

# 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 Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) is used 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)

## 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 to Grade 8 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.



Reports and maps are produced to help 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.

### Questions:

Contact The Research Department at Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board 905-527-5092

HUMAN  
EARLY LEARNING  
PARTNERSHIP

