

[DATE]

[PRINCIPAL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

[ADDRESS 1]

[CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [PRINCIPAL]:

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011), the third in a series of longitudinal studies of young children conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The earlier studies have been important sources of data for researchers and policy makers to address key issues related to children's development and learning including literacy in the home, the teaching of reading and mathematics, and the associations between physical exercise, childhood obesity, and well-being. Researchers using the data have published their findings widely in scientific journals and the popular press. NCES also presents the results from these studies for practitioners and the general public on our website, <http://nces.ed.gov/ecls>.

Like its predecessor studies, the ECLS-K:2011 will provide important information on children's early learning and development, transition into kindergarten, and progress through elementary school. The new cohort of kindergartners' school experiences will be compared to those of over a decade earlier to study the extent to which the demographic profile of children and their environment for learning have changed. We are notifying you because your school has been selected to take part in phase I of the ECLS-K:2011 this fall.

During this phase, we will test and refine the assessments and procedures for the full study in 2010-11. Children will complete some tasks conducted by trained ECLS-K:2011 staff to help us develop the English and Spanish reading skills items for the second phase of the study. The assessment items will be individually administered to children in your school and will take approximately 30 minutes per child.

Participation in this study is voluntary; however, I encourage your school's participation in ECLS-K:2011. Since ECLS-K:2011 is designed to be a representative sample of U.S. students, its accuracy depends on the full participation of your school, teachers, and students. In appreciation for your time and efforts, your school will receive a \$5 honorarium for each participating child, and participating school staff also will receive an honorarium.

The National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences is the primary sponsor of the ECLS-K:2011, which is being conducted on behalf of NCES by Westat. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). Under that law, the data provided by your schools, staff, students, and their parents may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). The vision and hearing screenings are sponsored by the National Eye Institute and the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, within the National Institutes of Health. ECLS-K:2011 been endorsed by the national education organizations listed on this letter. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0750.

Within the next few days, a representative of Westat will contact you about participating in this important study. Information collected from multiple individuals will be combined to

produce reports of findings from the ECLS-K:2011. The reports will not identify participating districts, schools, children and their parents, or individual staff.

Detailed information about the ECLS-K:2011 can be found in the materials enclosed with this letter. If you have questions about the study, please feel free to call Westat toll-free at 1-888-204-4864 or send an email to ECLSKHELP@westat.com. Also, more information about ECLS-K:2011 is available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/MyECLSK2011>.

Thank you for your support of the ECLS-K:2011.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics