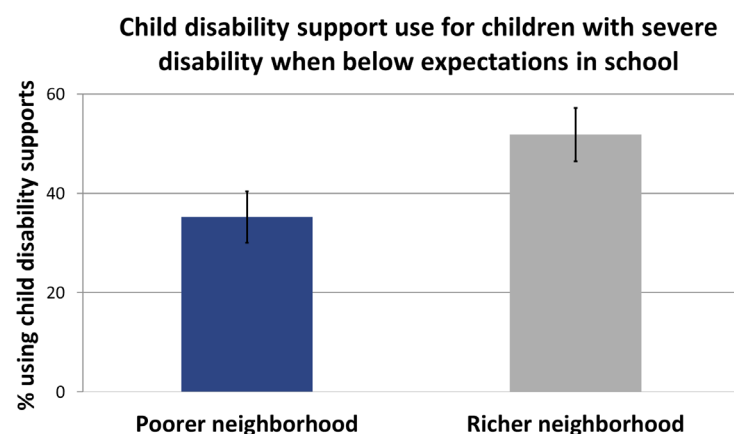


How families use family disability supports during early times of educational need

Families with children with severe disabilities were more likely to use family disability supports in the early years when their child was below expectations in school. However, families in poorer neighborhoods were less likely than families in richer neighborhoods to use these services in this time of educational need.

Implications: This research suggests that the use of additional disability support depends on the social background (i.e., income) of families. Early support access is important to children with disabilities as they show less achievement across their school years¹, and has potential long-term consequences as early (vs. late) support is thought to be more impactful. Reasons for not using supports may include differences in the location of services and/or in the ability of families to navigate the services. We should note that families' social backgrounds (e.g., income, city size, etc.) have been shown to affect other health-related outcomes.



Analysis details: Our analysis is based on six years of reported service use in Alberta (2005/6 to 2010/11), by the PolicyWise for Children & Families: Child and Youth Data Laboratory². We identified children with severe education disability codes during years that they were eligible for early childhood services (age 3 to 5). This resulted in a group of 1,817 children.

Achievement was based on performing below expectations (i.e., having a moderate or higher intellectual disability code, unsatisfactory provincial achievement scores, or being behind a grade) or meeting expectations (i.e., fulfilling these three indicators). Socioeconomic status (income status) was based on the social and material environments in which youth lived over the six years. Youth were assigned a socioeconomic status via an index based on the Statistics Canada dissemination area in which he or she resided (Higher SES: top 60% of neighborhoods; Lower SES: bottom 40% of neighborhoods). Family disability support use was based on Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) use in any of the years.

95% Confidence intervals are provided for the percentage of children using FSCD services in the figure. See the early childhood service report for further details on this analysis and other related analyses³.



What family disability support program is examined? Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) offers a range of supports to families of children with disabilities in Alberta. Services are designed to strengthen families' abilities to promote their child's healthy development⁴.

1. For more on special needs children, see https://visualization.policywise.com/P2dashboard/?data=EDU_SpecEd&year=2010-11
2. The CYDL dataset is described at https://visualization.policywise.com/P2matrix/CYDL_Program_Overlap_summary.pdf
3. The full report is available at https://policywise.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-07JUL-10-EarlyChildhoodServices_final.pdf
4. For more information on FSCD, see <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/disability-services/14855.html>