
Understanding Middle Childhood: The Middle Years Development Instrument

Parent/Guardian Informed Passive Consent Letter

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AT A GLANCE

- A survey will take place in your school and students will be asked questions pertaining to their social and emotional development, health and well-being.
- Your child will be invited to complete the survey unless you explicitly request to withdraw your child

Your school and the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) invite your child to take part in completing the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) – a survey designed to learn about the health and well-being of children ages 9 to 12. Students in Grade 4 and/or Grade 7 complete the MDI in schools in January/February and it is completed online, supervised by school staff, and takes approximately 45-90 minutes of class time. The MDI project is sponsored by your school or school board, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, and the Government of BC.

What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of this project is to better understand aspects of children's development, health, and well-being that contribute to their overall success in school and in life through the voices of children. The MDI gives children a voice in reporting their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in school, at home, and in the community, including how they spend their time after school. Your school board is participating in the MDI because they want to know more about the health and well-being of their students and identify the ways in which children's success and well-being can be promoted in schools and communities. They can use the information to improve education, support, and services for all students. The MDI was developed at UBC in collaboration with educators, parents, and students, and has been used in Canadian schools since 2009. To learn more about the MDI and view the survey questions, please visit www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi.

Participation is voluntary and consent is passive

The MDI is completely voluntary. There are no physical risks to completing the survey, and your child can choose whether or not to complete the survey. Your child may skip questions or stop answering the survey at any time. Your child can withdraw by clicking a withdrawal button at the bottom of every page of the online survey.

Participating or not participating in the survey will not affect your child's grades. It will not affect any services that your family receives from the school or school board.

If you do not want your child to complete the MDI, please return the attached form to your child's teacher or principal within 4 weeks upon receiving this letter. You can also email the MDI project team at mdi@help.ubc.ca to withdraw your child. Children who do not participate will work on an activity that is related to their regular school work. For more information on why we use this type of parent/guardian consent process (passive consent i.e. opt-out) for the MDI project, please view our website <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi/parent-guardian-resources/>.

What will happen?

Prior to starting the survey, your child's teacher or school staff will explain to the students that they will be asked questions about their lives inside and outside of school, that this is not a test, and that they can stop at any time. Because several of the questions ask about children's feelings and relationships, the survey has a place where your child can ask for help with any problems they are having. If your child asks for help, the teacher and principal will be sent an email and they will follow school procedures for making sure your child gets help.

How is my child's privacy protected?

Your child's responses to the survey questions are **private and confidential** (no one will know their answers). Your child's answers will not be available to you or any school or school board staff. No information is added to your child's school record from the project. If MDI information is used in research publications or in public documents, your child and your child's school will not be identified.

In order to participate in the MDI, your school board provides HELP at 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 child can log into the survey. It is removed from survey responses once the survey is complete.

How will the MDI data be used and stored?

HELP is responsible for keeping all MDI project data safe. Personal information such as your child's date of birth, Personal Education Number (PEN), and postal code is stored separately from your child's answers to the survey. This is to protect your child's privacy. Your child's personal information is kept in a secure research environment at UBC, to be used only for approved linkage and research projects **under Federal, Provincial/Territorial privacy laws**. 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.

The data from the study may be linked at the individual level with other data to learn about the factors that influence children's well-being, health, and school success. Other data may include education and health information. The data that are linked **can only be used for research or statistical purposes by HELP approved researchers, under an approved Research Agreement**. For concerns related to the privacy of your child's

survey data, please contact HELP's Privacy Officer at privacy@help.ubc.ca.

Project results

Your child's answers will be combined with those from other students in your child's school and community. Project results are reported at the level of school or school board, neighbourhood, and province. School reports are shared with boards and schools, and are not shared publicly. The MDI results will not be used to rank schools, students, or classes in any way. HELP provides public community reports and neighbourhood maps of the survey results www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/mdi.

Guided by our [Aboriginal Steering Committee](#), HELP respects the First Nations principles of OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) or other community based ethics codes. HELP never publically reports Aboriginal MDI data or uses it for comparison with other data. For more information, please visit <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi/parent-guardian-resources/#aboriginal-mdi-data-ocap> or contact the HELP Indigenous Community Engagement Coordinator at aboriginal.liaison@help.ubc.ca.

How will your school and community benefit?

Recent research indicates that children's well-being influences school and life success. By completing the survey, students will have a chance to share their experiences and feelings contributing to their sense of well-being. MDI reports give educators, program planners, and community members, information about the lives of children through children's voices. Your school and community can use the results to support students and improve their well-being. If you are interested in learning more about how schools and communities use MDI data to support children, please visit our MDI Field Guide website www.discovermdi.ca.

Where can I get more information on the project?

For more information, please visit HELP's website at www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Marit Gilbert, Project Contact, via email at mdi@help.ubc.ca or by phone at 604-827-5504. **If you do not want your child to complete the survey, please sign the attached withdrawal form and return it to your child's teacher or principal, or email us at mdi@help.ubc.ca to withdraw your child.**

If you have any concerns or complaints about your/your child's rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics 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,

Professor Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl, Ph.D.
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University of British Columbia
Telephone: 604-822-2215

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

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 in January/February.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Teacher: _____