

International Early Learning Study (IELS) Field Test Recruitment

OMB# 1850-new v.1

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State IELS Field Test Letter

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last]

[Title/Department]

[State]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am writing to inform your state education agency about an important new international study: the **International Early Learning Study (IELS)**. The IELS is sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries. The IELS will assess nationally-representative samples of children in kindergarten in cognitive and social emotional skills and will collect information about their home learning environments, early childhood education and care histories, and demographic characteristics. The United States and several other countries will conduct a field test in the fall of 2017 in order to prepare for the main study to be conducted in the fall of 2018. *Some schools in your state have been randomly selected to participate in the field test, and I am writing to ask your agency to support the participation of those schools.*

The results from IELS will allow policymakers to compare the skills and competencies of children from different nations as they make the transition to the elementary school. The purpose of the field test is to refine operational processes. It is also to try out new questions to ensure they accurately measure children’s knowledge and skills and are unbiased toward U.S. students. The IELS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials.

The IELS is conducted in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and is administered by [insert name of data collection contractor]. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the data collection under OMB #[insert number]. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in the IELS is voluntary, we ask for your support of the participation of sampled schools in your state. The IELS field test sample is small, as only about 30 schools will be asked to participate. Each school’s participation is important, because this phase of the study needs an inclusive and diverse group of American schools serving kindergarteners. The results of this field test will significantly inform the main study.

Within the next few weeks, a representative of [insert name of data collection contractor] will contact sampled school districts and schools to discuss participating in the field test. We are in contact with your state assessment director to try to ensure that we are not conflicting with other state efforts and that districts and schools understand how the IELS fits in with other data collections conducted by NCES. In the meantime, if you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to call [insert study phone number] or send an email to [insert study email]. You may also get more information by contacting Dana Kelly at NCES at (202) 245-8326 or Dana.Kelly@ed.gov or by visiting the IELS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/iels>.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Peggy Carr, Ph.D.

Acting Commissioner

cc: [State assessment coordinator name]

Enclosures

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, conducts the International Early Learning Study (IELS) in the United States as authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C., § 9543). Your responses are protected by federal statute (20 U.S.C., § 9573) and 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.

School District IELS Field Test Letter

[Date]

[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]

[School District]

[Address 1]

[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am writing to inform your district about an important new international study: the **International Early Learning Study (IELS)**. The IELS is sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries. The IELS will assess nationally-representative samples of children in kindergarten in cognitive and social emotional skills and will collect information about their home learning environments, early childhood education and care histories, and demographic characteristics. The United States and several other countries will conduct a field test in the fall of 2017 in order to prepare for the main study to be conducted in the fall of 2018. *Some schools in your district have been randomly selected to participate in the field test, and I am writing to ask your district to support the participation of those schools.*

The results from IELS will allow policymakers to compare the skills and competencies of children from different nations as they make the transition to the elementary school. The purpose of the field test is to refine operational processes. It is also to try out new questions to ensure they accurately measure children's knowledge and skills and are unbiased toward U.S. students. The IELS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials.

The child assessment will take about 60 minutes to complete. Teachers of students selected for the study will complete a questionnaire, which include questions about the skills and abilities of the students selected for the study (about 15 minutes total). Parents will be asked to complete a short survey. Data collected will significantly inform the main study.

We are asking you to encourage your school(s) to participate in this vital phase, which will take place in the fall of 2017. As a thank you for the school's help with this phase of the study, each participating school in your district will receive \$200 and each school's IELS school coordinator (a school staff person designated to liaise with IELS staff) will also receive \$200 as a thank you for their time and effort. Selected teachers will receive \$40 for completing a brief questionnaire. Parents who complete a questionnaire will receive \$20. Each student who participates will receive a sticker or a pencil. Schools that participate in the spring 2017 field test will not be selected again for the main IELS assessment in fall 2018.

The IELS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. The IELS is conducted in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and is administered by [insert name of data collection contractor]. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # [insert OMB number]. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this study is voluntary, we ask your district to support participation in your state so that the U.S. has a representative sample of schools.

Within the next few days, a representative of [insert name of data collection contractor] will contact the following school or schools in your district that have been selected for the field test: [LIST SAMPLED SCHOOLS HERE...]. Please include the IELS field test assessment window (September to October 2017) on your district test calendar.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call [insert study phone number here] or send an email to [insert study email]. You may also get more information about this study by

contacting Dana Kelly at NCES at (202) 245-8326 or Dana.Kelly@ed.gov or by visiting the IELS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/iels>.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Peggy Carr, Ph.D.
Acting Commissioner
Enclosures

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, conducts the International Early Learning Study (IELS) in the United States as authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C., § 9543). Your responses are protected by federal statute (20 U.S.C., § 9573) and 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.

School IELTS Field Test Letter

[Date]
[Title] [Name First] [Name Last], [Title/Department]
[School District]
[Address 1]
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [Title] [Name Last]:

I am writing to inform your school about an important new international study: the **International Early Learning Study (IELS)**. The IELS is sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries. The IELS will assess nationally-representative samples of children in kindergarten in cognitive and social emotional skills and will collect information about their home learning environments, early childhood education and care histories, and demographic characteristics. The U.S. and several other countries will conduct a field test in the fall of 2017 in order to prepare for the main study to be conducted in the fall of 2018. *Your school is one of 30 across the U.S. that has been selected to take part in the IELS field test in fall 2017.*

The results from IELS will allow policymakers to compare the skills and competencies of children from different nations as they make the transition to the elementary school. The purpose of the field test is to refine operational processes. It is also to try out new questions to ensure they accurately measure children’s knowledge and skills and are unbiased toward U.S. students. The IELS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials.

The child assessment will take about 60 minutes to complete. Teachers of students selected for the study will complete a questionnaire, which includes questions about the skills and abilities of the students selected for the study (about 15 minutes total). Parents will also be asked to complete a short survey. Data collected will significantly inform the main study.

As a thank you for help with this phase of the study, your school will receive \$200 and the appointed by you IELS school coordinator (a school staff person designated to liaise with IELS staff) will also receive \$200 as a thank you for their time and effort. Selected teachers will receive \$40 for completing a brief questionnaire. Parents who complete a questionnaire will receive \$20. Each student who participates will receive a sticker or a pencil. Schools that participate in the spring 2017 field test will not be selected again for the main IELS assessment in fall 2018.

The IELS is described in more detail in the enclosed materials. The IELS is conducted in the U.S. by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and is administered by [insert name of data collection contractor]. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # [insert OMB number]. For information on the confidentiality of the data collected, please see the enclosed FAQ. While participation in this study is voluntary, we ask you to support participation in your school so that the U.S. has a representative sample of schools.

The IELS field test assessment window is September to October, 2017. Within the next few days, a representative of [insert name of data collection contractor here] will contact you to discuss your participation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call [insert study phone number here] or send an email to [insert study email here]. You may also get more information about this study by contacting Dana Kelly at NCES at (202) 245-8326 or Dana.Kelly@ed.gov or by visiting the IELS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/iels>.

Your school's participation in the field test for the IELS is vital to ensuring a fair and valid assessment for all U.S. kindergarteners. Thank you for your time and for supporting this important international education study.

Sincerely,

Peggy Carr, Ph.D.
Acting Commissioner

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What is the International Early Learning Study (IELS)?

The IELS assesses nationally-representative samples of children ages 5.0 to 5.5 years (in kindergarten) in cognitive and social emotional domains, through direct and indirect measures, and will collect contextual data about their home learning environments, early childhood education and care histories, and demographic characteristics in all participating countries. The IELS is coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and conducted in the U.S. by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education.

Why is the IELS important and what are the benefits of participating?

The IELS will allow national policymakers to compare the skills and competencies of children from different nations as they prepare to enter primary school and to examine whether changes might be needed in the U.S.'s early childhood education and care system to promote additional skills and competencies seen in other countries. Without these kinds of data, U.S. policymakers will be limited in their ability to gain insight into the educational performance and practices of other nations as they compare to the U.S.

What is the purpose of the IELS Field Trial in fall 2017?

The IELS is conducting a field trial (a small-scale, trial run of the study) in every participating country to determine if any of the child direct assessment questions are biased because of national, social, or cultural differences and whether field operations work as planned. Analyses of child responses are conducted to check for evidence of unanticipated differences in child performance across countries that could indicate a linguistic or conceptual translation problem. Items found to be problematic are revised to ameliorate identified issues or dropped from the assessment altogether. In fall 2017, the United States will participate in the IELS field test. The field test data will provide valuable information to ensure that the IELS main study assessment is unbiased and fair to U.S. kindergarteners.

What will schools, students, and teachers be asked to do in the field test?

The IELS field test has three primary components: (1) a direct student assessment, (2) a teacher questionnaire, and (3) a parent questionnaire.

- Up to 19 kindergarteners in each school will participate in the IELS assessment, which is a one-on-one, untimed direct assessment designed to take about 1 hour. Students will participate in engaging activities to measure their skills in language/emergent literacy and mathematics/numeracy and their executive function and social emotional skills. **One parent or guardian of each student who participates in the study will complete a brief questionnaire about the child, the home learning environment, and the child's early childhood education history.**
- The principal of each school will be asked to appoint a staff member to act as the IELS school coordinator. The school coordinator will work with [insert name of the data collection contractor]'s staff to coordinate the assessment.
- Teachers of participating kindergarteners will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire with questions about each assessed child.

Participation in IELS is voluntary but important for ensuring that the sample is representative of schools and students across the country.

How is the IELS developed?

The IELS is developed through an international collaborative process involving input from U.S. and international experts in the areas of language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, and social emotional skills. The IELS assessment materials are thoroughly reviewed by within-country experts to make sure the materials are appropriate for each country's young children. Finally, the final assessment materials are endorsed by all participating countries.

What does the IELS direct assessment look like?

Kindergarteners participating in the IELS will be assessed one-on-one in an untimed session. They will be asked to point to pictures, consider situations, and complete game-like tasks. It has been our experience that children this age enjoy these activities.

Which countries are participating in IELS?*

<insert list when confirmed>

Where do I find more information?

Visit the IELS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/iels>.

For additional questions about the IELS, contact the IELS U.S. home office at [insert study phone number here] or email [insert study email here].

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education, conducts the International Early Learning Study (IELS) in the United States as authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C., § 9543). Your responses are protected by federal statute (20 U.S.C., § 9573) and 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. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved this data collection under OMB #[insert here].

International Early Learning Study

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The IELS is an international assessment of young children ages 5.0 to 5.5 years (in kindergarten). The IELS measures children's growth and competency in the following areas: language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, and social emotional skills. Contextual data about children's home learning environments, early childhood education and care histories, and demographic characteristics will be collected for all participating children. IELS provides a unique opportunity to examine how the skills and competencies of young U.S. children compare to those of the same age children in other nations.

What is the focus of the IELS?

The study will assess young children ages 5.0 to 5.5 years as they transition into primary school. The goals of the study are to assess competency in the following areas: language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, and social emotional skills to determine both within country and across country variations in the development of these areas.

What is the field test for?

Field tests are a critical part of the development of assessment questions for international studies like the IELS. Field tests (small-scale, trial runs of an assessment) allow assessment developers to try out new questions to determine their performance when administered to children around the world. The results of the U.S. field test will help assessment developers to eliminate wording or topics that would put U.S. children at a disadvantage relative to children in other countries. The field test also ensures that data collection procedures are done efficiently and correctly.

When is the field test being conducted?

The field test will take place in September to October 2017.

Why was my school selected for participation?

Your school was randomly selected so that the overall U.S. field test sample would be representative of the overall U.S. school population. Field-testing on a diverse sample of kindergarten students from a variety of schools, locations, and backgrounds ensures that the assessment wording and concepts are not regionally, culturally, or socially biased.

Why should my school and students participate?

The IELS field test will inform protocols and materials for the IELS main study, which will begin in September 2018. Specifically, this field test will be used to obtain information on recruiting schools and students, and the practices and procedures leading to successful study administration (e.g., protocols, timing, assessment accommodations). Surveys developed for teachers and parents will also be tested. Participants in the field test will provide essential feedback to improve data collection for the main study.

Moreover, the IELS informs national discussions about early childhood education and care, school readiness, as well as international competitiveness. By participating, U.S. kindergarteners ensure fairness in the questions that will be used in the main study. Field-testing the assessment questions will identify wording and concepts that could disadvantage U.S. kindergarteners in the main study. Students' efforts in the field test ensure that the achievement of our nation's 5.0 to 5.5 year-olds is accurately and fairly reported.

Is it possible that my school will be selected for the main study as well as the field test?

It is extremely unlikely that a school selected for the field test will be selected for the main study.

Will all of our kindergarten students be asked to participate?

No, only a subset of children at the target age (5.0 to 5.5 years old) will be invited to participate. Up to 19 students will be randomly selected to participate. Only in very small schools will the school sample likely include all kindergarteners who are the target age. In addition, some students with disabilities or limited English proficiency may be offered a limited set of accommodations to enable their participation; otherwise, they may be excused from the assessment.

How many schools and students will be involved in the field test?

A sample of approximately 475 students enrolled in kindergarten, from about 30 schools, will participate in the IELS field test.

Where will the field test be conducted?

The assessment will be conducted in the schools that are selected to participate. The assessment space needs to be able to accommodate the students and the assessor.

Are there incentives for participating schools?

The IELS recognizes the demands placed on schools from many sources throughout the school year, and will provide \$200 to schools that agree to participate in the field test. The IELS will also provide \$200 for a school coordinator to serve as the central point of contact for the data collection at each school.

Who will be responsible for the student data collection?

Trained IELS staff will provide all required materials and facilitate the completion of the questionnaires. Schools will only be asked to designate a school contact to assist IELS staff with in-school assessment arrangements. Additionally, trained IELS staff will conduct the student assessments, bringing all required materials for administering the assessments. Exceptions will be made for students with IEP accommodations who may require the assistance of school personnel (e.g., if a student works one-on-one with an aide).

What is involved for students?

Students will complete an untimed direct assessment of their language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, and social emotional skills. The assessment should take approximately 60 minutes and consists of activities fun for kindergarteners. It has been our experience that children tend to enjoy these assessment activities.

What happens if a child refuses to participate?

All participation is voluntary. There are no penalties for not participating in the study. When completing the assessments a child can skip any question they do not want to answer. Any child who refuses to work with an assessor will not be assessed.

What is involved for school staff?

The teachers of students who participate in the study will answer questions about the skills and abilities of specific students in the study (about 15 minutes total). Paper-and-pencil versions of the surveys may be available upon request.

What is involved for parents?

One parent (or guardian) of each student who participates in the study will complete a brief questionnaire via a web survey. A paper-and-pencil version of the survey may be available upon request.

What will happen with the collected data?

The field test data will be used to evaluate whether the assessment fairly and accurately measures students' knowledge and skills in all participating countries. Reports of the findings from the field test will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Will the names of participants and their responses be kept confidential?

Under law, the information provided by schools, staff, students, and 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 [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9573]. All field staff and other staff working on the study have signed an affidavit of non-disclosure where they swear to abide by this law. Field staff have also undergone a criminal background check as a condition of employment.

Where can I find more information?

For additional information, call the IELS information number, [insert study phone number here], or send an email to [insert study email here]. You may also learn more about the study by visiting the IELS website at **<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/iels>**.

International Early Learning Study

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Information for Teachers

The IELS is an international assessment of young children ages 5.0 to 5.5 years (in kindergarten). The IELS measures children's growth and competency in the following areas: language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, and social emotional skills. Contextual data about children's home learning environments, early childhood education and care histories, and demographic characteristics will be collected for all participating children. IELS provides a unique opportunity to examine how the skills and competencies of young U.S. children compare to those of the same age children in other nations.

What is the focus of the IELS?

The study will assess kindergarten children ages 5.0 to 5.5 years as they transition into primary school. The goals of the study are to assess competency in the following areas: language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, and social emotional skills to determine both within country and across country variations in the development of these areas.

What is the field test for?

Field tests are a critical part of the development of assessment questions for international studies like the IELS. Field tests (small-scale, trial runs of an assessment) allow assessment developers to try out new questions to determine their performance when administered to children around the world. The field test also ensures that data collection procedures are done efficiently and correctly. Specifically, this field test will be used to obtain information on recruiting schools and students, and the practices and procedures leading to successful study administration (e.g., protocols, timing, assessment accommodations). Surveys developed for teachers and parents will also be tested. Participants in the field test will provide essential feedback to improve data collection for the main study.

What role do teachers have in the IELS?

The teachers of students who participate in the study will answer questions about the skills and abilities of specific students in the study (about 15 minutes total). Paper-and-pencil versions of the surveys may be available upon request. Your participation in the IELS is vital as we need a certain number of teachers to help us evaluate questionnaire items. Teachers who complete the survey will be compensated for their time.

Do teachers need to help administer the assessments?

No, trained IELS staff will visit the school, bringing all required materials for administering the assessments. Exceptions will be made for students with IEP accommodations that may require the assistance of school personnel (e.g., if a student works one-on-one with an aide).

How long will it take to complete the IELS teacher questionnaire?

The teacher questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and you do not have to complete it in a single session. Each teacher will be offered \$40 for completing the questionnaire.

What happens if a child refuses to participate?

All participation is voluntary. There are no penalties for not participating in the study. When completing the assessments a child can skip any question they do not want to answer. Any child who refuses to work with an assessor will not be assessed.

Will the names of participants and their responses be kept confidential?

Under law, the information provided by schools, staff, students, and 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 [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9573]. All field staff and other staff working on the study have signed an affidavit of non-disclosure where they swear to abide by this law. Field staff have also undergone a criminal background check as a condition of employment.

What will happen with the collected data?

The field test data will be used to evaluate whether the assessment fairly and accurately measures students' knowledge and skills in all participating countries. Reports of the findings from the field test will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Where can I find more information?

For additional information, call the IELS information number, [insert study phone number here], or send an email to [insert study email here]. You may also learn more about the study by visiting the IELS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/iels>.

Appendix B: IELTS Field Test Consent Letters and Supporting Materials

Field Test Notification Letter, IELTS

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of early learning being conducted in our school this fall. This study is called the International Early Learning Study, or IELTS. IELTS provides important information on what young children in different countries and learning environments know and can do as they prepare to enter primary school.

As the IELTS is a new and groundbreaking study, new assessment questions need to be developed and tested to ensure that those questions accurately measure the knowledge and skills of young children in all countries. In fall 2017, new questions will be tested in approximately 30 schools in the U.S. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not working effectively and ensure that the IELTS assessment is valid and fair to all U.S. kindergarteners, taking into account their age and experiences.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the IELTS field test. A select few of our kindergarteners, along with your child, will take part in this study. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background on the IELTS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. kindergarteners can do, it is important that each student selected takes part in the study. The IELTS assessment is a one-on-one untimed assessment. It has been our experience that kindergarteners enjoy the types of activities included in the IELTS assessment. I urge you to support this effort by agreeing to have your child take part. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and children that do not wish to work with the IELTS assessor will not be assessed. One parent or guardian of each student who participates in the study will complete a brief questionnaire. Each parent/guardian who completes the survey will receive \$20 as a thank-you.

The information provided by students will not be shared with the school. NCES is authorized to conduct the IELTS under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data provided by schools, staff, and students 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 (20

U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

Enclosures:
Facts for Parents about the IELTS Field Test

Implicit Consent Letter for Parents, the IELS Field Trial

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of early learning being conducted in our school this fall. This study is called the International Early Learning Study, or IELS. IELS provides important information on what young children in different countries and learning environments know and can do as they prepare to enter primary school.

As the IELS is a new and groundbreaking study, new assessment questions need to be developed and tested to ensure that those questions accurately measure the knowledge and skills of young children in all countries. In fall 2017, new questions will be tested in approximately 30 schools in the U.S. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not working effectively and ensure that the IELS assessment is valid and fair to all U.S. kindergarteners, taking into account their age and experiences.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the IELS field test. A select few of our kindergarteners, along with your child, will take part in this study. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background on the IELS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. kindergarteners can do, it is important that each student selected takes part in the study. The IELS assessment is a one-on-one untimed assessment. It has been our experience that kindergarteners enjoy the types of activities included in the IELS assessment. I urge you to support this effort by agreeing to have your child take part. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and children that do not wish to work with the IELS assessor will not be assessed. One parent or guardian of each student who participates in the study will complete a brief questionnaire. Each parent/guardian who completes the survey will receive \$20 as a thank-you.

The information provided by students will not be shared with the school. NCES is authorized to conduct the IELS under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data provided by schools, staff, and students 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 (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the U.S. as a whole.

If you have an objection to your kindergartener participating in the IELS activities, please let us know by completing the attached consent form and returning it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents about the IELTS Field Test
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

IELS Implicit Consent Form

**International Early Learning Study (IELS)
Field Test
Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your kindergartener has been asked to participate in a field test of an international study of early learning called the International Early Learning Study (IELS). This assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from [insert data collection contractor], who are operating under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U. S. Department of Education. In fall 2017, new questions will be tested in approximately 30 schools in the United States. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not working effectively and ensure that the IELS assessment is valid and fair to all U.S. kindergarteners.

If you grant permission for your kindergartener to participate in the IELS field test, you do not need to return this form.

If you do not give permission for your child to participate in the IELS field test, please check the box below, and sign and return this form to your child’s school as soon as possible.

No, I do not give permission for my child to participate in IELS field test.

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: ____/____/____

PLEASE PRINT:

Student name: _____

School name: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent telephone: _____

Parent email: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: _____

Explicit Consent Letter for Parents--IELS Field Trial

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important international study of early learning being conducted in our school this fall. This study is called the International Early Learning Study, or IELS. IELS provides important information on what young children in different countries and learning environments know and can do as they prepare to enter primary school.

As the IELS is a new and groundbreaking study, new assessment questions need to be developed and tested to ensure that those questions accurately measure the knowledge and skills of young children in all countries. In fall 2017, new questions will be tested in approximately 30 schools in the U.S. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not working effectively and ensure that the IELS assessment is valid and fair to all U.S. kindergarteners, taking into account their age and experiences.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the IELS field test. A select few of our kindergarteners, along with your child, will take part in this study. The enclosed summary sheet provides some background on the IELS, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. kindergarteners can do, it is important that each student selected takes part in the study. The IELS assessment is a one-on-one untimed assessment. It has been our experience that kindergarteners enjoy the types of activities included in the IELS assessment. I urge you to support this effort by agreeing to have your child take part. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and children that do not wish to work with the IELS assessor will not be assessed. One parent or guardian of each student who participates in the study will complete a brief questionnaire. Each parent/guardian who completes the survey will receive \$20 as a thank-you.

The information provided by students will not be shared with the school. NCES is authorized to conduct the IELS under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data provided by schools, staff, and students 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 (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the U.S. as a whole.

Before we can allow your kindergartener to join in the IELS field test we must have your written consent. Please complete the attached form and return it to the school.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study and considering your kindergartener’s participation in it.

Sincerely,

Enclosures:

Facts for Parents About the IELS Field Test
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

IELS Explicit Consent Form for Parents—IELS Field Trial

**International Early Learning Study (IELS)
Field Test
Parent/Guardian Consent Form**

Your kindergartener has been asked to participate in a field test of an international study of early learning called the International Early Learning Study (IELS). This assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from [insert data collection contractor], who are operating under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U. S. Department of Education. In fall 2017, new questions will be tested in approximately 30 schools in the United States. This field test will allow test developers to modify or delete questions that are not working effectively and ensure that the IELS assessment is valid and fair to all U.S. kindergarteners.

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

Yes, I give permission for my child to participate in the IELS field test.

No, I do not give permission for my child to participate in the IELS field test.

I have read this permission form and understand what my child and I are being asked to do.

PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW:

_____ Date of signature:
_____/_____/_____

PLEASE PRINT:

Student name: _____

School name: _____

Parent name: _____

Parent telephone: _____

Parent email: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: _____

FAQ for Parents about the Field Test—IELS Field Trial

Facts for Parents About the IELS Field Test

The International Early Learning Study (IELS) is an international assessment of young children ages 5.0 to 5.5 years (in kindergarten). Between September and October of this year, your child's school will be one of about 30 schools nationwide taking part in the IELS field test. Schools were selected randomly to represent the nation's schools and, within each school, up to 19 kindergarteners were randomly selected to take part. Your child was among the students selected to take part in the study.

What is the International Early Learning Study (IELS)?

The IELS measures children's growth and competency in the following areas: language/emergent literacy, mathematics/numeracy, executive function, and social emotional skills. Information about children's home learning environments, early childhood education and care histories, and demographic characteristics will also be collected. The IELS provides a unique opportunity to examine how the skills and competencies of young U.S. children compare to those of the same age children in other nations. The IELS is sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries and is conducted in the U.S. by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S Department of Education.

What is the field test for?

The IELS is conducting a field test (a small-scale, trial run of the study) in every participating country to determine if any of the child direct assessment questions are biased because of national, social, or cultural differences and whether field operations work as planned. Surveys developed for teachers and parents will also be tested. Participants in the field test will provide essential feedback to improve data collection for the main study.

Why participate in the field test?

By participating, U.S. kindergarteners ensure fairness in the questions that will be used in the main study in 2018. Field-testing the assessment questions will identify wording and concepts that could disadvantage U.S. kindergarteners in the main study. Students' efforts in the field test ensure that the achievement of our nation's 5.0 to 5.5 year-olds is accurately and fairly reported. Moreover, parents contribute vital information on the home learning environment, children's early childhood education and care experiences, and characteristics of the household.

How many schools and students will be involved in the field test?

A sample of approximately 475 students enrolled in kindergarten, from about 30 schools, will participate in the IELS field test.

How did my child and their school get selected for the IELS?

The schools that participate in the IELS field test in the U.S. are randomly selected from a list of public and private schools in the country that enroll kindergarteners. Students who are 5.0 to 5.5 years old and in kindergarten were selected from a list of kindergarteners this age provided by your school. Up to 19 students were randomly selected to participate.

What is involved for kindergarten students?

Children will take an untimed one-on-one assessment that should take approximately 60 minutes and consist of activities fun for kindergarteners. It has been our experience that children tend to enjoy these assessment activities.

What is involved for parents?

One parent or guardian of each student who participates in the study will complete a brief questionnaire via a web survey. Each parent/guardian who completes the survey will receive \$20 as a thank-you. A paper-and-pencil version of the survey may be available upon request.

What happens if a child refuses to participate?

All participation is voluntary. There are no penalties for not participating in the study. When completing the assessments a child can skip any question they do not want to answer. Any child who refuses to work with an assessor will not be assessed.

My Child has a disability and is not in a general education setting. Do I still need to participate?

All participation is voluntary. The study is interested in learning about what children age 5.0 to 5.5 and in kindergarten know and can do. Even if your child is not able to participate in the child direct assessment, we invite you to participate in the survey. Information about your child's skills and abilities will be obtained from his/her teacher.

What are the benefits?

The nation as a whole benefits the IELS by having a greater understanding of how the knowledge and skills of U.S. kindergarteners compare with those from other countries. The country benefits from the field test in that it ensures that the questions used are fair and appropriate for U.S. kindergarteners. Schools that participate in the IELS will receive \$200.

What is done with the information you collect from my child?

The IELS is not designed to produce individual tests scores and your child's individual performance will not be shared with teachers, the school, or the district in any way. The field test data will be used to evaluate whether the assessment fairly and accurately measures students' knowledge and skills in all participating countries. Reports of the findings from the field test will not identify participating districts, schools, students, or individual staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Will the names of participants and their responses be kept confidential?

Under law, the information provided by schools, staff, students, and 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 [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9573]. All field staff and other staff working on the study have signed an affidavit of non-disclosure where they swear to abide by this law. Field staff have also undergone a criminal background check as a condition of employment.

Who do I contact for information about the IELS?

For additional information, call the IELS information number, [insert study phone number here], or send an email to [insert study email here]. You may also learn more about the study by visiting the IELS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/iels>.

Draft School Coordinator Email announcing E-Filing for Field Trial

Subject: IELTS E-Filing open

Attachment: IELTS Field Trial E-Filing Instructions

Dear School Coordinator:

Welcome and thank you for your efforts as the school coordinator for the International Early Learning Study (IELS) at your school!

In order to sample students for the IELTS field trial, we need a list of eligible students. The deadline for student lists to be submitted for sampling is **Month Day, 2017**. Please upload your school's lists as soon as possible so that sampled students and their parents can be notified well in advance of the assessment day.

Detailed instructions on submitting your lists to the IELTS are included in the enclosed document titled ***IELS Field Trial E-Filing Instructions***.

If you have any questions about the instructions, please contact the IELTS Help Desk at [insert email] or by calling 1-888-[insert number]. The e-filing instructions are also posted on the MyIELSUSA website (www.myielsusa.com).

Sincerely,

The IELTS USA Team

1. Prepare Electronic Student File (E-File)

Steps for preparing an Electronic Student File (E-File)

Step 1: Identify ALL students at your school who meet the eligibility criteria

Criteria for the IELS student eligibility are:

- Enrolled in kindergarten, AND
- Born **Date and Date**.

The IELS needs accurate information about all students at your school who meet the above criteria for student eligibility. Include all students, even those students who typically may be excluded from other testing programs, such as students with IEPs or 504 plans (SD), English language learners (ELL), or students with limited English proficiency (LEP). A small number of these students may be unable to complete the IELS assessment. Do not include on your list students who are known to be withdrawn. All other eligible students **must** be added to your list of students.

Step 2: List each of the eligible students along with their demographic information (see Figure 1 below for an example)

Using the electronic listing form template provided on the MyIELSUSA.com website (www.MyIELSUSA.com), list students in your school who are eligible for the IELS along with their demographic information.

- Student first name
- Student middle name (not required)
- Student last name
- Month of birth (M or MM; must be submitted in numeric format, not text)
- Year of birth (YYYY: 2012)
- Sex (1 = Female; 2 = Male)

Figure 1: Example of Electronic Student File

Student First Name	Student Middle Name	Student Last Name	Grade	Month of Birth	Year of Birth	Sex
Ted	Bria	Brooks	K	5	2012	2
Jeffrey		Jenkins	K	3	2012	2
Rose	Ann	Matthews	K	9	2012	1
Jennifer	Lyn	Trader	K	42	2012	1
José		Rodriguez	K	5	2012	2
Roy	John	Zastrow	K	8	2012	2
Sam		Walker	K	3	2012	2
Julie		Walters	K	6	2012	1

Submitting Your Electronic Student File

After you have created and saved your E-File, proceed to MYIELSUSA. Once you have logged in, click the "Submit Student List" link on the left side of the page. Then click the START E-FILE button at the bottom of the page.

IMPORTANT! If at any point you have any difficulties with this process, please do not hesitate to contact the IELS Help Desk for assistance at 1-888-xxxx.

Please Note: You must submit both your student lists before your school's sample is processed