



NWT School Attendance Fact Sheet

Attending school every day is essential to student learning and academic success.

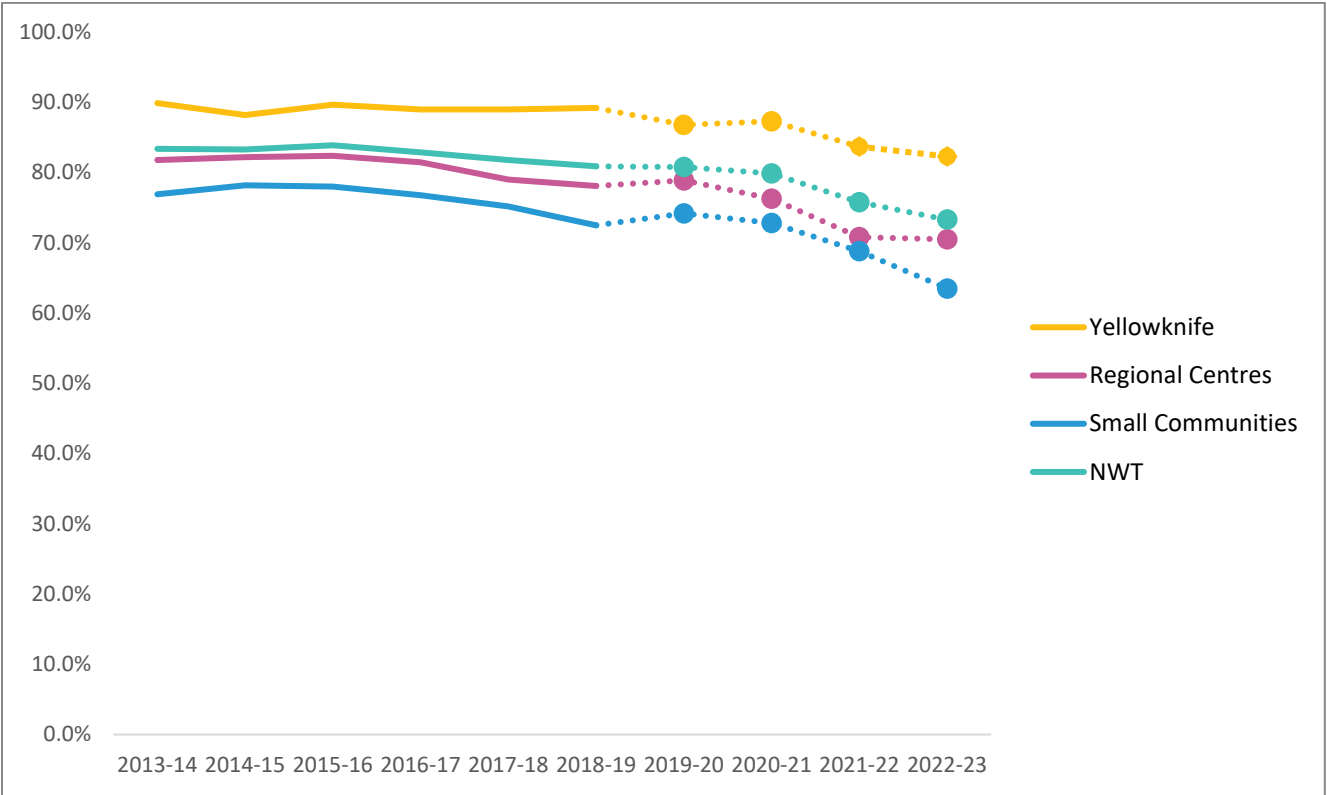
This annual fact sheet offers a glimpse at attendance rates over time for students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 across Northwest Territories (NWT) schools, with a focus on the 2022-23 school year. Attendance rates are only one indicator of how the education system is doing as a whole and can be connected to academic success. Schools and education bodies also monitor attendance and may have programming or supports in place to respond to any attendance issues or concerns in real-time.

Attendance rates are the average of the number of days (or hours) attended divided by the total number of days (or hours) possible annually. The attendance rate includes excused absences. It should also be noted that the attendance system defaults to “present” if student information is not entered, which may result in recorded attendance being higher than actual attendance.

Attendance data has been complicated by several factors in recent years. Data for the 2019-20 school year only reflects the portion of the year when students attended classes in-person (September 2, 2019 to March 13, 2020) prior to school closures and shifts to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequent school years (2020-21 and 2021-22) also faced school closures due to the pandemic, as well as spring flooding in the Hay River area. The 2022-23 school year was the first year since the pandemic began to not experience a COVID-related closure; however, several schools faced closures due to wildfire evacuations. These school years are therefore not comparable to previous years and are presented differently (Figure 1).

Average school attendance in the NWT was 73.3 percent in the 2022-23 school year. Students who attend 80 percent of the time miss about one day of school a week. This means, on average, students in the NWT missed more than one day of school each week in the last few years. Attendance rates have been on the decline in recent years, which is likely a direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other unplanned school closures.

Figure 1: Average rate of attendance by community type*, 2013-14 to 2018-19, and 2019-20 to 2022-23



*Regional Centres include Inuvik, Hay River, and Fort Smith. Small Communities are those outside of Regional Centres and Yellowknife.

* The attendance rates for the 2019-20 school year only reflect the portion of the year that included in-person instruction (September 2, 2019, to March 13, 2020). As a result, attendance rates are not directly comparable to previous years because they do not reflect the entire school year.

* The attendance rates for 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 are also not comparable due to the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, flooding, and wildfire evacuations. The dashed line connecting those data points is a reminder that trends between them cannot be interpreted.

Table 1: Average rate of attendance (%) by grade and community type, 2022-23

	JK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
NWT	70.2	72.4	73.4	77.3	76.9	77.3	77.0	75.7	74.5	74.6	69.3	65.1	75.4	80.2
Small Communities	56.8	61.8	59.4	65.1	67.4	67.0	68.1	66.6	65.4	68.8	62.9	58.5	69.1	67.3
Regional Centres	63.0	70.5	73.3	75.1	74.3	75.9	76.2	72.7	73.8	63.1	59.4	66.4	75.2	74.2
Yellowknife	81.1	81.0	84.0	86.1	84.5	85.8	83.8	83.9	81.7	83.9	79.2	75.1	79.0	86.7

Figure 2: Average rate of attendance in NWT by grade, 2022-23

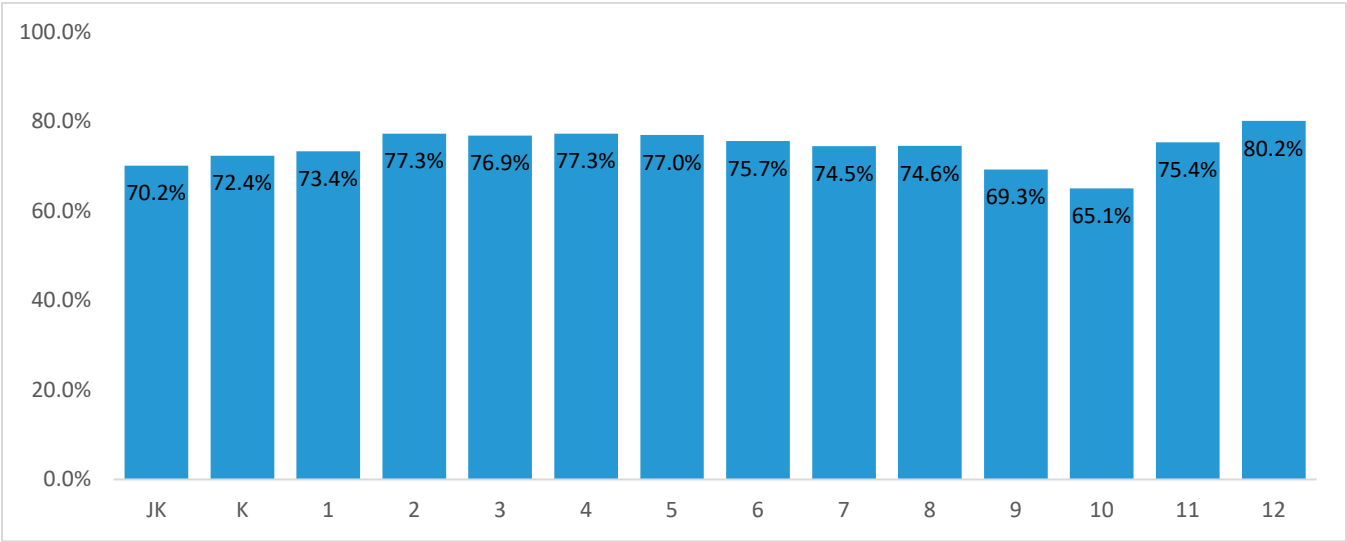


Figure 3: Overall average rate of attendance by community type, 2022-23

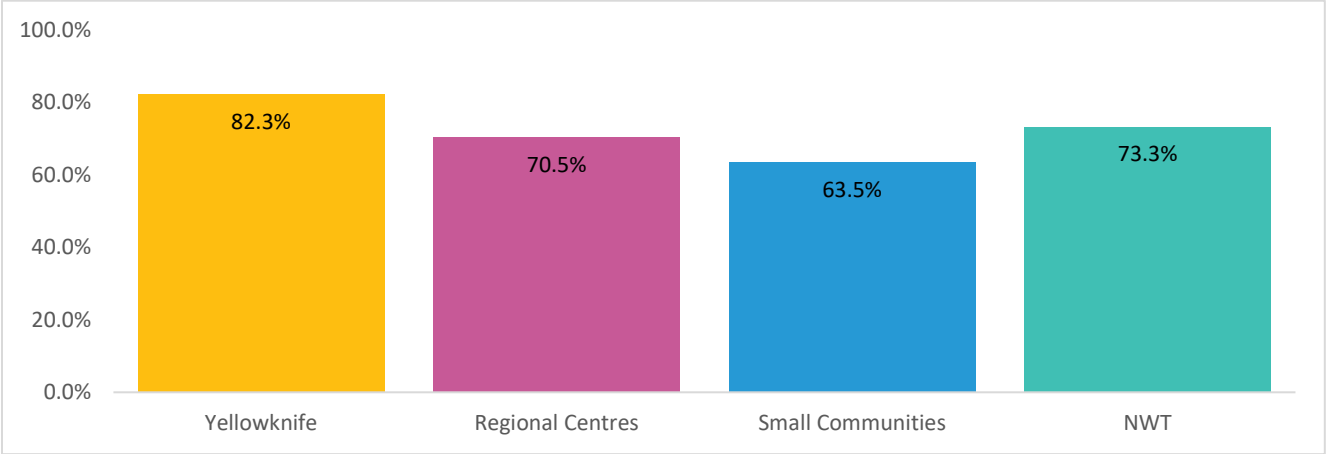
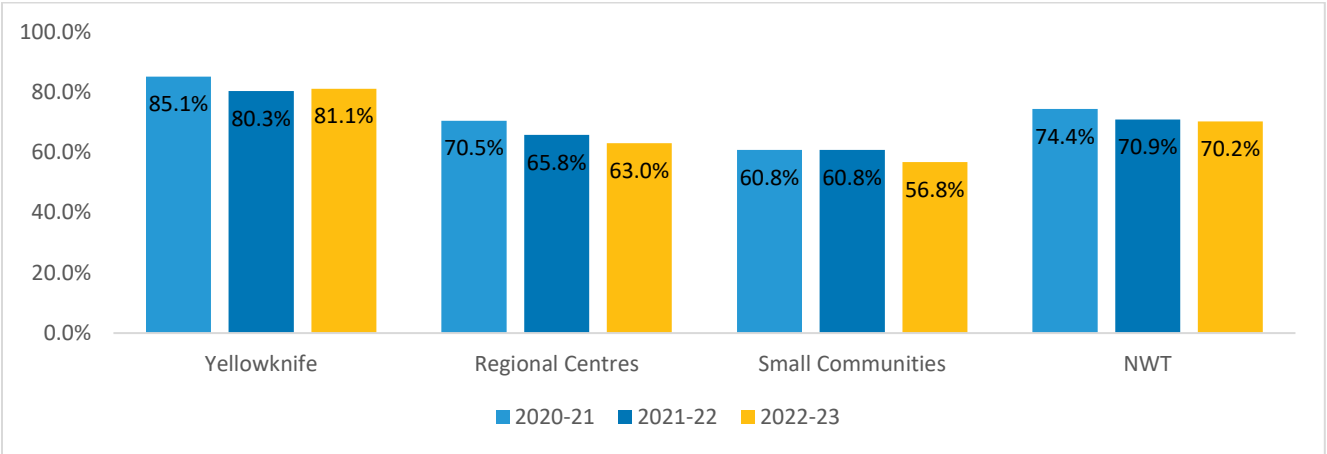


Figure 4: Average rate of attendance in Junior Kindergarten by community type, over time



Attendance rates in Junior Kindergarten have been monitored since its full introduction in the NWT in 2017. Families have the option to enrol their child. During the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment and attendance in Junior Kindergarten/pre-primary dropped across Canada and internationally more so than in other grades. Attendance is also likely impacted by other factors impacting schools, such as flooding and wildfires. ECE will continue to monitor Junior Kindergarten attendance rates to see if it returns to pre-COVID rates.

In Summary

Attendance rates are important indicators of the overall effectiveness of the NWT education system. They are monitored annually and used to inform the department's strategic planning and actions to improve student outcomes.

Several factors can affect school attendance, including relationships with peers and adults at school, access to programs and resources, and a relevant curriculum; as well as factors outside of the school setting, such as overall health and well-being, sleep, nutrition, and home life. When students develop strong relationships, are engaged in their learning, and have their needs met, their attendance improves.

There is work underway in the NWT school system to improve attendance rates in the NWT. The expectation is that as the education system becomes better at reflecting the cultures of the NWT, it will support students to flourish as capable and healthy persons and improve attendance.

Attendance rates will continue to be shared with education partners, Indigenous Governments, and the public as ECE continues its work to improve student outcomes across the NWT.