



Information Letter: “Children’s Experiences of the Pandemic”

Hello,

We would like to invite you and your child to participate in a research project called “Children’s Experiences of the Pandemic” designed to provide an opportunity for children to express their thoughts and feelings about their experiences of the pandemic. The project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants (REB#20-05-018) and involves the collection of children’s art work to understand their perspectives, views and experiences of the pandemic.

Researchers:

Dr. Nikki Martyn is the Principle Investigator of this project. She is the Program Head of Early Childhood Studies at the University of Guelph-Humber and can be reached at nikki.martyn@guelphhumber.ca or through the project at nikki@childart.ca

Dr. Elena Merenda is a co-investigator of this project. She is the Assistant Program Head of Early Childhood Studies at the University of Guelph-Humber and she can be reached at elena.merenda@guelphhumber.ca or through the project at elena@childart.ca

Purpose:

The purpose of the research is to develop an understanding of children’s perspectives, views and experiences of the pandemic. Children express themselves through art and play, this includes their feelings and thoughts of their world. Through the collection of children’s art work during the pandemic we hope to see children’s experiences and perspectives of this unique time in history. It is the hope that through understanding the child’s perspective through their own voice that we will be able to understand how to support and respond to children’s needs and understand implications of the future generations of this time in history.

Description:

The parents of young children or children themselves will be asked to upload a picture of their art work. This could be in the form of visual or written expressions of art. You will also be asked for some demographic information to help us understand more about the context of the artistic expression. There will be no identifying information collected, meaning we will not know who you or your children are. We will ask you the age of the child, the gender of the child, the ethnicity of the child, the location your child is living, including the city and country, as this information may be relevant if it was impacted significantly by the pandemic. We will also ask if the child has been affected by a loss from the pandemic, having parents or loved ones who are front line workers in hospital or nursing home settings which may affect their perspectives differently if they understand the risk being is higher.

You will not be asked for your or your child’s name or identifying information. The research may be published in academic journals, media such as news papers, and the art work in which consent was provided to show on the website may be shown in the art exhibit at a gallery. Updates about the research and the dissemination of the research will be shared on the website www.childart.ca and you are welcome to subscribe for email updates, as your personal information will not be obtained the website will be our way to communicate with you should you choose to check it.



Research Steps:

1. You will be invited to participate in the study and informed of all the information about the study and asked to consent at the bottom for your child (this letter).
2. We would like you to read and show your child the video for their assent and ask them if they want to share their Art work, it is important for the researchers that the children choose to share their Art work, thoughts, feelings, stories and ideas as well as understand why we are asking them to share.
3. You will be asked if you and your child would like to exhibit their art work on the website for everyone to experience. This is not necessary to participate in the study.
4. You will be asked to upload a picture of your child's Art work.
5. You will be asked about the child's art work, specifically if there were words, stories or a title they expressed while creating the Art or perhaps wanted to share with us when they completed it.
6. You will be asked demographic questions, such as the child's age, gender, location so we can look at themes across the country and this information will help us understand if there are unique experiences in different parts of Canada for instance.
7. You will be asked how your family has been affected by the pandemic, such as job loss, illness, death and if a parent is a front line worker. These experiences might uniquely affect your child's thoughts or feelings about their experiences and it is important to know.

We anticipate that this process will not take more than 5 minutes.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

We welcome the participation of children between the ages of 2 and 18 years old. The study's primary focus is Canadian children's perspectives and experiences if a child from outside of Canada would like to participate they are welcome, please indicate the place of residence when the demographic information is collected. Content that is deemed offensive for children will not be posted onto the website and may not be included into the study. This includes, racist, sexist, or other content that may be construed as crude or hurtful to another.

Potential Risks:

There are no known risks of this project, your child might feel pressure or increased stress by being asked a question and may not want to disappoint the parent or researcher or want to please them to make them happy. It is not believed that this is greater than experienced within the child's typical interactions with their parent or guardian. We would however like to reinforce that if you or your child does not feel comfortable in sharing pictures of their Art work then you should not participate in the study.

Potential Benefits:

Your child may enjoy seeing their art work displayed on the project website and experience a sense of pride. The art work may contribute to a greater understanding of children's perspectives, views and experiences of the pandemic on their world and this will help society understand the needs of children and possible impacts on the future of this generation. Children and families may not directly benefit from participation in this study, it is the researchers hope that through a large number of submissions that we will be able to understand the child's perspectives through their own voice. This will benefit society as a whole and the lives of children over time.



Confidentiality:

The pictures of the art work and demographic information will be shared on the project website if consent is provided. If consent is not provided to display the child's art work on the website then the art work and demographic information provided will be stored securely in a file on the principle investigators computer, this file will only be accessible to researchers on this project who have signed confidentiality agreements. As there is no identifying information being collected participants will have both anonymity and confidentiality within this study. The art work will be examined with other images based on the demographic information collected, such as age and location.

Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the internet.

Withdrawal Procedures:

Should you decide to participate in the study you may decline to answer any of the demographic questions or further information about the drawing. There will be no identifying information collected and as such there will be no way to identify you or your child. The data in the form of the Art work and demographic information submitted cannot be withdrawn once submitted.

Sponsorship:

There is no sponsoring agencies or organizations.

Conflict of Interest:

There is no known or anticipated conflict of interest.

Follow Up:

There will be no follow up as personal information will not be collected. If you would like to receive emails from the project you are welcome to subscribe to the project website (www.childart.ca) at which time any publications or information will be emailed to you. Any publications or information regarding the project will be shared on the website you are welcome to visit the site at any time to check for updates.

If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#20-05-018), please contact: Manager, Research Ethics; University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca; (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606).

Please note: There is NO obligation to participate in this study. You do NOT waive any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study.

Thank you for interest in our research study.

You are welcome to come back at any time to share your children's art.

All the best,
Dr. Nikki Martyn