.

Our community indicator: By 2015, the proportion of children not ready for school will fall by 20%.



The Importance of the Early Years

The early years of a child's life are critical to the establishment of patterns for successful relationships, schooling and lifelong learning. Children are natural learners, and between birth and six years, they grow and learn at the fastest rate of their lifetime. During these first years of life, the fundamental organization and functional capabilities of the brain are founded, as young children interact with and make sense of the world around them.

What do Young Children *Need* for Healthy Development?

Experiences during the early years shape a child's brain development and influence lifelong learning, behaviour and health. During these formative years, there is an opportunity to establish a sturdy foundation for later development. This is also a time of increased risk, which can compromise optimal development for life.

We now know that the determinants of success in early childhood development are found in the environments where children grow up, live and learn. These environments, in turn, are strongly influenced by economic, demographic, family, community and health conditions.

Access to quality early learning environments is an essential component of healthy child development. The first six years of life is a time of considerable learning – when children learn to talk, read, write and develop attitudes toward learning. It is the time when critical brain development takes place.

School readiness refers to a child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive capacity to meet the demands of school and to benefit from education. Children who arrive at school with good abilities to learn are more likely to feel good about themselves, do better academically and complete high school.¹

At the child level – All children are born ready to learn

Healthy child development and readiness to learn depend upon health conditions in pregnancy, at time of birth and during the first year of life. We know that early learning opportunities have a positive impact on all aspects of a child's healthy development. Children with healthy minds and bodies are better able to explore and develop a foundational understanding of the world.²

At the family level – Relationships are influential

Parents and caregivers play a key role in influencing a young child's health and development. Research shows that family is one of the most important elements affecting healthy child development. Positive family functioning can help to buffer the negative influence of other factors in child development, such as low family income and family structure.

At the neighbourhood level – Environments matter

Outside the family home, the neighbourhood and the wider community are the centre of most young children's lives. They provide opportunities for children to learn, play, meet friends and interact with adults. Although research on the effects of community resources has been quite limited, access to resources undoubtedly plays an important role in children's development.

How do we **measure** school readiness?

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) measures readiness for school as an outcome of early childhood development.

Special points of interest:

- EDI measurements apply to groups of children, rather than individual children.
- The EDI does not measure school performance or teacher ability.
- Results provide valuable information about supporting children's early development.
- EDI data are contributing to a community-driven action plan.

One measurement used to tap into children's challenges in multiple domains is the percentage of children low on two or more domains of the EDI. This measure of school readiness vulnerability represents those children who may require interventions in order to catch up to their peers; it captures those children who might benefit more from targeted programs as well as universal programs.

Research also shows that the percentage of children who score low on two or more EDI domains is a strong predictor of later school outcomes.³

The EDI measures development in five domains:

- 1 Physical health and well-being
- 2 Emotional maturity
- 3 Social competence
- 4 Language and cognitive development
- 5 Communication skills and general knowledge



City-level analysis – How are Ottawa children doing?

In Ottawa, the EDI was conducted in 2005/2006 and again in 2008/2009. Between 2006 and 2009 the percentage of children low on two or more domains of the EDI dropped from 12.3% to 11.5%. This represents movement in the right direction and should be applauded. This tells us that our community coalitions, parents, child care workers, residents, health professionals, community development and resource workers, and policymakers are already making great strides in helping to support early child development in our community.

Neighbourhood-level analysis – A little bit about the research

Communities consist of individual neighbourhood areas, each with its own unique identity, character and demographic make-up. There is a growing body of research to suggest that neighbourhood-level determinants of health influence the well-being and healthy development of children and youth, including readiness for school.

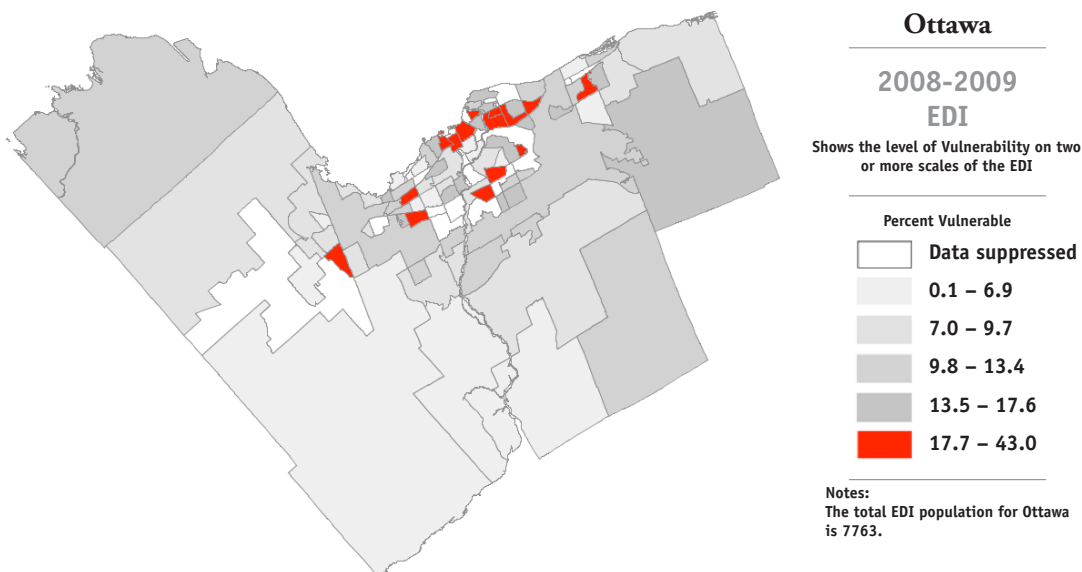
For the purposes of doing population-level analysis, Success By 6 adopted the “Ottawa Neighbourhood Study” neighbourhoods. Ottawa is composed of 96 neighbourhoods, 91 with enough data to identify populations and 77 with enough data to represent the results of the EDI. These areas ranged in total population size from 2,718 to 31,057.

In these neighbourhoods, the number of senior kindergarten students with completed EDI questionnaires ranged from as many as 494 to as few as 35, the minimum sample size.

Neighbourhood Differences

Below we will show some of these neighbourhood differences in Ottawa with regard to the EDI results. As can be seen in the map, the proportion of children scoring low, or “vulnerable” on two or more domains of the EDI varied considerably across the different neighbourhoods from as low as 2.5% to approximately 40%.

Map 1: Shows the level of vulnerability on two or more scales of the EDI



A focus on neighbourhoods

Over the last few years, Success By 6 has participated in or has led community-based initiatives that focus on neighbourhood-level research, planning and distribution of resources. Highlighted below are some of the important work under way in Ottawa.

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Ottawa Neighbourhood Study

(www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca)

The Ottawa Neighbourhood Study is a team that brings together the University of Ottawa, City of Ottawa, local Community Health Centres, Arts Ottawa East, United Way Ottawa, Just Food, Success By 6 and other community-based partners. Our goal is to better understand the neighbourhoods in which we live and play in order to provide evidence on which aspects are important for health and well-being. We also wish to provide the City of Ottawa, health organizations, social organizations and citizens with information on Ottawa's neighbourhoods that will help them to identify what is working well and where community development is needed.

Growing Healthy: Connecting services to families with young children

The Growing Healthy pilot project began in early 2008 to ensure that all vulnerable families and children in two neighbourhoods in Ottawa have access to a basket of services and programs that have been demonstrated to influence healthy child development. These services are provided in these two communities by the Community Health and Resource Centres (CHRC) and Ottawa Public Health (Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Reproductive Health and Early Years Programs). These agencies have integrated their services to ensure that vulnerable families do not 'fall through the cracks'. This means that CHRC-based workers, in coordination with Ottawa Public Health nurses and family visitors, provide transition support from home visiting to centre-based programming. The CHRCs provide HBHC staff with office space and professional development sessions. Information is shared more efficiently. The "basket of services" that is offered is free, adapted to community needs, accessible and includes: a parent-child drop-in that is play-based, parenting support, access to basic needs items, breastfeeding and prenatal and postnatal support.

City of Ottawa: Community Development Framework (CDF)

The Community Development Framework (CDF) is a new way of coordinating municipal and community services. It brings together funders, community organizations, residents, researchers and city services to share information and leverage resources and community strengths in order to address needs in neighbourhoods. The goals of the framework include:

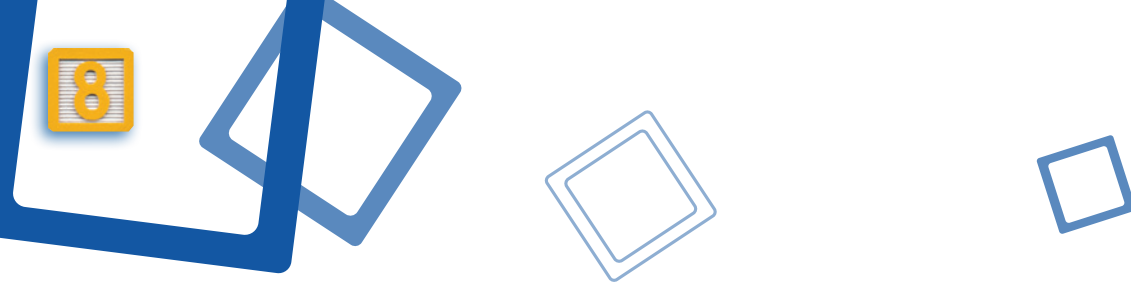
- Increase neighbourhood capacity to enact positive change (includes collective efficacy and resources)
- Improved planning and service delivery to achieve neighbourhood-defined goals by increasing collaboration and coordination between and within city services, community agencies, and their partners and residents
- Improve the social determinant of health in neighbourhoods
- Increase neighbourhood safety and perceptions of safety
- Promote sustainability of positive change at the neighbourhood and systems levels

It all starts at the neighbourhood level where residents, together with community partners, identify strengths and gaps in their neighbourhoods and create action plans to address those gaps. Community Health and Resource Centres then connect what is occurring in the neighbourhood to the systems level where municipal, resource and knowledge transfer supports are available. These three tables operate collaboratively to build a system of supports for the grassroots neighbourhood initiatives.

For more information, visit: www.ottawa.ca

Best Start

Early child development planning in Ottawa's communities has coalesced around a series of local planning tables who are taking the lead in collaborative planning in their neighbourhoods. These neighbourhood Best Start planning tables are working to create a comprehensive integrated system of services that support families with children from birth through to the transition into school, supporting the goal of having all children in Ottawa ready and eager to learn and achieve success in school by the time they start grade one.



Neighbourhood-level analysis – A little bit about the research (con't)

Socio-economic status

Child development is not just a reflection of private parenting patterns or the resources that individual families have to invest in their children. Broad community conditions and practices also create an environment that matters when it comes to raising healthy, happy children who have the potential to thrive as they mature.

A Socio-Economic Status (SES) index was developed in order to create a profile of the level of socio-economic well-being in Ottawa neighbourhoods. It was created by combining social and economic risk factors into one score so that the characteristics of each neighbourhood could be compared. SES scores range from 0-5: a score of zero indicates that a neighbourhood does not show signs of risk, while a score of 5 indicates the neighbourhood is exposed to high risk.

Data on EDI results and SES data for each neighbourhood can be mapped together. When this is done, a pattern tends to emerge: as one goes from the families with the lowest to highest economic SES, the percentage of children with vulnerable EDI scores increases. This is confirmed visually by comparing the “red” areas in maps 1 and 2, where one observes considerable overlapping.

Some neighbourhoods display a high level of risk in terms of socio-economic status but low EDI vulnerability. These neighbourhoods are good-news stories because they represent communities that are overcoming risk, which would generally result in higher rates of vulnerability. On the other hand, some neighbourhoods display low SES but high EDI vulnerability.

Multi-layered Mapping: Socio-economic status and the EDI

On our website, you can apply an overlay feature to present two distinct community features: neighbourhood scores for the EDI and neighbourhood socio-economic status. The overlay of such features in these maps allows us to observe the relationship between risk factors and developmental outcomes.

“By gathering and mapping information by neighbourhood, we gain a better understanding of how these factors influence children’s development and health”. (Human Early Learning Partnership: Vancouver, B.C.)

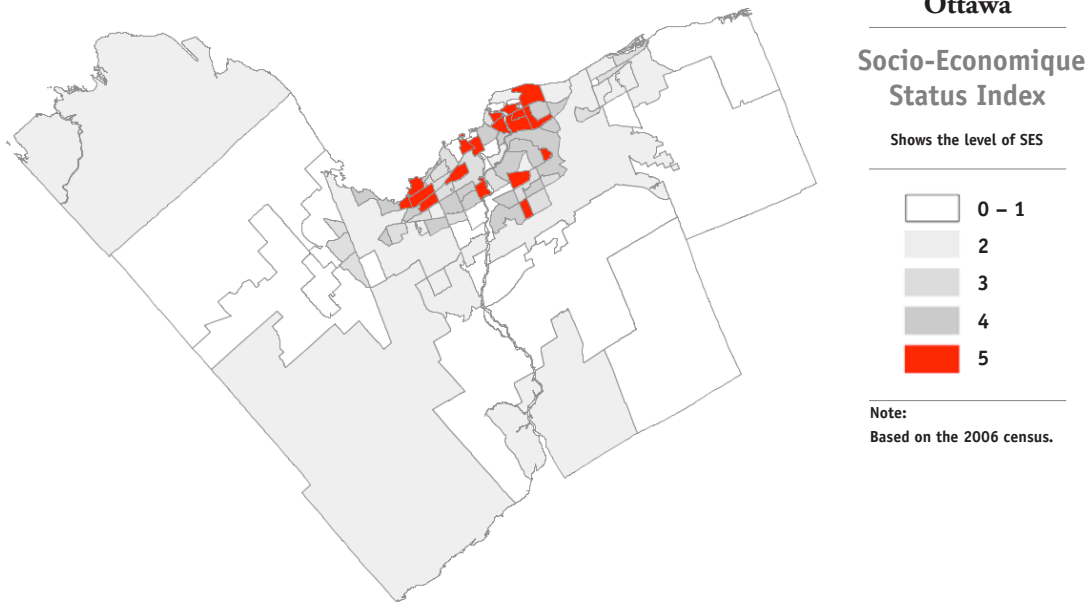
To learn more about your neighbourhood, please visit www.successby6ottawa.ca

Socio-economic status (SES) factors of the neighbourhood:

- Percentage of population living below LICO
- Unemployment rate
- Percentage of adults with less than high school education
- Percentage of people in lone-parent families
- Average income



Map 2: Shows the level Socio-economic status (SES)



Success By 6 and our partners believe that the whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of our community's young people, and our strategies reflect that:

Increase Public Awareness and Understanding

It is important to build awareness and knowledge in the community about the importance of early childhood development and the factors that influence it. We need to understand the impact that the first years of a child's life have on future success and the implications of not supporting young children.

Develop and Strengthen Capacity and Effectiveness

Increasing capacity includes drawing together the resources, skills and knowledge that already exist at all levels — in families, communities, governments, private industry and non-government organizations — and enhancing these with additional training and sharing of best practices, knowledge and other resources.

Build Research and Evaluation Capacity

To increase knowledge and understanding of the healthy development of young children and the factors that influence their health and well-being, we must examine protective and risk factors. This will involve exploring the root causes of risk factors that act as barriers to healthy development and developing actions we can take to minimize these risk factors and increase protective factors in the community.

Influence Policy and Systems

To secure commitment for action from all stakeholders, we must speak with one voice, increase the profile of early childhood issues and advocate effectively for policies that support families with young children.



Here are some specific actions that can and should be taken to help us reach our goal:

At the child level
At the family level
At the community level

Making a difference in the life of a child

While Success By 6 is working to foster healthy environments for children, we all have a role to play. Here are just a few ideas of how each individual can play a part in the healthy development of our community's greatest resource.

- Success By 6 has endorsed Dr. Charles Pascal's report to Premier McGuinty, *With our Best Futures in Mind*, outlining the recommendations for implementing full-day early learning in Ontario. Beginning in September 2010, Ottawa schools will begin to implement full-day early learning. Be an advocate for full-day learning, where children are given an opportunity to learn in a play-based environment with their peers.
- Review the neighbourhood-level research at successby6ottawa.ca to understand the relationship between school-readiness and other environmental factors.
- Promote a broader awareness of the importance of the early years in the life of a child – talk to friends and family about what you have learned.
- Call 2-1-1 or visit 211ontario.ca to learn more about the programs and services available for parents and children in your neighbourhood.
- Download a copy of the Growth Chart from successby6ottawa.ca for ideas on how to help children learn and grow. From reading with your child, to using everyday objects to practise math, to exploring your own neighbourhood together, make the most of the every interaction – because relationships are very influential to healthy development.
- Support early childhood development research and community-level research that monitors child health, well-being and development outcomes and evaluates community progress.
- Become an advocate in your workplace for family-friendly policies such as flexible work arrangements and assistance with child care.
- Challenge community leaders to evaluate each decision in light of its impact on children and the people who care for them.

By working together to address early childhood development,
we are helping children **succeed for life!**

Special thanks to: **David Ross**, Co-chair, Success By 6 Research and Evaluation Action Group
Louise Haney, Co-chair, Success By 6 Research and Evaluation Action Group
Erin Tardiff, Program Effectiveness Data Analysis Coordinator, Parent Resource Centre

And thanks to all of our partners.

¹ Doherty, G (1997). *Zero to Six: The Basis for School Readiness*. Ottawa: Applied Research Branch, Human Resources Development Canada.

² Neurons to Neighborhoods, 2000

³ Janus. Et al, 2007; Yao, M and Brown, R.S., 2007).