

Understanding Community Data

One of the primary purposes of this website is to make information accessible and comprehensible to all members of the community so that they can understand community problems, the resources available to address them, plan effective strategies, and evaluate progress toward their goals. This is referred to as the **democratization of data**¹ and has become increasingly important as communities, service providers, planners and the like operate within stronger environments of accountability.

This website provides a broad spectrum of community data related to the development of children within a **population health approach**². It also provides information that attempts to educate people on the uses of data and provide some of the basic understandings necessary for the appropriate use and interpretation of data.

1. Democratized Data

The goal of democratized data is to make public information accessible and comprehensible to all members of the community, so that they can understand community problems, the resources available to address them, plan effective strategies, and evaluate progress toward their goals.

Data Democracy means:

Without violating community members' right to confidentiality

- Publicly held data are accessible on the Internet to all community members who have access to computers.
- Public information is released in a way that helps people understand community issues and evaluate progress toward community goals.

Without violating government's obligation to the public interest

- Community members have the ability to create and display their own information about their community.

Data democratization recognizes that for community members to be able to use information to improve their neighbourhoods, they must have increased access to technology and increased confidence in their use of data. That means changing how neighbourhood organizations and their members get and use technology and information.

In the past few years, there has been a significant growth in the democratization of data. This is likely due to at least three reasons: the growth of computing power and data access; the fact that much less skill is required to turn raw data into information useful for policy analysis than in the past; and finally, a great need exists for these problem-solving tools at the city and neighbourhood levels.

In Canada, one of the best examples demonstrating the democratization of child-related data is found at the University of British Columbia's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) website <http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca>. This website contains a wealth of information pertaining to children living in British Columbia. One of the highlights of the website is an interactive mapping portal <http://ecdportal.help.ubc.ca/mapComReports.htm> for public use.

2. Population Health Approach

- a. The Approach
- b. History of Population Health in Canada
- c. Population Health Detailed Framework
- d. Population Health Framework Tool
- e. Key elements of Population Health

Population health refers to the health of a population as measured by health status indicators and as influenced by social, economic and physical environments, personal health practices, individual capacity and coping skills, human biology, early childhood development, and health services.

As an approach, population health focuses on the interrelated conditions and factors that influence the health of populations over the life course, identifies systematic variations in the patterns of occurrence, and applies the resulting knowledge to develop and implement policies and actions to improve the health and well-being of those populations.

Below are some excellent resources that describe the Population Health Approach in more detail and provide tools to help you implement this approach into your own planning strategies.

Population Health Approach – Health Canada

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/approach/index.html>

Population Health Template

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/pdf/discussion_paper.pdf

Population Health Template Tool

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/pdf/template_tool.pdf

Summary Table for Key Elements of Population Health

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/pdf/summary_table.pdf

History of Population Health in Canada

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/approach/approach.html#history>