Frequently Asked Questions by Parents about the Universal Preschool Study

What is the purpose of this study?

The main purpose of the study is to learn about ways in which Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) programs can continue to improve their services for the children and families in Los Angeles so that First 5 LA meets its goal of ensuring that all children enter kindergarten ready for a successful school experience. We will learn how children develop their school readiness skills during the program and how the characteristics of the programs, teachers, and families are related to children’s growth and development.

What kinds of information will be collected?

We will collect information in several ways. We will talk to you in your own language. We will ask your child’s teacher some questions and we will do some fun activities with your child.

When will the study be conducted?

The study will take place over two phases. The first phase will be a small pilot conducted in spring 2007. The second phase of the study (fall 2007 and spring 2008) will include a larger number of centers and children and will provide the opportunity to see how children develop from the fall to the spring. We will recruit 120 LAUP centers to participate in the study. The study will represent the diverse population served by selecting about 20 children and families in each center.

How will families be thanked?

We will give parents $25 and a gift valued at $10 for their child each time they are interviewed.

Who is doing this study?

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), an independent policy research organization, whose studies of early childhood programs (as well as many others) have informed national policymakers for more than 35 years, is conducting the evaluation. MPR’s partners in this research include researchers from Juárez & Associates of Los Angeles, American Institutes for Research in Palo Alto, and the Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley.
How will MPR protect the privacy of staff, families, and children?

MPR is committed to respecting the privacy of everyone who contributes to this study. We follow strict procedures to maintain the privacy of the information entrusted to us. MPR has done many studies like this, and we are experienced in following stringent procedures to guarantee this protection. All staff involved with the study from MPR and its partner organizations will sign confidentiality pledges to further ensure that we protect the privacy of families, teachers, and programs.

In addition, MPR does not report any information about individual children, families, or teachers to the center, LAUP, or First 5 LA—or to anyone else. Our reports give averages for groups of children. We will not present information about children’s development or about parents, teachers, or classrooms that anyone could connect to specific families, teachers, classes, or programs. In this way, the privacy of children and families, teachers, and programs will be carefully guarded.

How can I get more information about the study?

For more information, you can contact Katie Fallin at First 5 LA (213-482-9489 or kfallin@first5la.org) or Anne Self at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., (888-771-1192 or email UPKStudy@mathematica-mpr.com).