



Early Childhood Development Instrument

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) provides information about the development of children in kindergarten to assess their developmental readiness for learning in school prior to entering Grade 1.

Kindergarten teachers complete Early Development Instrument surveys in February-March of the school year. This annual data provides information to guide decision-making, monitor trends and measure the impacts of changes to programs and services provided for children in the early years. This instrument is similar to a census; it is not a diagnostic tool and does not report findings on individual children. This fact sheet looks at results over time in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with a focus on the 2024-25 school year.

The Early Development Instrument includes five areas of development:

- Physical health and well-being
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language, numbers and memory
- Communication skills and general knowledge

How children are doing in each of these areas is used to determine if they are *ON TRACK*, *VULNERABLE*, or *IN FLUX*.

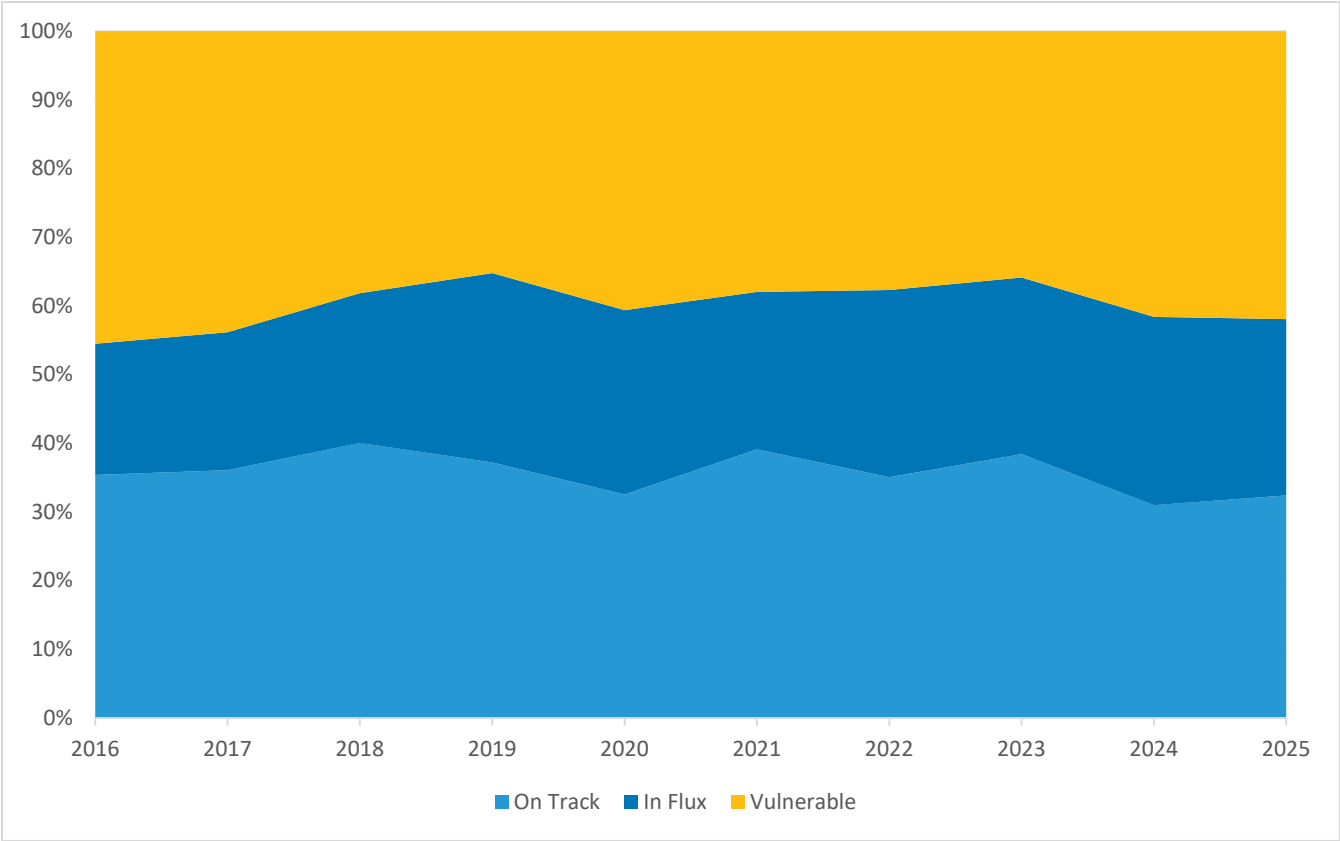
Children who are *ON TRACK* are doing well for their age *IN ALL FIVE* areas of development. These children are considered ready for the experiences and learning opportunities available to them in Grade 1.

Children who are *VULNERABLE* are having challenges *IN ONE OR MORE* of the five areas of development. Without supports, these children could experience difficulties in later years.

Children who are *IN FLUX* are not vulnerable in any area, and not on track in all areas. These children may or may not catch up to their *ON TRACK* peers and may benefit from additional supports.

Seeing a high percentage of vulnerable children, or a low percentage of on-track children, does not mean that children are not doing well in the NWT. It means there are opportunities to improve upon children’s preparation for school and learning, and that some extra supports in early grades can help to improve children’s ability to succeed as they grow and move into higher grades.

Figure 1: Percent of Kindergarten students who are developmentally *ON TRACK*, *IN FLUX* and *VULNERABLE* in the NWT from 2016-2025.



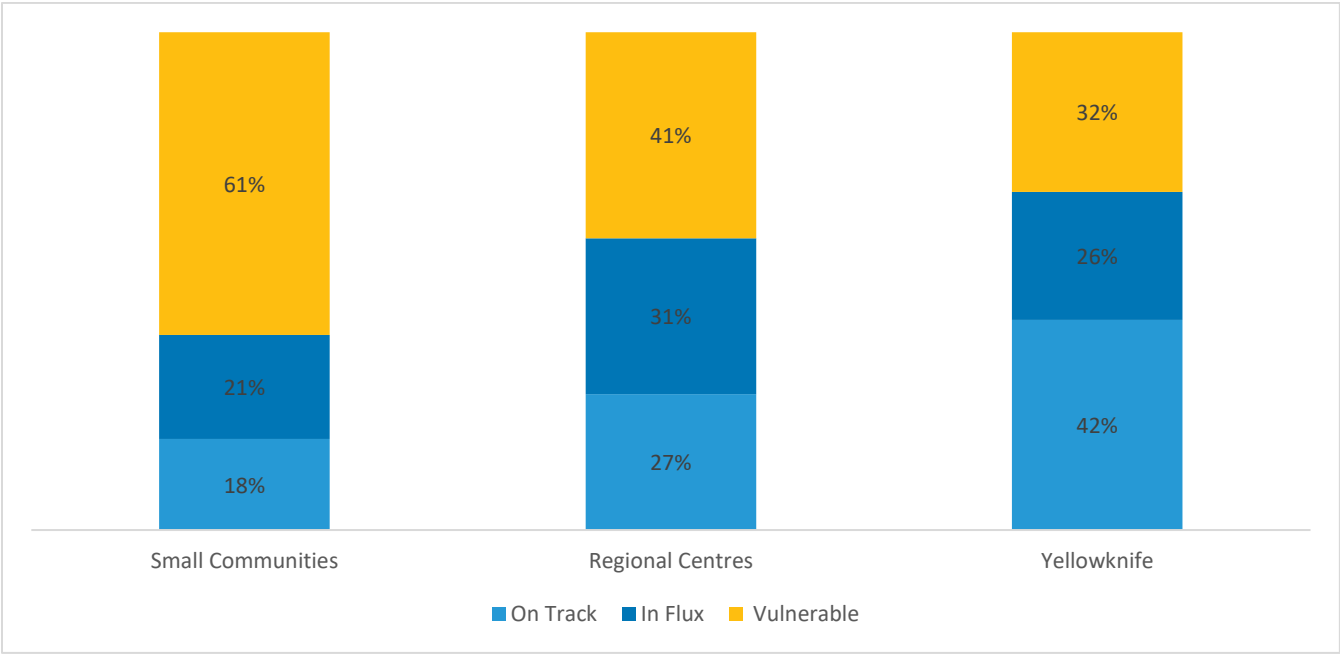
The percentage of children who are *ON TRACK*, *IN FLUX*, and *VULNERABLE* has remained stable between 2024 and 2025.

Monitoring the Early Development Instrument results in the NWT helps families, communities, schools, and decision-makers stay informed about how young children in different NWT regions are doing. This allows us all to ensure that proper attention can be given to children and communities that may need extra supports.

As supports and systems are introduced, such as the Junior Kindergarten program; and access to quality, inclusive licensed early learning and childcare programming is increased, we hope to see the percentage of children who are *VULNERABLE* going down, and the percentage of children who are *IN FLUX* and *ON TRACK* going up.

In the 2024-25 school year, 32 percent of children in Kindergarten in the NWT were *ON TRACK*, 26 percent were *IN FLUX*, and 42 percent were *VULNERABLE* (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Percentage of children who are *ON TRACK*, *IN FLUX* and *VULNERABLE* by community type* in 2024-25.



**Regional centres include Hay River, Inuvik and Fort Smith. Small communities are those outside of regional centres and Yellowknife.*

It is also important to consider that situations are different across all NWT communities: Yellowknife, regional centres, and small communities have unique strengths and needs. The Early Development Instrument helps identify areas of strength and areas to support.

The combined percentage of children who are *ON TRACK* or *IN FLUX* is over fifty percent in both Yellowknife and regional centres (68 percent and 58 percent, respectively, Figure 2).

Small communities have a lower proportion of children who are *ON TRACK* or *IN FLUX* compared to regional centres and Yellowknife, at 39 percent.

Prior to Kindergarten

Junior Kindergarten was made available across the NWT in 2017. This has had a positive impact on the readiness of children in the NWT for Grade 1 (Figure 3). Over time, there is a higher percentage of children who attended Junior Kindergarten that are developmentally *IN FLUX* or *ON TRACK* (Figure 3).

Looking at the Early Development Instrument results of children who attended licensed ELCC facilities (including centre-based and home-based facilities, excluding Junior Kindergarten), more years in care align with higher proportions of children who are developmentally *IN FLUX* or *ON TRACK* (Figure 4). Forty-eight percent of children who attended licensed ELCC facilities for two or more years before Kindergarten are developmentally *ON TRACK* (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Percent of children who are *ON TRACK*, *IN FLUX* and *VULNERABLE* by whether they attended Junior Kindergarten, 2018-2025.

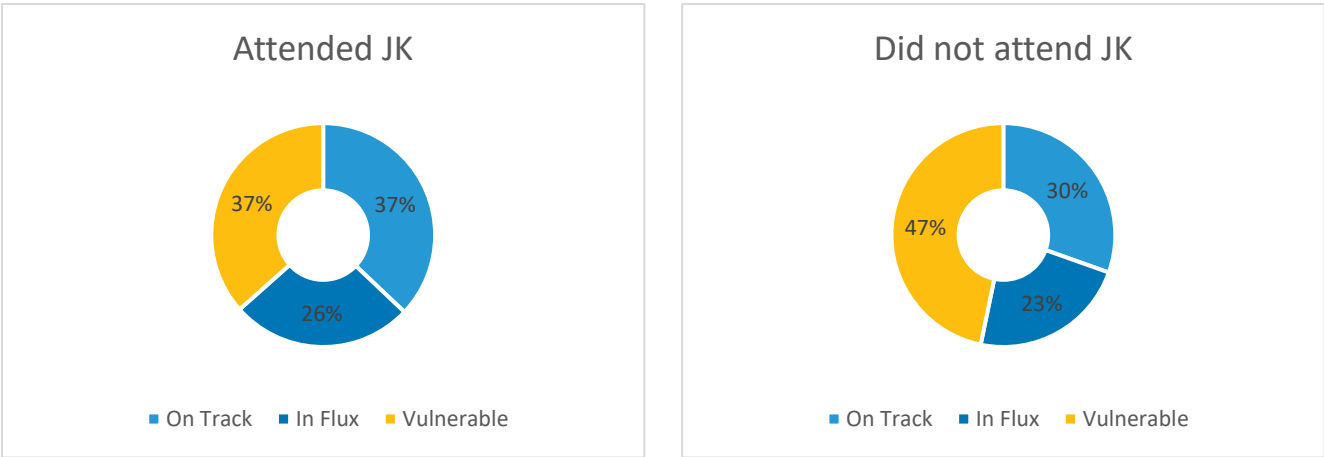
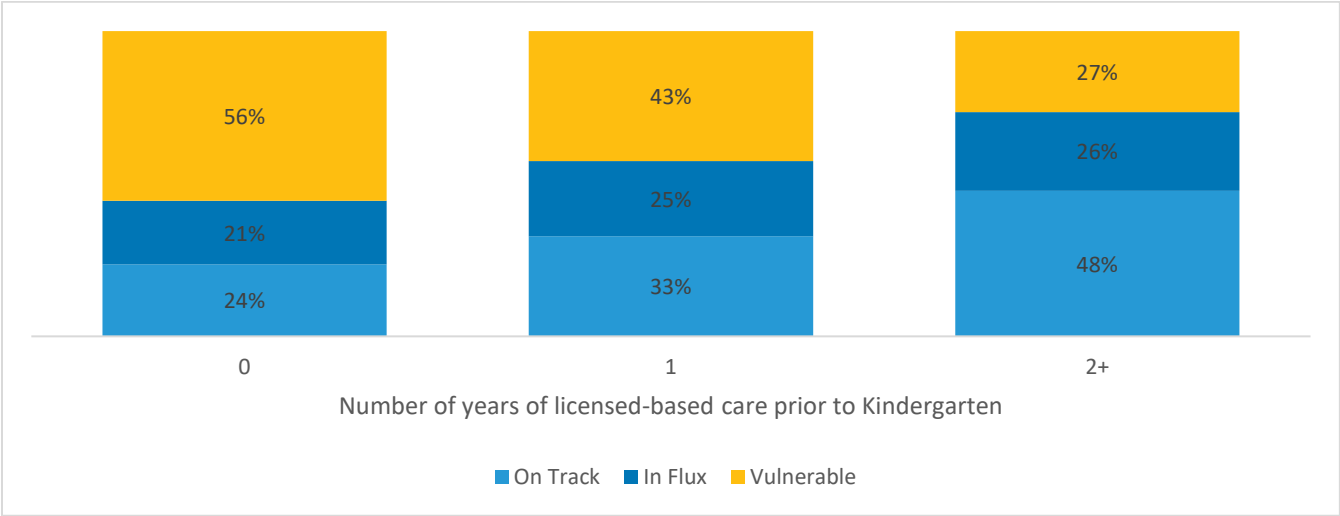


Figure 4: Percentage of children who are *ON TRACK*, *IN FLUX* and *VULNERABLE* by number of years spent in licensed ELCC facilities (including centre-based and home-based facilities, excluding Junior Kindergarten), 2012-2025.



In Summary

The developmental health of children is a shared responsibility.

ECE recognizes the value of all early learning opportunities before children enter Kindergarten, including programming at centre-based and home-based facilities. The Early Development Instrument results reflect the cumulative experiences of children from before birth to age five. Results cannot be attributed to one factor nor solved with a single solution. Together, everyone contributes to the positive experiences of children as they grow.

Early Development Instrument reports will continue to be shared with community-based partners, departments, Indigenous governments, and the public to reinforce the shared responsibility of supporting children and families in the early years.