

TODAY'S WEATHER

LIGHT RAIN
SHOWERS

12 °C

4 Day Forecast | Traffic



Thursday, November 06, 2008 | [Today's Toronto Star](#) | [Login](#)

[PHOTOS](#) [VIDEO](#) [COLUMNISTS](#) [BLOGS](#) [PODCASTS](#) [RSS](#) [MOBILE](#) [NEWSLETTERS](#) [ALERTS](#)



the star.com Web find a Business
Advanced Search | Full Text Article Archive

AUTOS
CAREERS
CLASSIFIEDS
DEATH NOTICES
REAL ESTATE

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [OPINION](#) [BUSINESS](#) [SPORTS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [LIVING](#) [TRAVEL](#) [WHEELS](#) [HEALTHZONE](#) [YOURHOME](#) [PARENTCENTRAL](#)

[Toronto & GTA](#) | [Ontario](#) | [Canada](#) | [World](#) | [Comics](#) | [Contests](#) | [Crosswords](#) | [Horoscopes](#) | [Lotteries](#) | [Sudoku](#) | [TV Listings](#) | [StarAuctions](#)

Preschoolers shine in troubled neighbourhood

'Sense of community, identity' in Malton helps raise kids well-prepared for school, study finds

Oct 31, 2008 04:30 AM

[Comments on this story](#) (1)

SHABNAM JANET JANANI
STAFF REPORTER

Though they face greater social and economic risks than kids in other communities, the percentage of Malton children deemed ready for kindergarten is equal to that of more privileged areas across Peel Region.

Why?

A new study shows that preschool development in this sometimes troubled neighbourhood remains steady, although the risk factors have increased by 10 per cent in the past five years.

The study is part of a federal government support project called Understanding the Early Years, launched in 16 high-risk communities nationwide, including Malton, last February. The local study found that Malton is one of the most challenged areas in the GTA.

"Malton is a community with a high level of social risk, with increasing vulnerability and poverty," explains project co-ordinator Sumbal Malik. "Many families have just moved to Canada and they are in a state of transition, learning and settling in. Low employment and low family income are just a couple of factors that increase a community's vulnerability. These factors subsequently impact the quality of life of children in their early years."

Yet Malton kindergarteners are slightly more likely to be ready for school – by about 1 per cent – than children in Mississauga overall.

"Social cohesion in Malton is one of the main reasons why our kids are doing well," said Sylvia Link, communications manager at the Peel District School Board. "There is a sense of community and identity."

With the unemployment rate at 8 per cent, more Malton kids are living in poverty today than in 2001. The average household income is about \$65,000, compared with \$88,000 for Mississauga overall. A quarter of adults in Malton do not have a high school diploma.

Children for whom English is a second language constitute 57 per cent of the school population, compared with 31 per cent in Mississauga overall and just 29 per cent across Peel.

Malton battles its demons

[Priscilla Dixon's eyes light up when she talks about her neighbourhood of Malton. This is a young person who takes serious pride in her community.](#)

Alison Robinson, a teacher in Malton for 13 years, believes various programs offered by the Peel board for the community provide immense benefits to these children.

Robinson said the Ridgewood Readiness Centre and the Early Years Hub at Lancaster Junior Public School help parents find resources in

the community.

The study assumes that a high proportion of recent immigrants increases social risk, but Jatinder Grewal, chairperson of the community leadership group that guides the Understanding the Early Years project in Malton, thinks diversity also plays a role in stability.

"We have a unique mix of individuals in Malton. The high immigrant populations place more emphasis on the value of education for their children," Grewal said.

Despite hopeful signs in education, Malton residents are concerned about their children's future. "The community needs more support," Link said.

Understanding the Early Years Malton is funded by Human Resources Canada and supported by the Peel District School Board.

Email story
Print
Choose text size
Report typo or correction

BOOKMARK

> Advertisement <

MORE IN THE NEWS

[Striking York U. staff rally](#)

[School mourns Brandon Crisp](#)

[PM looks to U.S. for climate deal](#)

[Toronto workers to fight for 'sick bank'](#)

[Man faces 10 child-porn charges](#)

> Advertisement <

RECENT SPECIAL SECTIONS

[Desi Life Nov.-Dec.](#)

[U.S. Election](#)

[Vital Signs 2008](#)

[Guide to Colleges & Universities](#)

[HDTV](#)

[Insurance](#)

[More Specials](#)

Comments on this story are moderated | [Login to Comment](#) [Commenting Guidelines](#)

Working Together


Families and educators working together can only bring positive results in the education of our children. It is wonderful to see that our families are being supported by Human Resources Canada, the Peel Board and the Ontario Government. Many of our immigrant families move to Canada so that their children will have the opportunity for a good education. All they need to make this happen is a little support. I'm glad that we are providing that for many of our families that need it, not just our immigrant families. I hope that it will continue and increase.

Posted By Barb at 9:09 AM Friday, October 31 2008

[Agree](#) | [Disagree](#) | [Offensive](#)

Is your car insurance rate **too high?**

yes outrageous out of this world!



MOST POPULAR ON THESTAR.COM

Most Read Most Emailed

- Brandon Crisp found dead
- McCain aides dish Palin dirt
- Dangerous driver, 52, charged again
- New trial for 380 lb. man who crushed wife
- Dangerous driver, 52, cornered in chase again

SPECIAL



Video: Poppy campaign

War veterans and peacekeepers hand out poppies to pupils from Davisville Public School, kicking off the annual poppy drive.



Teens choose the news

Students from across the GTA spent the day at the Star's downtown office as part of Canada's Take Our Kids to Work Day, co-ordinated ...



U.S. election

Read the latest news and analysis in the aftermath of the U.S. presidential election. Our coverage includes election night photos and an interactive ...



Santa Claus Fund

It was Angela Connors's déjà vu moment.



Car of the Year contenders

To pick this year's best vehicles, 80 auto reviewers tested 56 models back to back on road and off, on the track and on the street.

[More Specials](#)

TheStar.com [Corrections](#) | [Contact Webmaster](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS](#) | [Desi Life](#)

Toronto Star [About Us](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Self Services](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [News Releases](#) | [Star Internships](#) | [Careers at the Star](#)

Advertise With Us [Media Kit](#) | [Online Advertising](#) | [Print Advertising](#) | [Special Sections](#)

Initiatives [Santa Claus Fund](#) | [Fresh Air Fund](#) | [Classroom Connection](#) | [Community Giving](#)

Torstar Sites [toronto.com](#) | [ourfaves.com](#) | [Pages of the Past](#) | [Star Store & Photo Sales](#) | [New In Homes](#) | [More...](#)



TORONTO STAR [the-star.com](#) © Copyright Toronto Star 1996-2008 [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Code](#)