



PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Community-Level Measurement of Developmental Health at School Entry for Senior Kindergarten Children

Local Coordinator: Upper Canada District School Board

Principal Investigator: Dr. Magdalena Janus, Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University

Sponsoring Agency: Ministry of Education

As part of an ongoing study about children's developmental health, school boards across Canada have been collecting anonymized data on senior kindergarten students. This year, all kindergarten classes with senior kindergarten students in your child's school will be involved in the study. It is your choice whether your child's information is included. If you would like your child exempted, please contact your school principal.

The Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University and the Upper Canada District School Board are under contract with the sponsor of this study and will receive money to cover the costs. The benefit to the researcher will be professional, through academic achievement or presentation of the results.

Why is this research being done?

It is being done to better understand and measure children's developmental health as they enter school. Children can be very different in how ready they are to start school and begin formal learning. Those who are ready from their first day have a greater chance of doing well all through school.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose is to examine the information that is collected to see what might affect a child's developmental health between the ages of 0 and 5 years.

What will happen?

A questionnaire called the Early Development Instrument (EDI) was developed at McMaster University with the help of principals and kindergarten teachers. It asks questions about five areas of child development: 1) physical health and well-being; 2) social knowledge and competence; 3) emotional health and maturity; 4) language and cognitive development; and 5) general knowledge and communication skills.

The school will give the Offord Centre your child's date of birth, gender, and postal code, but NEVER your child's name. The EDI will be filled out by kindergarten teachers during May of the school year. It will give information on children in different communities, and help the communities work on making sure all children are ready to start grade one.

All data collected with the EDI – in Canada and around the world – is kept at the Offord Centre. Results will be shared with the sponsoring agency/the provincial government, the local community coordinator, and the school board, only if guidelines are met to meet provincial privacy legislation. School boards may use these data for future planning in order to be prepared to handle the needs of children entering grade one. McMaster may share anonymized data with approved third party organizations for research purposes.

Data will sometimes be linked at the individual level with other data about things that may affect how well children are doing to see if there are any trends. For example, the availability of programs and services for young families, the number of children under five, or the income level in your neighbourhood. Reporting of results are only done at the aggregate/group level (e.g., school board, neighbourhood, province, country), never on individual children. The smallest group would be a school or neighbourhood so that no child can reasonably be identified. Data from your community may be used to make maps that show EDI results for different neighbourhoods. Data may be combined into a file to be analysed at provincial and national levels.

Confidentiality

Results of this study will not be linked to your child such that he or she can be identified by name. An ID number will be assigned to your child, and the Offord Centre will never have children's names. Only data on gender, age and postal code will be attached to this ID number. There will be no record of your child's results in their academic records. Results will only be examined at a group level, never on individual children.

All questionnaires will be locked in confidential storage until the end of the study, when they will be destroyed. Data will be stored on a password-protected computer which only members of the project team will have access to. Any publications that may result from this research will not identify the children in any way. Your child's score will not be available to you, but overall study results can be available on request.

Are there any risks or benefits to you or your child?

We do not reasonably foresee any risks to you or your child arising from this study. Although there will be no direct benefit to your child, the research may answer questions about differences in child development from place to place. We hope that the results of this study will help bring changes to communities where there is a need to make things better for families with young children. If you choose not to have your child's information included in the study, it will have no effect on your child's standing in their classroom or school.

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns about this study?

If you have questions or concerns you may contact any of the following: the school principal; Patricia Raso at the Offord Centre for Child Studies (905)525-9140 ext. 27051; or the office of the Chair of the Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board at 905-521-2100 Ext. 42013.

Sincerely,



Marsha McNair, Superintendent
Upper Canada District School Board