



Government of Alberta ■

Education

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET AND AUTHORIZATION FORM

Title of Study:	Community–Level Measurement of School Readiness-to-Learn for 4-5 Year Old Children
Locally Responsible Community Coordinator:	Bev Sagert, Director Early Childhood Services
Principal Investigator:	Dr. Magdalena Janus, Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster University
Sponsoring Agency:	Alberta Education

As a part of an ongoing commitment to improve the well-being of children across our province and Canada, school boards and authorities are participating in the collection of data on kindergarten-age children. This year, all kindergarten classes in your child's school and the Sturgeon School Division are scheduled to be part of the study. It is your choice whether your child is included in this study.

The Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University and The ECMap Project Consortium, led by Community-University Partnership (CUP), University of Alberta are under contract with Alberta Education and will receive money to cover the costs of doing the study. There will be no other benefit to the Investigator other than professionally through academic achievement or presentation of the results.

Why is this research being done?

Children vary a great deal in how ready they are to start school. 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.

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

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 co-operation with principals and kindergarten teachers. The questionnaire 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 also give the Offord Centre your child's date of birth, gender, student number and postal code only. No one, at any time, will receive the name of your child. This questionnaire will be completed by kindergarten teachers for all children in kindergarten classes between February and March of your child's kindergarten year. This will provide information on children in our community, and help the community to work towards ensuring that they are ready to learn when they enter grade 1.

The completion of the questionnaire will not actively involve your child; the teacher will be reflecting on what he/she knows about your child in each of the areas of development. The teacher will not be actively questioning your child or asking your child to perform any tasks.

The Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University is the site where all data collected with the EDI in Canada and internationally is kept. Offord analyzes the data into population-level reports which are shared with the school authority. These reports will describe the school readiness to learn of the 'group' of children on each of the domains. Results will be shared with Alberta Education and Sturgeon School Division.

The data files remain secured at the Offord Centre for Child Studies and with Alberta Education. Although these data files do not contain the names of children, the files will remain protected and secured and only shared if strict guidelines are met which meet provincial privacy legislation. School authorities may use these data for future planning in order to be prepared to handle the needs of children entering grade one. Alberta Education has an Early Child Mapping Development Initiative underway which will use the EDI data at the community level with other data about factors that may influence how well children are doing to see if there are any trends. Similarly, Alberta Education may use the data to understand the relationship between EDI results and future success. Data from your community as a whole may be used in the Pan-Canadian mapping initiative, a joint project with the Council for Early Child Development. Data from all sites will be combined to develop a data file which will be analyzed at provincial and national levels.

Confidentiality

Results of this study will not be linked to your child. The Investigator will not have access to the names of children in the study. Results will be examined at neighbourhood or community 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 an encrypted-protected computer both of which only the members of the project team at

the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University and The ECMap Project Consortium, led by Community-University Partnership (CUP), University of Alberta will have access to. Any publications that may result from this research will not identify individual participants or schools in any way. Your child's results on the questionnaire will not be provided to you, but results of the study can be available upon request from The ECMap Project Consortium, led by Community-University Partnership (CUP), University of Alberta.

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

There are minimal 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.

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 local coordinator, Bev Sagert 780 939-4341 Ext. 1250, your school principal; Ashley Gaskin, the coordinator at the Offord Centre for Child Studies 1-905-521-2100 ext. 74352; or the office of the Chair of the Research Ethics Board, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University 1-905-521-2100 ext. 42013.

We are asking for your participation in the Project by signing the attached Parent Consent Form. Please complete and sign the Form and return it to your child's teacher by January 28th 2011.

Sincerely,

Bev Sagert, Director, Early Childhood Children

**PARENTAL AUTHORIZATION FORM
COMMUNITY–LEVEL MEASUREMENT OF SCHOOL READINESS–TO–LEARN
PROJECT**

We are asking for your participation in the Community–Level Measurement of School Readiness–to–learn Project.

I authorize my child’s teacher to complete a questionnaire about my child. The questionnaire, called the Early Development Instrument (EDI), measures children’s readiness to learn at school. It has been developed by McMaster University in consultation with principals and kindergarten teachers. This questionnaire does not involve any testing of the children. Information collected on the questionnaire will not become part of any child’s school record. Information will be reported only in summarized form. No personal information will be reported or provided. A copy of the questionnaire will be available at your school for you to view, if you wish.

I have read and understood the above and the attached information sheet and I authorize my child’s teacher to complete the EDI questionnaire regarding my child.

Child’s Name: _____
Please Print

Parent Name: _____
Please Print

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please complete and return to your child’s teacher no later than January 28th 20011.

Thank you.