



HUMAN
EARLY LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP

Human Early Learning Partnership
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Understanding Middle Childhood: The Middle Years Development Instrument Survey

Parent/Guardian Information Letter

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Project Contact: Gillian Corless, Implementation Manager, Human Early Learning Partnership (Telephone: 604-822-1836)

Date: October 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We invite your child to participate in an important research project being conducted this November in his/her school and in other schools across Canada. This study will help us understand how children think and feel about their lives, both inside and outside of school during ages 9 to 13 (middle childhood years). Children in Grade 4 and Grade 7 will be asked to share their views by answering questions on the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI). The MDI survey questions ask about areas of child development that are strongly linked to well-being, health and academic achievement. The project is administered by researchers at the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in partnership with school boards and the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The information collected in this study helps inform educational and community efforts to improve the lives of children.

What is involved in project participation?

The school will arrange for your child's teacher or principal to administer the MDI survey to his/her students. Students complete the survey during school hours on a secure website hosted at UBC. The entire survey takes children one to two class periods to complete. Teachers will determine if

If you DO NOT want your child to participate, please return the attached withdrawal form to your child's teacher within 4 weeks upon receiving this letter.

children who are English language learners or have difficulty understanding the questions will be able to participate in the study. Students will be able to ask for help if they need it.

The MDI survey is **voluntary**. You have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time and you have the right to ask that your child not answer any of the questions.

Withdrawing will not affect any services that your family receives from the school board. *If you DO NOT wish your child to participate, please return the attached withdrawal form (last page) to your child's teacher within **4 weeks** upon receiving this letter.*

Your child also has the right to withdraw from the study at any time, even after they complete the survey. Your child may leave out questions they do not want to answer. If your child chooses not to participate, he/she can be provided an activity that is related to the regular school curriculum. Refusing to participate or withdrawal will not affect your child's education in any way. We can identify no risks involved with this study.

What data are collected?

The MDI questions ask children about five areas of development and well-being: 1) social and emotional development; 2) feelings of connectedness to school, family, friends, and communities; 3) school experiences; 4) physical health and well-being; and 5) time use during the after school hours.

You can view the MDI questions and learn more about the MDI project at:
www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi

There are questions on the MDI that ask your child about problems that he/she may be having with classmates. For this reason, students have the option to confidentially request help following the survey. If your child asks for help in this way, only their teacher and/or principal will be notified and then they will follow the procedures outlined by your school for assisting students.

How is my child's privacy protected?

Your child's privacy is extremely important to us. Students' names are never collected on the actual survey. Your child's school does not keep a copy of the survey and no information is added to your child's school record. Because the results of the study are reported at the group-level only, your child's own specific survey information will never be given to anyone or made public in any way. Personal identification data, such as student education number, date of birth, postal code, and demographic data are needed for data linkage and research purposes only. For confidentiality reasons, personal identification data is stored separately from the MDI data in a secure research environment.

How will the MDI data be used and stored?

As a national research project, MDI data is stored in a secure database by Population Data BC at UBC. Population Data BC is a secure storage facility and only gives access to data for bona fide public-interest research purposes, while at the same time ensuring protection of privacy and

confidentiality of individuals. HELP is responsible for safeguarding MDI data and only approves access to data for research purposes under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) BC, similar to privacy legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. Researchers who receive permission to use the MDI data for research or statistical purposes will be provided data that cannot be connected to any individual student. Confidentiality is maintained at all times.

MDI data may be combined with other data sources in order to learn more about the factors that impact children's well-being and sense of competence. Other data sources may include education and health information such as the Early Development Instrument, which collects information on kindergarten children. **The linked data can *only* be used for research or statistical purposes, by HELP approved researchers, under an approved Research Agreement.** No individual will be identified in the linked data. For concerns related to the privacy of your child's data, please contact HELP's Privacy Officer at privacy@help.ubc.ca.

How are the data reported?

MDI data are reported only for groups of children, in the neighbourhood, in a school or across a school board. HELP researchers also create public maps and community summary reports of the results which are available through the HELP website: www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/mdi.

HELP will provide the school board with an overall school board report and reports of the MDI results for each school. HELP does not share the individual school results publicly. ***None of this information will be used to rank schools, students or classes in any way.*** For privacy reasons, HELP does not create a report for any schools where there are fewer than five students completing the MDI.

How will your school board and community benefit?

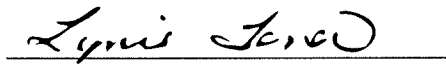
Researchers, educators, parents, and policy makers across Canada can use MDI reports to make decisions about programs and initiatives. Research using MDI data can identify where there are large neighbourhood differences in the number of children who are healthy and feel supported by schools and communities. Schools, program planners, and community members have access to children's voices through the MDI results, and so can better create environments to help children thrive.

Where can I get more information on the study?

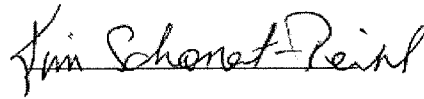
For further information please visit HELP's website at www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi. If you have any questions about the project and the collection and disclosure of information, please contact Gillian Corless, Project Manager, via e-mail at gillian.corless@ubc.ca or by phone at 604-822-1836.

If at any time you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a person who takes part in this project, you may contact the Research Subject Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at the University of British Columbia at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, you may contact the principal investigator at the number or email provided below.

Yours sincerely,



Lynie Tener, School Board MDI Contact
Coordinator, Instructional Services
Telephone: 604-534-7891
Email: ltener@sd35.bc.ca



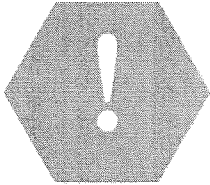
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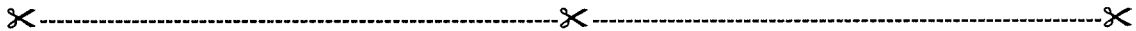
a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



MIDDLE YEARS
DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE



If you do **NOT** want your child to participate in the MDI survey, please detach the following, sign and return to your child's teacher.



Optional – Withdraw my Child

Please return this form to the classroom teacher by [DATE] if you **do NOT** want your child to participate.

☐ I do not consent for my child [NAME] _____ to participate in the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) survey taking place this November

Parent name: _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Classroom teacher's name: _____