



Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Guardians Early Learning Study at Harvard (ELS@H)

Q. What is ELS@H?

ELS@H (just call us “Elsa”!) is a study being run by researchers at Harvard University to find out about how the different types of places where young children spend time relate to how they learn and grow. We plan to include about 5,000 children and their caregivers from all across Massachusetts in this study. A Massachusetts-based research organization called Abt Associates is working with researchers at Harvard University to carry out the study. You can visit Abt’s website here: www.abtassociates.com.

Q. Why was my child picked to be part of the study?

We want to make sure the 5,000 children in this study are like all of the 3- and 4-year-old children in Massachusetts. To do so, the study team picked over 150 communities by chance and we would like every 3- and 4-year old from those communities to be part of the study. That way we’ll feel confident that the kids in our study are similar to the kids across state!

Q. What will it mean for my child to be part of the study?

We hope that your child will be part of this study for at least the next three years, starting in fall 2017 and continuing as your child goes on to school. If you agree for your child to be in the study, the ELS@H team will want to meet with your child twice per year to learn about what he or she knows and can do. We will meet with your child either at your home or where your child is being taken care of, like at a child care center, a school, or someone else’s home.

Q. Will I, as the parent or guardian, be asked to do anything if my child is part of the study?

The study team will ask you to give us written permission for your child to be in the study. We may send you a short survey about where your child is being cared for, how you feel about your child’s care, and your child’s life at home with you. The survey will be translated into different languages to make sure that parents and guardians can understand the questions. We may ask you to let us know how to reach your child’s caregivers so we can ask them to be part of the study so we can better understand how your child spends their time with the caregiver. If your child is spending most of their time with you, we may want to learn more about your child’s time with you in your home, too.

Q. What will it mean for my child’s teacher or caregiver if my child is part of the study?

We hope to be able to find out about the places where your child spends time and learns because we want to know about the experiences that are helping your child to grow and develop. If your child’s caregiver agrees, the study team will likely visit them once during each year that your child is there to see what your child’s day is like. If your child stays at home with you most of the time, the study team may ask to visit your home to see what your child’s day is like with you.

Q. Why should I be part of the study?

The results of the study will provide information to the people who care most about young children – parents or guardians, caregivers, program developers, and other decision makers – about how to best support the early development of young children in Massachusetts.

Q. Do I have to participate in ELS@H?

No, your participation is voluntary. You can decide not to participate in parts of the study, or to stop being part of the study completely at any time.

Q. Who will collect information on my child and on my child’s caregiver?

The Harvard University researcher-led team will carefully train and supervise the study team members who will be working with children. The team members have experience working with young children and with different kinds of caregivers. We will do security background checks on all team members. We also train study team members to keep all information completely private.

Q. Will the information collected on my child be kept private?

Yes, we will keep all of the information that we collect about children, families, and caregivers private to the fullest extent allowed by law. We will never include the names of children, families, or caregivers in any reports or study findings. Additionally, we will not report any of the data we collect as part of the study to any government agency and we will never ask about the legal status of anyone in the study. If we learn that a child is in danger, we must report this by law.

The study team is committed to protecting your confidentiality. However, participation in a study always includes a small risk that your personal information might be seen by someone outside of the study team. The study team has developed strict procedures to minimize the chance that this happens.

Q. What will happen next if I agree to let my child be part of the ELS@H?

If you agree, we will contact you this fall to schedule our first meeting with your child. At that time, we will provide you with more details about the study activities that are planned over the next year for you, your child, and your child’s caregiver. We will be able to answer any questions you may have about the study or upcoming activities. When we ask you or your child’s caregiver to do an activity for the study, we will often provide a small payment to thank you for spending time with us.

Q. Who do I contact if I have questions about ELS@H?

Please contact the study team by telephone (1-888-738-6663) or email (ELSAH@abtassoc.com). You can also visit the ELS@H website here: www.ELSAHstudy.com and check us out on Facebook, here: <https://www.facebook.com/ELSAHStudy>.