

# THE MIDDLE YEARS WHY THEY MATTER

*A time of risk, a time of opportunity*



The **people** children spend their time with have the power to teach children the skills they need to be successful.

The **places** where children live, play and learn have a lot to do with health and happiness later in life.

The **experiences** children have in their middle years have lasting effects on brain development.

The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at UBC is using the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) to understand more about children's thoughts, feelings and experiences inside and outside of school. The MDI is a questionnaire that gives schools and communities valuable information about the strengths and needs of their children.

To find out more, read on about the MDI or visit [earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi](http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi)



HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP



## MIDDLE YEARS RESEARCH SHOWS:

INCREASED  
DECREASED

- Poverty
- Stress
- Bullying
- Mental Illness
- Self-confidence
- Empathy
- Optimism
- Overall Health

## WHAT MATTERS MOST?

- Caring Adults
- Happiness
- Sleep
- Friendships
- Nutrition
- After-School Activities

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING teaches children how to:






- Control their emotions
- Manage their behaviour
- Feel self-confident
- Express their needs
- Show empathy
- Adapt to change
- Set goals
- Build strong friendships
- Cope with stress



# The Middle Years Development Instrument

## Hello Parents!

The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) is a questionnaire that asks children about their thoughts, feelings and experiences inside and outside of school. It is not a test for reading, writing or math. The MDI looks at children’s points of view on:

- Social and Emotional Development**  Optimism, empathy, happiness, prosocial behaviour, self-esteem
- Connectedness**  Presence of supportive adults, sense of belonging with peers
- School Experiences**  Academic self-concept, school environment, bullying
- Physical Health and Well-being**  Health, body image, nutrition, sleep
- Use of After-School Time**  Time spent playing sports, video games and watching TV




### The MDI is:

A questionnaire filled out by Grade 4 and Grade 7 students.

### The MDI is not:

A tool for comparing individual children, teachers, classrooms or schools.

## How does the MDI work?

-  Participation is voluntary. Parents or students may withdraw at any time.
-  Students fill out the MDI during class time. Surveys are sent to a secure lab at the University of British Columbia.
-  Reports and maps are produced to help families, schools and communities understand what students have said.

## How the data are used:



- The MDI helps us understand the “whole child” not just how he/she is doing in school.
- Schools and communities have information about the strengths, needs and wishes of children in their neighbourhoods and school districts.
- People can see neighbourhood differences in the number of children who are healthy and happy.
- Adults can start thinking about ways to build more and stronger relationships with the children in their homes, schools and communities.
- Better plans can be made about the kinds of after-school activities that should be offered to children.
- Better decisions can be made about how organizations provide services, spend money and share resources.
- Schools and communities can set goals for the future and can learn about how children are doing over time.

The MDI is administered by the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) at the University of British Columbia. For more information please contact:

**MDI Coordinator**  
mdi@help.ubc.ca  
(604) 827-5504  
earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi

**HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP**

