



## Formal Information Letter

### SNAP: School Nutrition and Activity Project

Dear Parent/Guardian (and Students):

This letter describes a research project being conducted at your/your child's school through the University of Prince Edward Island.

The **purpose** of the study is to collect information on PEI children's eating habits and physical activity and to assess children's height and body weight.

**Why is this study important?** As you know, school nutrition policies have been adopted in elementary schools across the province. This study will provide us with important information about the eating habits, physical activity and weight status of children on PEI, and whether the new school nutrition policies can help children to be healthier.

We believe our study will help schools to improve the health of students overall.

#### **There are two parts to the research:**

1. Students will be asked to complete a short paper and pencil survey about what they eat and their physical activity. Students will not put their names on the survey. A trained research assistant will be present while students complete the survey. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes.
2. We will be collecting the weights and heights of grade 5 and 6 students across PEI so that we can compare them to weights and heights of other grade 5 and 6 students in a few years. **No one – including the students themselves – will be told their individual weights and heights.** Students will be asked to be weighed and have their height measured in a separate private room at your school. We will be using strict guidelines (developed for measuring children from the Centres for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia) to make sure that information is kept private and that we are sensitive to children's needs, and that we get accurate information.

We will:

- use a special electronic scale with a display which is held by the researcher across the room, which will make sure that the student, or any other student, cannot see what their weight is;
- use trained research assistants to make sure they are sensitive to children's concerns and can answer children's questions; we will assure students that this is not about appearance, it is about assessing children's health over time.



- make sure measurements are taken in a PRIVATE area so that others can't see or hear the measurement. Results will NOT be shared with the child, or with anyone else at the school.
- Upon completion of the project, only present average weights, and the total number of children overweight. Students' individual weights and heights will be kept private.

**Only students with written permission from their parents, and who are willing to participate themselves, will be included in the study.** If you or your child is not comfortable with she or he being weighed, you or your child have the right to refuse to have this done.

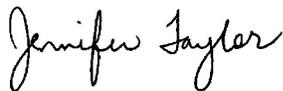
All individual information obtained from this study will be destroyed after the study is completed. There will be no identifying names on any information we obtain. Only the researchers will see the information.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UPEI Research Ethics Committee. Although there are no known risks to taking part in the study, this study is voluntary: the final decision to take part rests with you and your child. We will appreciate your co-operation in permitting your son or daughter to join in the research. However, there is no penalty of any kind in terms of his or her grades or school performance if he/she does not take part or if you or your child decides to withdraw from the study later. Either you/your child may withdraw at any time before or during the interview by advising the researcher or research assistant of your decision, even if you agree to take part now. If you have any questions about the study, or wish more information to help you in reaching a decision, please call Dr. Jennifer Taylor (University of Prince Edward Island) at 566-0475.

If you are willing to have your child take part in this study, **please complete the attached booklet (permission form and Home Survey)** by \_\_\_\_\_, and have your son or daughter bring it to his or her teacher. All students **must** return a signed permission form in order to take part. Children will not be permitted to take part if he/she does not have the form when he/she arrives.

If you have any positive or negative comments about your participation in this study, please contact the Chair, Research Ethics Committee, University of Prince Edward Island, through the secretary at the Office of Research Development, 566-0637. You can also call Jennifer Taylor at the University of Prince Edward Island, 902-566-0475.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Taylor PhD, Paul Veugelers, PhD  
Co-Principal Investigators, SNAP Project