
Early Child Development Program of Research: Early Development Instrument (EDI) Parent/Guardian Informed Passive Consent Letter

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

In February 2021, Kindergarten teachers at your child's elementary school will be completing the **Early Development Instrument (EDI)** on each of their students. The EDI is a questionnaire that includes questions on children's social and emotional development, health and well-being, language and cognitive development, and communication skills. The EDI was developed by child development experts and researchers in Canada and with the help of Kindergarten teachers and school administrators and it has been used in 12 of 13 Canadian provinces and territories. In British Columbia (BC), the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Education, and Health have funded the collection and use of the EDI for over 19 years.

AT A GLANCE

- Your child's Kindergarten teacher will complete the EDI on each of their students in February, 2021;
- The EDI questionnaire is designed to help us understand trends in children's development at the population level, such as in a census;
- The EDI is **not** an individual assessment of your child and your child's EDI results will never be reported individually, instead your child's EDI information will only be reported in a summary with other children;
- If you wish to withdraw your child from participating in the EDI research, you can do so by contacting your child's teacher or the EDI team at the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) (see contacts above);
- The EDI questionnaire and further information are available at:
www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/ediparent.

What is the purpose of the project - How will your school and community benefit?

The purpose of collecting information using the EDI to improve the understanding of children's development as they start school. Information from the EDI has proven essential to educators, school districts, health professionals, early years service providers, and community members in planning programs and supports for children and families. Public institutions, including school districts, use EDI information (data) in their school district planning. Schools and communities use EDI information to

understand how children are doing in key areas of development, and to plan interventions. The information obtained from the EDI also support provincial investment, policy development, and program planning and evaluation.

Research using EDI data reveals that there is variability across neighbourhoods – with some neighbourhoods showing a high percentage of children who are vulnerable in key areas of their development, while other neighbourhoods have low percentages. EDI data can provide insight into how Kindergarten children are doing and encourage discussions about the factors affecting children's early development in neighbourhoods across the province. The information from the EDI is used to increase awareness of the ways in which we can create environments in which all children can thrive and develop.

Now is a time like no other for us to be focusing our attention on children's health and well-being. The stress and disruption brought about by COVID-19 are of great concern. All children and families are at risk of experiencing increased challenges. It is critical to continue to collect data that help us reflect and understand the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on BC's children and families.

Participation is voluntary

Having an EDI questionnaire completed for your child is not required in any way. You can withdraw your child from the project by notifying your child's teacher or the EDI team at HELP (edi@help.ubc.ca). You will have at least four weeks to review this letter and decide if you wish to withdraw your child before the EDI questionnaire is completed by their teacher. There is a withdrawal slip on the last page of this informed passive consent letter. You can also request that an EDI questionnaire that has already been completed for your child by their teacher be destroyed by notifying your child's teacher or contacting the EDI team at HELP (edi@help.ubc.ca). For all participating children, data from the EDI questionnaire will be included in the EDI reports and program of research. Participation or non-participation in the EDI will not affect your child's grades or the services that your family receives from the school or School District.

What will happen?

Prior to completing the EDI questionnaire, teachers are required to take training on how to complete the EDI. The EDI questionnaire is in an electronic (web-based) format completed online by Kindergarten teachers on each student in their class. The e-EDI system runs on a HELP server that is hosted by UBC IT and is located at UBC. For the e-EDI, teachers answer questions about five areas of development: 1) physical health and well-being; 2) social competence; 3) emotional maturity; 4) language and cognitive development; and 5) general knowledge and communications skills. Students are never directly involved in the completion of the EDI questionnaire.

How are my child's data protected, stored and used?

Teacher responses to the EDI questions are **private and confidential**. No information is added to your child's school record from the EDI questionnaire. When EDI data are used in research publications or in public documents, your child and your child's school are never identified.

To facilitate accurate completion of EDI questionnaires, your school district gives HELP/UBC information about your child, including their name, Personal Education Number (PEN), date of birth, gender, and postal code. Your child's name is only used so that your teacher can complete the questionnaire. The names are removed from the EDI data set once the EDI questionnaire has been completed. Personal information such as your child's PEN, date of birth, and postal code is stored separately from the teacher's answers to the EDI questionnaire to protect your child's privacy. HELP is responsible for keeping all EDI data safe and secure and all EDI data are stored in a secure research environment at UBC. More information is available at: <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/safeguarding-personal-information/>

EDI data held at HELP can only be used for approved research projects **under Federal and Provincial/Territorial privacy laws**. Researchers who receive permission to use the EDI data for research or statistical purposes will be provided data that cannot be connected to any individual student (individual EDI records are de-identified). The data gathered using the EDI may be linked at the individual level to other data in order to learn about the factors that influence children's well-being, health, and school success. For example, EDI data can be linked with education data to show the relationship of Kindergarten children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development and well-being to successful achievement in high school. This research then can be used to inform school planning and interventions aimed at promoting students' high school success in BC. The data that are linked **can only be used for research or statistical purposes by HELP approved researchers, under an approved Research Agreement**.

As the license-holder of the EDI, the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University receives a copy of HELP's individual-level EDI data which is protocol for all jurisdictions that administer the EDI. The data sent to the Offord Centre do not include students' names, PEN, or date of birth. Postal codes, gender, and month of birth (not day or year) are included to enable approved national research about neighbourhoods. These variables are stored separately from the EDI data.

HELP discloses individual-level EDI results (data) to the Ministries of Children and Family Development, Education, and Health for specific purposes of program evaluation and planning. The Ministries are prohibited from using the data to make individual-level assessments or decisions about your child.

EDI Reports

HELP's EDI reports combine EDI results from students in your child's school and community. EDI Reports are prepared for individual schools and school districts, neighbourhoods, and the province as a whole. School reports are provided directly to school districts and schools, and are never shared publicly. EDI data are not used to rank teachers, schools, students, or classes in any way. HELP publishes public community reports and neighbourhood maps of the data to support decision making towards improving policies, programs and services for children and families. These reports and maps are available at: <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/edi/>.

HELP's Aboriginal Steering Committee has established a protocol regarding the reporting of data for Indigenous children. This protocol ensures the data are used to support Indigenous self-determination toward improving developmental outcomes for Indigenous children. While Indigenous children attending public schools and Independent schools that participate in EDI data collection are included in EDI data, HELP never publicly reports EDI data for Indigenous children separately, nor uses data for comparison. For more information, please visit <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/edi/aboriginal-EDI/>.

Where can I get more information on the project?

For more information, please visit HELP's website at www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/edi. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Brandon Schulmeister, EDI Implementation Lead, via email at edi@help.ubc.ca or by phone at 604-822-3361.

If you have any concerns or complaints about your child's rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics 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. You can also contact the Principal Investigator at the number or email provided below.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Lawson

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If you want to withdraw your child's data, please, sign and return this section to your child's teacher.

Please return this form to the classroom teacher by January 29, 2021 if you do **NOT** want your child to participate.

I do **not** consent for my child [NAME] _____ to participate in the Early Development Instrument (EDI) questionnaire taking place in February.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Teacher: _____