



Victorian trial of the Toddler Development Instrument (TDI) Information Statement for Facilitators

Dear facilitator,

This information letter is to provide you with more details regarding your involvement as a facilitator in the Victorian trial of the Toddler Development Instrument (TDI). This document is 3 pages long.

What is this research project about?

This study aims to learn more about how child outcomes in early life are affected by different social context factors (e.g., family context, neighbourhood characteristics), and how we can best monitor these contextual factors within communities. The TDI is a questionnaire for parents/primary caregivers of 16-20 month old children developed by the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada, in collaboration with parents and caregivers, early child development professionals, policy makers, and researchers. The TDI collects representative data on the daily lives of toddlers and their families. We aim to use the results of this study to determine the feasibility of the TDI as an early monitoring tool – by which we may better understand the early needs and experiences of toddlers and their families – and as a platform for building more meaningful connections between families with young children and existing community resources.

This project has been funded by the Ian Potter Foundation, the Victorian Department of Education and Training, and the Centre for Social and Early Emotional Development (SEED), Deakin University. The Social Research Centre (SRC) will provide infrastructure and support.

What is involved in participating?

During this feasibility trial phase of the TDI, we are working with a number of communities and organisations across the state of Victoria to test the implementation of the TDI questionnaire. Your community has expressed a willingness to work with us on this phase of the project and has agreed for the TDI to be implemented through your standard health service processes. We wanted to provide you with more information about the project relevant to your role as a TDI facilitator.

In this role, we are asking you to assist with recruitment of parents of children aged 16-20 months who are eligible to complete the questionnaire, and then provide them with support through your normal referral pathways if required. In addition to facilitating the recruitment and support of parents filling out the TDI questionnaire, we are asking you to provide observational feedback related to the implementation of the TDI through your health service. We will be providing you with a feedback form that will allow you to share various challenges and successes you observed in the implementation of the TDI within your community. We may also invite you to provide feedback via participation in a focus group. If you have additional information you would like to share during this time, please contact Cathie Nolan, Comprehensive Child Development Monitoring Project Manager on (03) 9651 3539. Your feedback on the TDI implementation is greatly appreciated and will help shape the administration and utility of the TDI questionnaire in your community. Your participation in feedback is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. There will be no penalty if you choose not to participate or if you start to participate and then change your mind. You do not need to tell us the reason why you want to stop being in the project. If you leave the study, we will use any information already collected unless you tell us not to.

For parents/primary caregivers participating in the TDI trial, the questionnaire will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete, and they do not need to answer any questions that they are not comfortable answering. We are also asking parents/caregivers to provide their email address if they are willing to provide feedback at a later stage on their experience completing the TDI questionnaire. This will take an additional 5-10 minutes. Please remember that parents/caregivers may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If they choose to withdraw from the study after completion of all/part of a questionnaire please notify the SRC through their Helpline. Choosing not to participate in this study should not affect the services parents/caregivers receive within your organisation in any way.

What are the risks and benefits involved with participating?

There are no known or suspected risks associated with participating in this study. The only inconvenience to you is the time required to recruit and support the parent in completing the questionnaire, as part of your routine health services. We do not expect there to be any direct benefit to you. However, by participating, you will help contribute to our understanding of factors that influence early child development, and facilitate better documentation of the lived experiences of toddlers and their families in Victoria. This information, in turn, may support the creation and implementation of supportive programs and policies to promote healthy early child development and help toddlers, their families, and their broader communities thrive.

How will the TDI data be used?

The TDI is a population health measure, which means that results are reported at a group level only. All parents'/caregivers' responses will be summarised by region to understand the experiences of toddlers and their families in different areas in Victoria. The research team may also create public maps to display summary results by region. No personal identifying information is ever used in any research summaries or maps. To further safeguard personal information, the research team will never not publicly share data from "small-cell" groups (i.e. geographical areas with few children). Parents will also be asked to provide permission to link to other databases to collect information about the needs and experiences of their child over time. This may include linking to information from the following sources/databases:

- School Entrant Health Questionnaire
- NAPLAN
- Australian Early Development Census
- Middle Years Development Instrument

The responses you and parents/caregivers provide through the feedback forms will be used to further revise processes and content of the TDI. This will ensure that the information collected is meaningful for understanding the effects of early life experiences on the health and wellbeing of toddlers and their families in a Victorian setting. Your feedback will also help shape the delivery of the TDI as we seek to build an implementation model that works well for parents/caregivers in different health service providers and communities within Victoria.

How will privacy be protected?

Most parents/primary caregivers will complete their TDI questionnaires electronically through a secure database hosted by the Social Research Centre. The questionnaire is designed to be completed independently.

Parent/caregiver responses will therefore remain private. We ask that you provide parents with an opportunity to discuss with you any concerns that the questionnaire has raised for them after completion. This is voluntary and they are not obliged to disclose their personal responses. If a parent completes a paper copy of the TDI they will be provided with a sealable envelope to return this to us securely via reply paid post. To protect their privacy, please ensure this envelope is sealed before they hand it to you for posting. Once you have received a paper TDI questionnaire, we ask that you keep this information in a locked filing cabinet until posting. When you transfer completed questionnaires to the SRC or to your site coordinator, please be sure to place the sealed envelopes in a larger sealed envelope (double-sealed).

All responses parents/caregivers provide will be stored in a secure computer database managed by the SRC. Completed paper questionnaires will be stored at the SRC in secure, locked filing cabinets, which can only be accessed by the research team. The following people are authorised to access the information collected as part of this research project:

- The research team involved with this project
- The Royal Children's Hospital Human Research Ethics Committee

Because the results of the study are reported at the group-level only, individual children's/family's own specific questionnaire information will never be made public in any way. Study feedback collected through the feedback forms and focus groups will also be kept confidential. Completed feedback forms will be kept in a locked filing cabinet accessible to only the research and evaluation teams.

We hope that you will take part in providing feedback on your experience of the Victorian trial of the TDI. You do not need to complete a consent form to take part in this project. **If you complete and return the feedback form or choose to participate in a focus group, this means you are giving your consent.**

Where can I get more information on the study?

If you have any questions about this project please speak with your site coordinator or contact Cathie Nolan on (03) 9651 3539.

Yours sincerely,



Cathie Nolan
Project Director
Principal Investigator
Department of Education & Training



Professor Craig Olsson
Scientific Director
Principal Investigator
Deakin University & Murdoch Children's Research Institute

If you have any concerns and/or complaints about the project, the way it is being conducted or your rights as a research participant, and would like to speak to someone independent of the project, please contact: Director, Research Ethics & Governance, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne on telephone: (03) 9345 5044.

This research project has been approved by The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – including all updates.