

Early Development Instrument Parent Fact Sheet 2008-2009

As a part of an ongoing commitment to improve the well-being of children across Saskatchewan, school divisions are participating in the collection of data using the Early Development Instrument. This year, all Kindergarten classes in your child's school are scheduled to participate.

It is your choice whether your child is included in this collection. Please contact your school if do not want your child to participate.

Further information on the Early Development Instrument can be found at <http://www.offordcentre.com/readiness/>

Why is this research being done?

Children vary a great deal in how ready they are to start school and begin learning. Children who are ready for school from their first day have a greater chance of doing well in their school careers. This research is being done to better understand and measure readiness to learn at school as an outcome of early development.

What is the purpose of the study?

The information that we gather on children as they enter Kindergarten will be examined to see if there are factors that may affect a child's development between the ages of 0 to 5.

What will take place?

A questionnaire, called the Early Development Instrument (EDI) which measures children's readiness to learn at school, has been developed at McMaster University in cooperation with principals and Kindergarten teachers.

The questionnaire asks questions in 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 also give us your child's date of birth, gender and postal code only. The Offord Centre at McMaster University will NOT at any time receive the name of your child. This questionnaire will be completed by kindergarten teachers for all children in senior Kindergarten classes during February/March 2009. This will provide information on children in your community, and help towards ensuring that all children are ready to learn when they enter Grade 1.

The Offord Centre for Child Studies is the site where all data collected with the EDI in Canada and internationally is kept. The Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University is under contract with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and will receive money to cover the costs of doing the study. There will be no other benefit to the Offord Centre for Child Studies other than professionally through academic achievement or presentation of the results.

What will happen to the information collected?

Results of the study will be shared with the Ministry of Education. Ensuring provincial privacy legislation guidelines are met, results of the study will be shared with the Ministry of Education and participating school divisions. School boards may use these data for future planning in order to be prepared to handle the needs of children entering Grade 1.

Data will sometimes be linked at group levels (i.e., school board, neighbourhood, province, country) with other data about things that may have an effect on 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 years of age in your neighbourhood, or the income level in your neighbourhood. This cannot and will not be done for individual children, but only groups of children (the smallest group would be a school or neighbourhood so that no individual child can be identified).

Confidentiality

Results of this study will not be linked to your child. An anonymous identification (ID) number will be assigned to your child. The Offord Centre at McMaster University will not have access to the names of children in the study. Data on gender, date of birth and postal code will be attached to the ID number. Results will be examined at neighbourhood or school levels but not on an individual basis. There will be no record of your child's results in their academic records. All questionnaires will be locked in confidential storage until the end of the study, and data will be stored on a password protected computer. Access to this information will be limited to the project team members only. Any publications that may result from this research will not identify participants in any way. Your child's score will not be available to you, but study results can be available upon request.

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

There are no risks involved with this study. Although there will be no direct benefit to your child, we feel that this research may answer questions about why children in some areas are doing better or worse than others in terms of their early development which in turn determines their success at school and beyond. We hope that the results of the study will bring about changes in communities where there is a need to improve conditions for families with young children.

Data will not be examined at an aggregated level where there are less than 10 children in a group in order to make it impossible to identify children. If you choose not to have your child included in the study it will have no affect on your child's standing in their classroom or school.