



# STATE OF THE CHILD

Nanaimo 2017  
Greater Nanaimo Early  
Years Partnership

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[www.nanaimoearlyyears.org](http://www.nanaimoearlyyears.org)

# INTRODUCTION

The Greater Nanaimo Early Years Partnership's (GNEYYP) third "State of the Child Report" provides an assessment of children's wellbeing in the Nanaimo region. The report supports investments in the first years of a child's life and highlights how our community supports the positive development of young people.

This report extends the 2015 State of the Child Report, letting us assess a number of domains that affect children, with an increased focus on children of Aboriginal ancestry. While many of the metrics provided are the purview of health and social service organisations, it is a whole community's efforts that yield the best outcomes. We all need to help children achieve their best potential.

The report tracks how our community is doing to becoming a more child-friendly place. The success of our children is vital to the health of our community, and GNEYYP welcomes the contributions of all in our community who want to contribute to that success.

## Children thrive within healthy families and supportive communities

### Demographics

The 2016 Census reports a total population of 90,504 for the City of Nanaimo. Of this, 13,035 are less than 15 years of age, a 7.8% increase in this age group since 2011. Since the 2011 Census, the total population of the City of Nanaimo has increased by 8%. The Census noted that 35% of families are led by a lone-parent, of which 78% are single mothers. The rate of lone-parent families has increased by 5.6%.

### **What is the Greater Nanaimo Early Years Partnership?**

The GNEYYP is a diverse group of engaged community partners who are committed to improving the health of children under six in the Greater Nanaimo area.

### **The GNEYYP Mission:**

Our mission is to be a positive, evolving community table that collaborates to identify, strengthen and support the optimal development of children and their families with the goal having children thriving and ready for school.

### **The GNEYYP Vision:**

To support all families in Greater Nanaimo to create a solid foundation for children in order to help them reach their full potential in health and development during their early years.



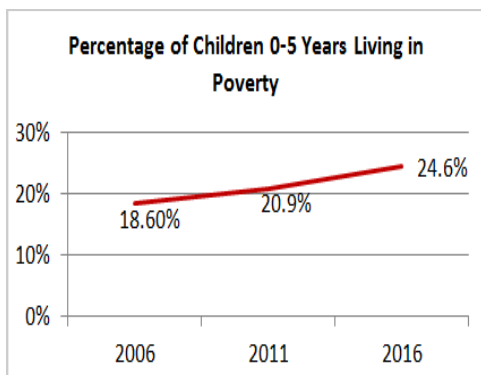
# FAMILY & ECONOMIC WELLBEING

## Family Economics

Relative to 2011, the 2016 Census showed the average annual family income in Nanaimo increased by 14.8% to \$79,194. The average lone-parent family income increased by 14.5% to

The number of children under age 5 living in poverty grew to 24.6% in 2016.

\$45,560. The percentage of children 0-5 years of age living in poverty increased to 24.6%, while the percentage of people living in poverty stayed consistent at 17.3%.



## Children in Need of Care & Protection

Fifteen of every 1,000 children aged newborn to 18 years old were living in care as of 2016. This rate has decreased only slightly since 2014. Thirty-five of every 1,000 children were reported to be in need of protection in 2014. These rates are 75-85% higher than the BC rates. In the Nanaimo area, 133 of the 251 children in protection are of Aboriginal ancestry. This proportion is similar to the rest of BC.

## Education

In fall 2017, there was a 5.5% increase in enrollment in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS). Of the 14,709 students registered, 1032 entered Kindergarten. The 2015/16 six-year completion rate remained consistent at 72.6% of students graduating within 6 years of enrolling in Grade 8. The Eligible Grade 12 Graduation Rate was 94% in 2015/2016. Grade 3/4 Student Satisfaction survey results showed 83% of respondents felt they were getting better at reading, 75% were improving in math and 68% in writing sentences or stories.

## Housing

Housing costs continue to rise. The average sale price for a single-family residential house was \$447,336 in 2016, a 14% increase from 2015. Rental vacancy rates dropped from 8.3% in 2013 to 2% in 2015. Average rent for a 3 bedroom condo was \$1155 in 2015, a 10% increase from

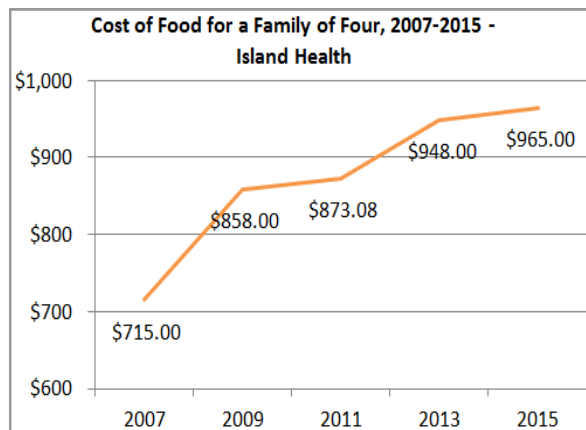
2014. Average rent for a 2 bedroom unit increased by 5% to \$900.

## Aboriginal Families

There are three First Nation communities that fall within the NLPS district: Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as and Stz'uminus. 8.1% of the population of the Greater Nanaimo area and 15% of children aged 0 to 15 identified as Aboriginal in the 2016 Census. In October 2016 2,359 Aboriginal students were enrolled in NLPS, of which 159 students were enrolled in Kindergarten. 2,161 of Aboriginal students were enrolled in Aboriginal Programs. The 2015/2016 six-year completion rate for Aboriginal students graduating within 6 years of enrolling in Grade 8 was 56.4%, which has been declining since the 2013/2014 rate of 63.9%. The Eligible Grade 12 Graduation Rate was 88% in 2015/2016. In 2017 Qwam Qwam Stuwixwulth school on the Snuneymuxw reserve had 65 students from Pre-K to Grade 7.

## Food Security

Loaves and Fishes Food Bank reports that they help between 3000 and 4800 people each month, one-third of whom are children. In 2016 8,058 different people used their services.



*It cost \$965 per month to feed a family of four in 2015.*

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Newborn Health

943 babies were born at NRGH in 2015; 5.7% of these babies had low birth weight (less than 2.5 kilograms).

The percent of premature births stayed constant at 7.4% of births in 2015. 25% of babies were born via Caesarian section. This is below the provincial average of 32%.

78% of mothers were within the age range of 20-35 where healthiest baby outcomes are expected.

59% of mothers exclusively breastfed their babies initially upon hospital discharge, and 41% of mothers still exclusively breastfed their babies at 4 months of age.



**The Baby Bed program is a safe sleep initiative that provides a bed for baby and care items to promote a healthy start in life.**

The Nanaimo Baby Bed program began in October 2017 in partnership with multiple service providers including Island Health, GNEYP, United Way, Hospital Foundation and NLPS. The goal of the program is to help families provide a strong start for their baby by providing a safe sleep surface for babies, education on safe sleep practices and early contact with a Public Health Nurse. Beds are available at the Nanaimo Health Centre to all families with a newborn infant (up to 3 months) or pregnant woman in their 3rd trimester of pregnancy. For more information contact Nanaimo Public Health at 250.755.3388.

## Child Development

In 2016, 780 children under 6 years received services at the Nanaimo Child Development Centre (CDC) for a variety of programs, such as: speech/language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, infant development and family development.

171 children under 6 years were referred to the Island Health Speech Language Pathology department in 2016.

51% of referrals at both the CDC and Island Health for speech/language services were for children under 3 years of age; 30% were referred at 3 years of age.

Early identification and referral leads to better outcomes.



## Immunization Rates

The 2016 rate of children aged 2 with complete immunizations increased from 61% in 2014 to 72.2%. Fewer parents are refusing all immunizations (4.8%) compared to 2014 (15%).

## Dental Health

According to the 2015/2016 NLPS dental survey 68.2% of Kindergarten children had no dental decay. This is similar to the 2012/13 survey.

Over 2 years, there was a 20% increase in children being hospitalized for dental surgery to 11.4 per 1,000 in 2014/2015.

## Child Health

The 2014/2015 hospitalization rates for children aged 0 to 14 with respiratory disease were 8.3 per 1,000, a slight increase from the 2012/2013 rates.

Rates were slightly increased at 4.9 per 1,000 for children hospitalized for injury and poisoning.

# HEALTH & WELLNESS



Children & youth aged 5 to 17 should get at least 60 minutes per day of medium to intense physical activity.\*  
Currently just 9% of children meet this recommendation.  
(\*Government of Canada)

## Physical Activity

According to the NLPS 2015/16 Satisfaction Survey, 44% of Grade 3/4 respondents said they did sufficient physical activities at school. This rate has been declining since 2011/12 (66% of respondents).



64% said they usually do their physical activity within school, while the remainder do so outside of school. These rates have stayed fairly consistent.



91% of Grade 3/4 respondents said they usually ate or drank healthier foods or beverages.

This rate has stayed consistent with previous years.

49% of Grade 3/4 respondents said they had eaten 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables in the last 24 hours. This rate has been slowly declining since 2011/12 (61%).

## Aboriginal Health

On average, 25-28% of the Nanaimo Child Development Centre's active caseloads self-identify as Aboriginal.

The Aboriginal Infant Development Program maintained an average caseload of 25 clients between the two consultants for 2016, with no waitlist.

37.2% of Aboriginal children had no dental decay in the 2015/2016 survey, unchanged from 2012/13.

The Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as and Stz'uminus Health Centres provide immunization, prenatal health, breastfeeding and diet services to members of their communities.

Every Tuesday Snuneymuxw Health Center offers a Building Beautiful Babies program for moms and their children under a year of age or for pregnant mothers.

Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre offers a number of health programs for families with children.

**Young Mothers Housing Program** provides temporary/transitional housing for 18 to 25 year old women and their children, and helps maintain family support when they end tenancy.

**Building Better Babies** provides supports for women and families from pregnancy until six months postpartum.

**Creating Healthy Families** is a drop-in parenting program for parents with children aged 0-6 years. In 2016, 803 children and 1549 adults participated in this program.

**Children's Wellness Program** provides individual, family and group therapy to urban Aboriginal children, youth and families who have been impacted by abuse or trauma. The Children's Wellness Program also conducts workshops in the Vancouver Island Region. 23 children under the age of 6 took part in this program in 2016.

For more information on the services provided by the Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre visit <http://www.tillicumlelum.ca/>.

# CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## Family Resources

Nanaimo has 8 elementary schools with **StrongStart** programs. Families with children 5 years and under can access **free** daily drop-in programs on most school days. In 2016-17, over 1400 children attended each month.

Every elementary school **hosts Ready Set Learn** early learning events for 3 and 4 year olds. Students starting Kindergarten are invited to a special **Welcome to Kindergarten** event in the spring before starting school. Last year NLPS introduced toy lending libraries in the StrongStart schools.



**GNEYP** is offering a one-stop-shop for parents to learn about and access resources and services available for children 0-6 in the Nanaimo area. The partnership has hosted 5 free Early Years Healthy Start Fairs.

The **Family Magazine** is a local magazine published by Nanaimo News Bulletin and Black Press, with editorial contributions made by the Early Years Partnership for Nanaimo and Ladysmith, as well as organizations involved in child development and early learning. This magazine offers a list of drop in activities, resource and service listings, and helpful articles for families with young children. To view the magazine please visit [www.nanaimoearlyyears.org](http://www.nanaimoearlyyears.org).



**Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)** is a school readiness program that recognizes the parent as the child's first and best teacher. HIPPY employs Home

Visitors to deliver a structured curriculum to the parents in their homes. Parents works with their children on educational activities that develop cognitive, social and emotional skills. HIPPY is

offered through the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society for families with Permanent Residency Status. For further information please contact the HIIPY program at 250-753-6911 Ext 121.

## Licensed Child Care

There are currently 2,700 licensed day-care spots in the Nanaimo area, an increase of 8.6% from 2015. Of those spots 168 were designated for infants/toddlers, 353 for preschool and 1,079 were for school age children. The current average rate of child care is between \$35 and \$45 per day.

1441 children in Nanaimo received child care subsidy funding in 2016/17. This included 363 infants/toddlers and 530 children aged 3 years to school age. Centres report difficulty recruiting and retaining Early Childhood Educators.

**PacificCARE Child Care Resource & Referral Program** supports families and caregivers with child care subsidy forms, child care referrals, training opportunities and more. Referrals are decreasing as parents use social media to find care. Caregivers are also using the provincial MCFD Child Care Map found at [www.gov.bc.ca/findchildcare](http://www.gov.bc.ca/findchildcare) to find care.

# CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## Aboriginal Resources

Snuneymuxw Daycare had 48 children enrolled, with about 10 on the waitlist for daycare services in 2016. The daycare also offers a Head Start/ preschool program. Every Wednesday the Snuneymuxw AIDP program offers a playgroup for families with children aged 0-5 years old; usually 20 people attend.

Uy'sqwalawun Childcare Center is for on and off reserve children, with an equal number of families accessing services. Currently 11 children are enrolled in their Infant/Toddler program, with 3 children on the waitlist. 18 children are enrolled in their Group Childcare (preschool) program. There is no wait list for this program. They also have a Head Start program for Aboriginal children.

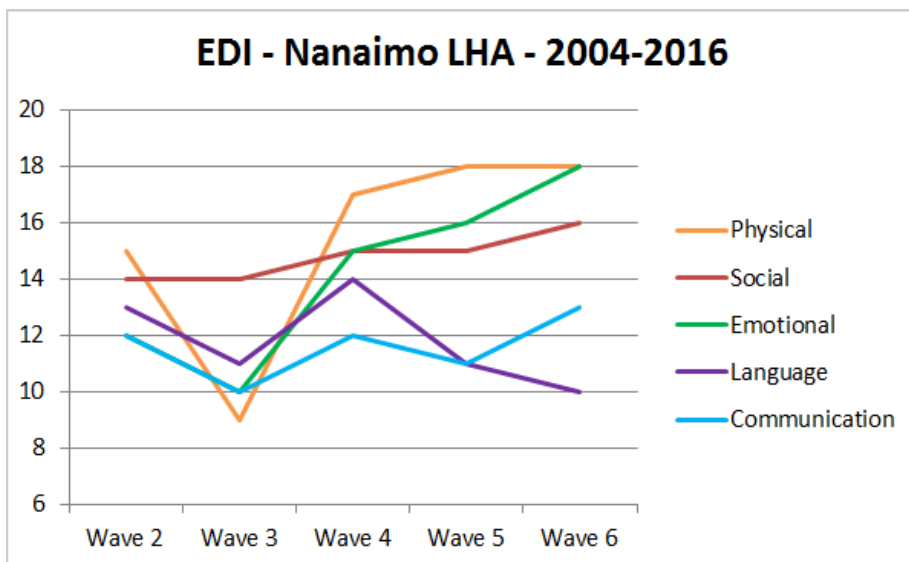
Tillicum Lelum's ECD program integrates cultural practices and teachings into their programming to strengthen and promote healthy children, families and communities. 121 children aged 0-6 participated in this program in 2016.

Kwumut Lelum runs the 4 Seasons Early Years program that delivers culturally-focused parenting and and play groups for children and families on reserve. In 2017, the weekly drop-in programs in Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as and Stz'uminus served approximately 50 children and 43 families.

Information about programs and resources for Nanaimo families can be found online: [nanaimoearlyyears.org](http://nanaimoearlyyears.org)

## Early Development Instrument

### EDI - Nanaimo LHA - 2004-2016



The Early Development Instrument measures children's development up to kindergarten in five domains: *physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development and communication skills*. In 2016, the proportion of children considered to be vulnerable stayed the same at 34%.



Physical health continues to have the highest level of vulnerability at 18%. Emotional maturity vulnerability worsened to 18%. Communication and emotional vulnerability also worsened to 13% and 16% respectively.

Language and cognitive development continues to improve, with 90% of children not vulnerable.



## **Multicultural Literacy Kits**

Developed by the GNEYP Cultural Awareness Committee, the Multi-Cultural Literacy Kits are aimed at helping parents to promote their children's literacy and language development through

regular engagement and play. Each kit contains books, activities, toys, and audio resources that have been developed to reflect a variety of cultures and languages. There are now kits for 11 cultures available for request at all three Vancouver Island Regional Library locations in Nanaimo.



# CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

GNEYP works with governments to make Nanaimo a Child-Friendly city.

## Low-Cost Recreation

The City of Nanaimo continues to offer a Leisure Economic Access Pass to eligible low income residents. The LEAP program offers a 50% discount for up to 4 courses, and 50 free admissions to City pools, arenas and gyms. The City offers a number of drop-in programs that are under \$5 per child, and approximately 30 registered courses are less than \$5 per class. The City also offers 75 free sponsored swims and skates throughout the year, in addition to many special events.

## Parks & Playgrounds

Nanaimo offers a number of public outdoor spaces with over 631 hectares of City parks. This includes 13 destination parks and 90 neighbourhood parks. There are 4



destination playgrounds (some feature paved training routes for children learning to ride bikes), 26 sports fields, 4 waterparks, 2 outdoor amphitheatres, 2 skateboard parks and over 140 kilometers of trails. At 11 of Nanaimo's playgrounds you will find the "Unplug & Play" signage, encouraging families to unplug and connect with their children.



*Large playboxes full of equipment have been installed in three city parks. The locked boxes can be freely accessed by signing up with Nanaimo Parks & Rec.*

## Library Usage



In 2016, 19,359 children attended just over 700 programs held in the three branches, this is a 45% increase in attendance and a 28% increase in programs from 2014. A total of 293,790 children's books and media were borrowed in 2016.

## Acknowledgements

The success of this State of the Child Report is due to our community partners at the Greater Nanaimo Early Years Partnership with financial support from Success by 6 and Children First.

## Sources

The information contained in this report came from a large number of sources. For a detailed list, please visit: [www.nanaimoearlyyears.org](http://www.nanaimoearlyyears.org).

## More Information

**For more information regarding community resources** and services, an event calendar and a community program schedule for the Nanaimo area, please go to the Greater Nanaimo Early Years Partnership website located at: [www.nanaimoearlyyears.org](http://www.nanaimoearlyyears.org).

**For more information about this report**, contact: Amber Bruner, Children First Early Years Community Coordinator: [nanaimoearlyyears@telus.net](mailto:nanaimoearlyyears@telus.net) 250.816.1699.

