



# Understanding the Early Years West Kootenay, BC

An Initiative of the Kootenay Boundary Regional Resources Co-operative

Issue One

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## Researching the Early Years in the West Kootenay

### DID YOU KNOW? In 2001:

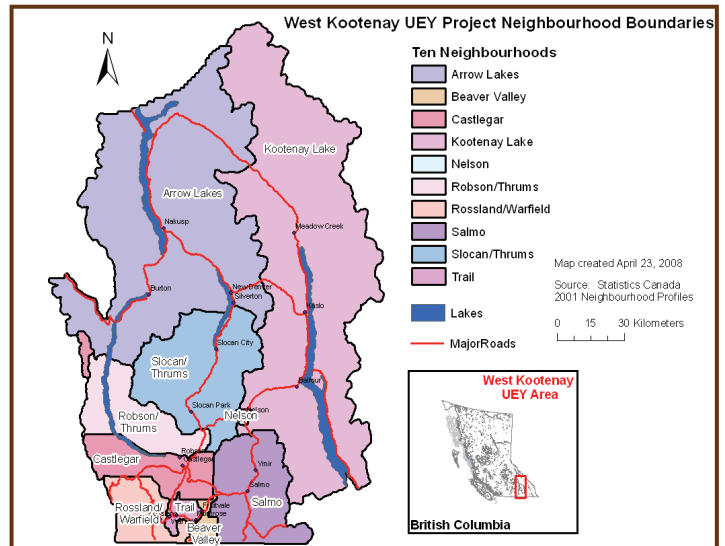
- \* Children aged six and under made up 7% of the total West Kootenay population (4480 children).
- \* An average of 77% of households in the West Kootenay owned their own home.
- \* Nearly 22% of residents over the age of 20 had not completed their high school diploma.

There has been an exponential growth in the body of literature indicating that a child's first six years of development significantly affect learning, behavior and physical and emotional health throughout adulthood. Due to this growing knowledge base, as well as the limited finances available to support the early years, communities are increasingly interested in learning what factors, resources and initiatives best support their young children (and

conversely which factors do not). In response to this demand for knowledge and the expectation of sound evidence to guide decision making and resource allocation, the *Understanding the Early Years* (UEY) Initiative was developed in 1999 by Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

The UEY West Kootenay Initiative is a three year project to empower communities with evidence to make responsive program, policy and investment decisions to give their children the best possible start. It examines the role that families and communities play in the lives of children by providing communities with important and objective information, including:

- The socio-economic characteristics of communities
- The "readiness to learn" of young children
- The family and community factors that influence children's development
- The availability of local resources to support young children and their families.



The West Kootenay project includes ten areas, termed "neighbourhoods". During the past nine months, Researcher Helen Lutz has used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software to examine the community demographics and resources of the West Kootenay area. In addition to this, Statistics Canada 2006 Census data will be used to identify various populations with respect to their age, sex, education, income and mobility. These maps are under construction and will be available in a Community Mapping Report later in 2008. For additional information on the West Kootenay UEY initiative please contact Kim Adamson at 352-6786. For research related inquiries please contact Helen Lutz at [Helen@thekoop.ca](mailto:Helen@thekoop.ca)

**This project is an initiative of the Kootenay Boundary Regional Resources Co-operative.**

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