



School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work & Speech Pathology

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Profiling the language skills of adolescents in Curriculum and Reengagement in Education (CARE) Schools in WA

We are carrying out a study of the oral language skills of students in Years 7-10 in CARE Schools in Western Australia. The project team members are Toni Tomlin, lead psychologist within AISWA, and A/Prof Suze Leitao, Dr Mary Claessen, and Dr Mark Boyes from Curtin University.

What does taking part in the research project involve?

We are asking students from years 7-10, who attend a CARE school in WA to take part. We will assess their oral language skills, and collect some information from you, your child's teacher, and their school records. We would like to invite you and your child to take part in this research. We will ask you to complete a short questionnaire to collect background information. This will take about 5-10 minutes.

With your permission, Toni Tomlin, a psychologist with AISWA, will pull out information on school progress and any related issues from your child's school records. This will include any diagnosis such as autism or hearing loss. Your child's teacher will complete a questionnaire and 2 checklists about your child's academic progress and their social and emotional well-being. We will directly assess your child's language skills based on an informal conversation and a language assessment which measures vocabulary, grammar and understanding. This testing should take 1 – 2 sessions of no more than 30-45 minutes each and will be carried out by a research assistant who will be a qualified speech pathologist. We will organise these sessions to take place at a time convenient for the teacher and your child. During the sessions, we will offer children breaks as required. Part of the assessment will be audio-recorded so that we can score it afterwards. The audio recordings will be destroyed immediately following the completion and checking of scoring.

To what extent is taking part voluntary?

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw yourself and your child, or your child may withdraw themselves, from the study at any time without consequence. If a child is withdrawn from participating in the study, all information and data will be destroyed immediately. If the project has already been published at the time a participant decides to withdraw, their contribution to research data cannot be removed from the publication. The decision about whether to take part will not affect any relationship with the research team or Curtin University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Information that identifies a child or the school will be removed from the data we collect. The data will be stored electronically on a secure drive or in a locked cupboard at Curtin University that can only be accessed by the research team. All records will be stored for 7-25 years, as per requirements for conducting research where the projects include children, after which it will be destroyed according to the Curtin University Functional Records Disposal Authority protocol.

We store the data this way so that, if a participant decides to withdraw, we can re-identify it to be destroyed. This is done by using a system of individual codes which are known only to the research team. The results of this study may be published. However, no identifying information regarding the participants or the school will be used.

What are the benefits of this research for the child's education and the school?

Results from this study will be used to inform teachers and schools about the language profiles of students in CARE schools, and the development of educational programmes that take account of children's learning needs and profiles. After we complete the research, we can provide a report describing to the school staff. When filling out the consent forms, you may request to receive a summary of your child's results on the language assessments. You may also give permission for your child's individual results to be provided to school staff. This would provide information to the teacher regarding the assessed areas to inform classroom programmes. The data that are collected do have the potential to identify difficulties with the assessed areas, and we will provide information about options for follow-up.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

Do all members of the research team who will be having contact with children have their Working with Children Check?

Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, individuals undertaking research that involves contact with children must pass a Working with Children Check. We will provide the school with evidence of current Working with Children Checks.

Is this research approved?

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study. Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

Please do not hesitate to contact any of us if you have any questions about the study. We can be contacted at, A/Prof Suze Leitao (S.Leitao@curtin.edu.au or 92667620), Dr Mary Claessen (M.Claessen@curtin.edu.au) or Dr Mark Boyes (Mark.boyes@curtin.edu.au).

How do I indicate my willingness for us to be involved in this project?

Please make sure that you:

- Talk to your child about what taking part in the project involves before you both make a decision (we have also provided a child version of this letter);
- Take up our offer to ask any questions you may have about the project.

Once any questions have been answered, and you and your child are willing to take part, please both complete the attached **Consent Forms**, and return them to your child's school by the start of Term 3 2021.

Thank you

Toni Tomlin

A/Prof Suze Leitao

Dr Mary Claessen

Dr Mark Boyes

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