



Study Information Letter for Staff

Boston Ready, a *K-1 professional development program*

Boston Ready is a research grant in collaboration with Boston Public Schools, UMass Boston, and Wellesley Centers for Women.

Boston Ready is a multi-year professional development and research initiative designed to foster academic success for K-1 children. This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to UMass Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion. This initiative is a collaboration with the Boston Public Schools, Horizons for Homeless Children, Federation for Children with Special Needs, Hampshire Educational Collaborative, Roxbury Community College and includes an external evaluation by Wellesley Centers for Women.

All preschool classrooms will receive some benefit in the form of professional development and/or materials or a stipend. Those classrooms chosen as control sites will operate with “business as usual” professional development provided by the district. Intervention classrooms participate in all aspects of the intervention. The goal of this initiative is to provide professional development to early childhood teachers and paraprofessionals. Curricula that participants will be trained in include:

- OWL—**Literacy**
- Building Blocks—**Math**

Wellesley Centers for Women will evaluate the project by conducting educator and parent surveys, teacher focus groups, and standardized assessments of randomly selected students to measure achievement outcomes.

What will happen:

We will recruit approximately 40-50 classrooms of K-1 children. About one half of the classrooms will receive an intervention that includes professional development activities and introduction of new curricula designed for early childhood education. The other half of the classrooms will receive delayed professional development or a stipend depending upon geographic location of the site. Teachers will be asked to give permission to enroll the classroom. Then, parents of the students in that class will be asked to give consent for their child’s participation.

Staff Consent

CONSENT FORM Teacher/Paraprofessional Study Participant

*Institute for Community Inclusion
University of Massachusetts Boston
Graduate College of Education
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393*

You have been asked to take part in an evaluation of the Boston Ready research project.

Description of Project:

The Boston Ready research project is designed to provide professional development to teachers and paraprofessionals.

Purpose: *Boston Ready* is a multi-year professional development and research initiative designed to foster academic success for K-1 children. The study is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to UMass Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion, in partnership with Boston Public Schools. This initiative includes an external evaluation by Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW). All preschool classrooms will receive some benefit in the form of professional development and/or materials.

What will be done: The allocation of benefits will be based on random assignment of classrooms as either experimental or control group. The goal of this initiative is to provide professional development to early childhood teachers and paraprofessionals in Boston. Curricula that participants will be trained in include:

- OWL—**Literacy**
- Building Blocks—**Math**

Evaluation efforts by WCW will include educator and parent surveys, teacher focus groups and interviews, and standardized assessments of randomly selected students to measure achievement outcomes.

We are asking your participation through the completion of pre- and posttest surveys that describe your professional development experience and interests, as well as your appraisal of your involvement in professional development. We will also ask you to allow us to observe your classroom. Teachers are invited to participate in focus group interviews designed for more in-depth evaluation of your professional development experiences. We are not looking for individual answers to evaluation materials, but instead gathering data for group level analysis. We want to know how teachers are responding to professional development as a group, or on average.

Confidentiality:

All the information from this project (answers to questions) will be private when ever possible. Your part in this research will not be shared beyond the project. None of the information will let anyone know you by name. Your name will not be on any of the information from the project. Instead, the information will have code numbers that only the research team will know. The information will be stored in a locked file.

No information about you will be given to anyone outside of the project.

Voluntary Participation:

You can decide if you want to participate in the research or not. You do not have to participate. If you do decide to join the project, you may decide to stop participating at any time. If you wish to stop participating in the project, all you need to do is tell one of us: Mary Lu Love, Principal Investigator (617-287-5925) or Michelle Porche, External Evaluator (781-283-2498). Whatever you choose, it will not affect your employment.

Boston Ready is a collaborative effort between Boston Public Schools, the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and Wellesley College. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (CFA #84.349A).

07-07-07

Rights and Complaints:

If you do not like the way the project happens or you feel you have been hurt in any way by participating in the project, you may let Mary Lu Love know, 617-287-5925.

You may also contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston if you feel you have been hurt in any way by participating. The IRB may be reached at the following address: IRB, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Quinn Administration Building-2-015, University of Massachusetts Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125-3393. Or you can contact the Board by telephone at (617) 287-5370.

YOU HAVE READ THE ASSENT FORM. YOUR QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. YOUR SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MEANS THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION AND YOU GIVE PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAININGS AS WELL AS THE SURVEY AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATION COMPONENTS OF THE STUDY. ENROLLMENT IN COLLEGE COURSEWORK IS AN OPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AT YOUR DISCRETION.

IN ADDITION, PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOCUS GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:

IN ADDITION TO THE SURVEYS AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS, I WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Signature of Participant
(Teacher/Paraprofessional)

Typed/Printed Name of Participant
(Teacher/Paraprofessional)

Signature of Researcher

Typed/Printed Name of Researcher

(school)

(city)