
Understanding Middle Childhood: The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) 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 child will be told that they can choose to complete the survey, and can skip questions and stop at any time.

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 social and emotional development; health, and well-being of children ages 9 to 13. Students in Grades 4 to 8 will complete the MDI in schools in January/February. The MDI is completed online, supervised by school staff, and takes students approximately 45-90 minutes to complete. The MDI project is sponsored by your school, the Federation of Independent Schools Association of BC (FISA BC), and the Government of BC.

What is the purpose of this project?

The purpose of this project is to better understand aspects of children's social and emotional development, health, and well-being that contribute to their overall success in school and in life. 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. Educators at your school are participating in the MDI project 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 survey questions also align with the BC Ministry of Education's K-12 curriculum which includes a focus on promoting children's personal and social competencies.

The MDI was developed at UBC in collaboration with educators, community members, parents, and students, and has been administered in Canadian schools since 2009. To learn more about the MDI and view the survey questions, please visit www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi.

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 real concern. All children and families are at risk of experiencing increased challenges. MDI data provide an opportunity to hear from children themselves about their self-reported well-being and the assets in their lives that will be valuable as they navigate through this unprecedented time.

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.

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 the MDI is not a test – there are no right or wrong answers, 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 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 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**. More information is available at: <http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/safeguarding-personal-information/> . 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, FISA Member Association, and FISA BC. School reports are shared with 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.

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. HELP never publicly reports MDI data for Indigenous children, nor uses it for comparison.

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 website www.discovermdi.ca.

Where can I get more information on the project?

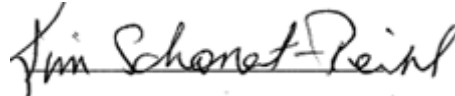
For more information, please visit HELP's website at www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Marit Gilbert, Project Contact, via email at mdi@help.ubc.ca or by phone at 604-827-5504 or toll free 1-888-908-4050. You can also contact the principal investigator at the number or email provided below. **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.**

Research participants complaints or concerns

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.

Yours sincerely,

Sharlene Weingart, School MDI Contact
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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 [December 18th 2020] 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: _____