

## Background

- Children with severe Developmental Disabilities (DD) are at greater risk for health problems (Decouffé & Autry, 2002), co-morbid mental health problems (e.g., McCarthy, 2007) and problem behaviour (Atkinson et al., 1994)
- Older children and adolescents with DD show increased levels of psychopathology (Chadwick et al., 2005)
- Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) often show higher levels of problem behaviour (e.g., Blacher & Baker, 2007)
- Families of children with DD tend to have lower SES which has been related to lower levels of well-being and greater emotional and behavioural disorders (Emerson, 2003; Emerson & Hatton, 2007)
- Little current research exists about the health and well-being of Canadian children with severe DD and about the specific impact that SES can have
- Purpose: To describe the health and well-being of a large sample of Canadian children with severe DD and examine the relationship between child factors (i.e., age, gender and diagnosis), SES and the children's health and well-being

## Research Goals

1. Describe the Health and Well-being of a large Canadian Sample of children with Severe and Multiple DD.
2. Examine differences in the Health and Well-being of these children based on gender, diagnosis and age.
3. Examine the relationship between SES and the Health and Well-being of children with severe and multiple DD.

## Method

- This study is part of the Great Outcomes for Kids Impacted by Severe Developmental Disabilities (GO4KIDDS) Canadian team project
- GO4KIDDS utilizes a variety of methodologies; this poster is based on a nationwide online Basic Survey measuring indicators of the health, well-being and social inclusion of children with severe and multiple DD and that of their parents

## Measures

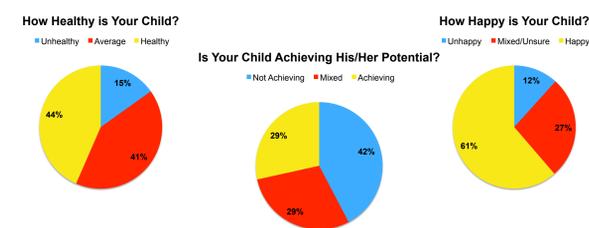
- Health and Well-being: three single item questions rated on a 5-point scale (condensed to 3 categories on this poster):
  1. How healthy is your child? (Unhealthy, Average, Healthy)
  2. How happy is your child? (Unhappy, Mixed/Unsure, Happy)
  3. Do you think your child is achieving as much as he/she has the potential to? (Not Achieving, Mixed, Achieving)
- SES: Based on family's postal code, we obtained the median income of their neighbourhood

## Participants

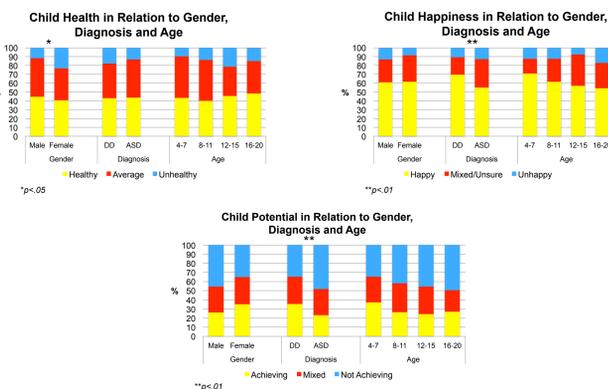
- N = 412
- Gender: 69% boys, 31% girls
  - Diagnosis: 43% DD only, 57% ASD (often with DD)
  - Age: 4-21 years (M = 11.4) 23% 4-7; 34% 8-11; 27% 12-15; 16% 16-20
  - Median income ranges from \$19,112 - \$109,302 (M = \$62,689.11)

## Results

### 1. Describe the Health and Well-being of the sample



### 2. Examine differences in the Health and Well-being based on child gender, diagnosis and age



### 3. Examine the relationship between SES and Health and Well-being

- Spearman correlations showed no relationship between SES and the original 5-point scale for any of the 3 measures of health and well-being
- ANOVA analyses showed that SES (median income) did not differ among the 3 levels of health and well-being for any of the 3 questions (Healthy, Happy, Achieving Potential)

## Discussion

### 1. Describe the Health and Well-being of the sample

- Overall the children in our sample are relatively healthy
- 43% of parents indicated their child was **healthy**
- 42% of parents indicated their child had **average** health
- Only 15% of parents reported their child was **unhealthy**
- Parents believe their children are quite happy
- 61% of parents rated their child as **happy**
- 28% of parents indicated they were **mixed or unsure** about their child's happiness
- 11% of parents believed their child was **unhappy**
- Many parents in our sample do not believe that their child is achieving his/her potential
- Only 28% of parents believed their child was **achieving** his/her potential
- 29% of parents were **mixed** in their belief that their child was achieving his/her potential
- 43% of parents believed their child was **not achieving** his/her potential

### 2. Examine differences in the Health and Well-being based on gender, diagnosis and age

- Health:
  - Significant difference for gender:  $X^2(2, N=390) = 8.21, p < .05$  (boys likely to be healthier)
  - No significant differences for diagnosis or age
- Happiness:
  - Significant difference for Diagnosis:  $X^2(2, N=393) = 9.37, p < .01$  (DD happier than ASD)
  - No significant differences for gender or age
- Achieving Potential:
  - Significant difference for Diagnosis:  $X^2(2, N=390) = 9.12, p = .01$  (DD higher than ASD)
  - No significant differences for gender or age

### 3. Examine the relationship between SES and Health and Well-being

- No relationship between SES and these Health and Well-being variables
- This may reflect well on the Canadian healthcare system and society, but may also be methodological
- The measures of Health and Well-being are very simple, one question measures of children's health and well-being and may not be the best way to measure these variables
- SES is a complicated construct and has not been well defined in the literature
- There are many different ways to conceptualize SES and the results may have been different with the use of a different measure of SES

## Acknowledgments

Data for this study were collected as part of the CIHR Team: GO4KIDDS: Great Outcomes for Kids Impacted by Severe Developmental Disabilities, Nominated Principal Investigator: Adrienne Perry, York University. ([www.go4kidds.ca](http://www.go4kidds.ca))