

Kia ora/hello!

Thank you for your interest in the KidsWords project. This research study is being conducted by the University of Canterbury's Child Language Centre and the University of Otago, in collaboration with the University of Southern Denmark's Centre for Child Language. It is funded in part by a grant from the CDI Advisory Board in the USA.

What's the project about?

The aim of the project is to discover facts about the early language development of children in Aotearoa/New Zealand, such as how many different words children can say at a given age, what those words are and when they begin joining words to make sentences. We're also interested in how children's language development relates to various aspects of their development and environment, such as gender, birth history and education.

Why is this important?

At the moment, very little is known about the early language development of children growing up in this country. The information from this study will be useful to parents, early childhood educators, speech-language therapists, day care professionals, psychologists, linguists and others who work with and care for young children.

Who can participate?

If you're a parent or main care giver of a child in the age range of 16 through 30 months and live in New Zealand, we invite you to take part in this nationwide study. At this stage of the research, we are collecting data on children learning English. If your child is also learning another language, you are also welcome to participate, although we won't be asking for details about the other language(s). The goal is to have 3000 parents take part by completing the questionnaire.

What's involved if I participate?

You'll be asked to complete an on-line questionnaire about your child's language development and answer some questions about your child and family/whānau. It's simple and should take between 15-30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be saved each time you press "Next" to advance to the next screen. However, if more than about 10 minutes pass without any keyboard input from you, the website may log you out. If that happens, you should be able to log back in again and complete the questionnaire. **If you have a smart phone, please do not use it to complete the questionnaire.** If you prefer to complete a paper copy of the questionnaire, we'd be happy to send you one. If you need help with the questionnaire, including having the questions read to you, just let us know. You are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

How will my privacy be protected?

We will take every precaution to ensure your privacy. If you're uncomfortable with any question, you don't need to answer it. None of the personal information you provide us will be made public. Only people working on the project will have access to this. Personal details, such as names and email addresses, will be permanently deleted from the database after the data have been analysed. Your responses to the questionnaires will be kept confidential. They will be combined with those of other parents and stored on secure computers at the university.

How will the findings of the study be made known?

When the project is over, we will post a summary of what we found on our website at www.cmds.canterbury.ac.nz/clc/research/kidswords.shtml. We will also write up our findings and share them with people who work with children throughout the world. Summaries may be presented at conferences and published in books and scientific and professional journals. Anonymised group results may also be made available on the CLEX website (www.cdi-clex.org), where summary data on the language development of children from other countries appears. This website is used by researchers around the world to study children's language development.

I'm interested in participating. What do I do now?

We sent you a username and password in an email. Go to the KidsWords website at www.kidswords.org, enter those details, and complete the questionnaire. That's all there is to it! If you've lost that email, let us know and we'll send it again.

Contact us

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This project was reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, 2012/124. (Phone: 03 364 2987, Ext 45588. Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) and by the Plunket Ethics Committee, 9 October 2013.