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## INFORMATION SHEET FOR EDUCATORS

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### **Raising Reading Achievement in Australian Children:**

*Predicting literacy pathways using web-based screening and monitoring of essential pre-reading skills during the early childhood and schooling years*

#### **Investigator:**

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#### **Description of the study:**

This study is part of the project entitled '*Raising Reading Achievement in Australian Children*'. This project will investigate whether a series of web-based game-like tasks can help us to predict which children may or may not be more likely to experience challenges learning to read as they start school. To achieve this, we are looking for up to one-hundred four-year old children to have their early reading skills monitored over a two year period. This project is supported by the Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law at Flinders University.

#### **Purpose of the study:**

The aims of this project are to:

- Develop an easy-to-use web-based system that educators can use to predict which children may or may not be at-risk for later reading problems. This means that children who may be more likely to face challenges with reading acquisition can be supported earlier in their development.
- Profile the development of essential pre-reading skills among young South Australian children to increase understanding of how these skills develop.

### **What will children at my preschool or kindergarten be asked to do?**

Children with parental consent will be asked to participate in five short assessments separated by six-monthly intervals over a two year period. The type of assessment activity, location, and the age of children at each assessment point are detailed in the following table.

| Assessment | Activity                                                                                                                                                             | Location                                                    | Child's Age                          |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1          | 40-minute spoken language assessment<br>5-10 minute evaluation of pre-reading skills using web-based tasks specifically designed for this project                    | Preschool, kindergarten, or a clinic at Flinders University | 4 years 0 months to 4 years 3 months |
| 2          | 5-10 minute evaluation of pre-reading skills using web-based tasks specifically designed for this project                                                            | Preschool, kindergarten, or a clinic at Flinders University | 4 years 6 months                     |
| 3          | 5-10 minute evaluation of pre-reading skills using web-based tasks specifically designed for this project                                                            | Preschool, kindergarten, or a clinic at Flinders University | 5 years 0 months                     |
| 4          | 5-10 minute evaluation of pre-reading skills using web-based tasks specifically designed for this project                                                            | School or a clinic at Flinders University                   | 5 years 6 months                     |
| 5          | 30-minute reading accuracy and comprehension assessment<br>5-10 minute evaluation of pre-reading skills using web-based tasks specifically designed for this project | School or a clinic at Flinders University                   | 6 years 6 months                     |

Please note that typically we would prefer to complete the assessments in children's natural learning environments; that is, in a quiet learning area of their preschool or kindergarten. However, parents will be given the option to have some or all of the assessments conducted at a clinic at Flinders University.

### **What will we be asked to do as staff at the preschool or kindergarten?**

If you agree for your preschool or kindergarten to participate in this study, you will be asked to distribute 'Project Information Sheets' and 'Parent/Guardian Consent Forms' to parents of children who are aged 4 years 0 months to 4 years 3 months. You will also be asked for permission to allow the lead investigator and their research assistant to visit your preschool or kindergarten up to three times to complete the short assessments.

### **What are the benefits of being involved in this study?**

Children will have the benefit of free screening and monitoring of their early reading skills, in addition to six-monthly progress reports for parents. In addition, children will be contributing to a dataset profiling how essential reading skills develop in young Australian children. This

comparative dataset will help educators to identify children who may end up struggling with reading acquisition before difficulties have a chance to escalate. At the end of the study, children and parents will be offered the opportunity to participate in a workshop with Dr Karyn Carson if the child is showing poor progress in reading development.

### **Will participants be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

To ensure confidentiality, every child will be allocated an 'Identification Number' and a 'Location Number'. Data will be stored on a password protected computer only accessible to Dr Karyn Carson.

For the purposes of reliable data collection, permission will be asked to take up to three over-the-shoulder video recordings of each child completing the 5-10 minute web-based tasks. Any over-the-shoulder recordings will be conducted with parent/guardian and staff permission, and will be carried out in sight-view of staff at the preschool or kindergarten.

After the study is completed, all information will be stored for a period of seven years on a USB stick or external hard drive in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office at Flinders University. After this time all data will be destroyed. Please note that the results of this study will be published with all person information remaining confidential and anonymous.

### **Are there any risks or discomforts by being involved?**

It is anticipated that there are few risks from involvement in this study. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with Dr Karyn Carson.

### **How do I agree to participate?**

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your preschool or kindergarten's willingness to participate in the study at any time. Please sign the attached 'Registration Form' if you agree to: a) distribute 'Parent/Guardian Consent Forms', b) distribute 'Project Information Sheets', and c) have assessment data collected on three separate occasions at your preschool or kindergarten. The 'Registration Form' can be handed directly to Dr Karyn Carson or posted to: Dr Karyn Carson, School of Education, Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law, GPO Box 2100 Adelaide SA 5001 Australia. Alternatively you can scan and email the form to:

[karyn.carson@flinders.edu.au](mailto:karyn.carson@flinders.edu.au)

### **How will I receive feedback?**

Short summaries outlining children's performance at each six-monthly assessment point will be provided to parents, and can be shared with educators if parents provide permission to do so via

the 'Parent/Guardian Consent Form'. At the end of the study, the outcomes will be summarised and given to you by Dr Karyn Carson if you would like to view them.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved in this study.**

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project number 6107). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*