

For more than 15 years, First 5 Orange County has worked with schools to collect data across the county through a survey called the **Early Development Index (EDI)**. EDI data allow us to have the best picture of where the needs and successes are in our county and neighborhoods.

What is the Early Development Index

The Early Development Index (EDI) is a population measure of how young children are developing in communities across the United States. The EDI measures five areas (domains) of early childhood development:

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive skills
- Communication skills and general knowledge

The EDI is helpful not only in describing how children are developing, but can also help to predict health, education, and social outcomes.

Success to Date:

Since 2015, Orange County has had 100% participation among public schools with a kindergarten population!

How are EDI results used?

EDI data provide an opportunity for community members and leaders to:

- Understand the strengths and weaknesses in children’s development and school readiness across communities and EDI areas
- Explore the relationship between children’s EDI results and other factors that may influence their health and well-being (e.g., poverty rates and availability of community assets like preschools, libraries, and health providers)
- Implement strategic and targeted resourcing, investments, and policies to address neighborhood and community needs
- Track progress over time to see how changes in investments, policies, and other factors impact children’s health and well-being

Who else is using the EDI?

Through a partnership with the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, First 5 Orange County was the first site in the U.S. to collect EDI data (2007). The EDI has now spread to over 80 communities and 18 states nationally.

The data collected has measured over 150,000 children representing more than 200 school districts and 1,400 schools across the nation.

U.S. EDI Participation as of 2024



How are EDI data collected?

After receiving an online training, kindergarten teachers complete an EDI record on each child in their classroom. In addition to asking questions about the five areas of development, general demographic information on children is collected (e.g., child's ethnicity, English Language Learner status, Individualized Education Program (IEP) status and gender). Home address information is also collected in order to map the data geographically.

How are EDI results reported?

EDI results are reported for an entire community—neighborhood by neighborhood—as the percentage of children on track (>25th percentile), at risk for becoming not on track (>10th and ≤25th percentile) and not on track (≤10th percentile) in each of the five areas. Children who are on track on all areas are considered “ready for kindergarten.”

Geographic maps show the percentage of children who are developmentally on track or not on track in the EDI areas. In the example map below, the darker the blue a neighborhood or community is, the lower the proportion of children who are ready for kindergarten. Children are mapped based on where they live, not where they attend school. Other important indicators or factors that may influence health and well-being can be mapped on top of community-level EDI results.

How does First 5 OC support communities in using the data?

Partnering with communities, First 5 Orange County:

- Provides technical assistance to community collaboratives interested in advocating for early childhood, including health, development, and early education
- Uses data from EDI and other sources to pinpoint areas of need, identify community assets/barriers, and highlight where additional resources are needed
- Works with funded partners to increase services to meet the needs of neighborhoods and communities
- Provides a springboard to engage families around strategies to best support the needs of young children in their community
- Supports partner agencies, including school districts in applying for grants or other funding sources to help close opportunity gaps

How does the EDI differ from other assessments?

The EDI was uniquely designed to provide a community-level index of children's health, development and school readiness, not to inform individual instruction. Other tools used to inform individual instruction often require significant teacher time, are repeated during a school year, and focus on academic skills. By contrast, the EDI is a holistic measure completed once every three years on subsequent classes of kindergarteners to monitor changes in children's well-being and assess collective impact of community-wide early childhood efforts. Both assessment types have a role to play in improving the life of kids.

For additional information about how the EDI is used in Orange County, including interactive maps and research profile with validity and reliability studies, go to:

<https://first5oc.org/resources/edi/>

