

Ministry of Education
Early Years Division

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Ministère de l'Éducation
Division de la petite enfance

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December 1, 2015

Lori Clark
Co-Chair, Manitoulin-Sudbury Best Start Network
201 Mead Blvd
Espanola, ON P5E 1R9
lori.clark@msdsb.net

Dear Ms. Clark,

Thank you for your letter about the Early Development Instrument (EDI). I am pleased to respond on behalf of George Zegarac, Deputy Minister of Education.

As you are aware, in 2013, responsibility for the EDI transferred to the Ministry of Education from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, school boards became responsible for the administration and collection of the EDI data. In addition — and in contrast to past collections — the 2015 EDI data was collected by the Ministry of Education under the statutory authority of the *Education Act* and is the property of the Ministry of Education.

As the stewards of the 2015 EDI dataset, the ministry has an obligation to protect children's personally identifying information. We are legislated by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to ensure the security and integrity of personal information. We must also maintain the privacy and data security commitments that were made to parents/guardians when they were informed about the 2015 EDI data collection.

At the same time, we understand the importance of providing useful EDI data to communities across the province. The ministry is giving careful consideration to balancing privacy with data usefulness, recognizing that both are essential to the ministry, to our partner organizations that provide early years programs and services, and to children and their families. To this end, the Early Years Division has been exploring various options for reaching a balance between privacy protection and giving communities access to useful EDI results.

We know that healthy child development in the early years puts children on a path to lifelong success. The EDI provides critical information about how Ontario's youngest children are developing; this helps us plan at the local and provincial levels for their future academic and lifelong success.

Please be assured that the Early Years Division is working closely with the Offord Centre for Child Studies and other ministry partners to identify options for providing useful data while ensuring that the same high level of security is applied to all student information in Ontario. In addition, the Early Years Division will be working with our Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, District Social Services Administration Boards, Data Analysis Coordinator host agencies, school boards, school authorities, and First Nation partners to ensure that communities have the information they require to plan for children and families.

The success of the EDI is rooted in a deep commitment and strong collaboration by many organizations involved in collecting, analyzing, and reporting this important data. Thank you for your collaboration and commitment to continued community planning in support of children and families in the Manitoulin-Sudbury district.

I trust this provides you with an enhanced understanding of the ministry's approach to the release of the 2015 EDI data. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact Laurie McNelles, Manager of the Outcomes and Assessments Unit, at Laurie.McNelles@ontario.ca or 416-212-2239.

Sincerely,



Katherine Kelly Gatten
Director, Business Planning, Outcomes and Assessments Branch

c: Sue Caverson, Co-Chair, Manitoulin-Sudbury Best Start Network
Nancy Matthews, Assistant Deputy Minister, Early Years Division
Tadesse Haile, Director, Education Statistics and Analysis Branch