

# Children's University Research Study – Information for Parents and Carers

08 June 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child's school has chosen to take part in a two-year research study involving a programme called Children's University. The study will include Year 4 pupils (academic year 2020 - 2021) in 200 schools across England.

## What is Children's University?

Children's University is a charity that works in partnership with schools to develop a love of learning in children. They do this by encouraging and celebrating participation in extra-curricular activities in and outside of school.

If selected to take part in the study's activities, your child's school will provide a range of activities within the school lunch hour and after school. We would also encourage parents to take their children to activities that are run by Children's University validated centres such as local libraries, sports clubs, museums, etc. There are hundreds of activities to choose from such as walking trails, reading challenges, cooking workshops, etc., there is a wide range of in person and online activity. Your child's school will be able to provide you with a list of where these activities are available.

You can find more information about Children's University here:

<https://childrensuniversity.co.uk/eef>

## Who is working on this research study?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is funding this research study. Children's University Trust and the local Children's Universities are running the programme. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is evaluating the programme and is responsible for collection and analysis of data.

## What is the research study?

NFER will use a type of research study called Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). In this RCT, participating schools will be **randomly** assigned to one of two groups. Half of the schools will take part in Children's University activities and will be known as the intervention group. The other half will not take part in Children's University activities and will be known as the control group.

Having these two groups will allow researchers to see the difference that Children's University can have on a child's skills.

## Why is this research study taking place?

This study will enable us to find out whether Children's University has an impact on a child's reading and maths skills, their motivation to learn and their confidence and self-belief.

The findings will be summarised as a report. No school, teacher or pupil will be named in any report arising from this work. The report will be shared with participating school leaders and will also be available freely on EEF website.

## What will happen to my child if they take part?

To run this study we will need to collect information about all pupils:

Your child's school will provide the following information about the current Year 4 pupils:

- Full name
- Date of birth

- Unique Pupil Number
- Year group
- Class name

We will collect the following information from the National Pupil Database (held by the Department of Education):

- Free school meals (FSM) eligibility
- Key Stage 1 maths and reading results (KS1, academic year 2018-19)
- Key Stage 2 maths and reading results (KS2, academic year 2022-23).

We will also ask your child to complete a questionnaire in September and again at the end of Year 6. This will give us information about their attitudes like motivation to learn, their confidence and self-belief etc.

Your child's participation in CU activities will also be tracked via the CU Online website. CU Online is a digital platform that's a fun, safe and secure online space for participants to record what they're doing. Children will be able to use this alongside their paper passport.

### What happens if my child wants to withdraw from the research study?

You may remove your child from the research study at any time.

To do this, you must complete the attached '**Parent/Carer form for withdrawal from data collection and sharing**' and return it to the school office.

If you wish for your child to take part in the study, you do not need to return the form.

### How will NFER use and protect my child's data?

All data collected during the research study will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016/679 and will be treated in the strictest confidence by NFER, Children's University Trust and the local Children's Universities. All personal data will be shared via an online secure data portal or via secure courier, and will only be used for the purposes of this research study. The research report will be published in 2024 and will be available freely on the EEF website ([www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk](http://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)). The findings may also be disseminated at educational research conferences and in academic or professional journals.

### No school, teacher or pupil will be named in any report arising from this work.

For more information on how NFER, Children's University Trust and local Children's Universities will collect, use and protect data, please read the **Privacy Notice** for the project, available at: [https://www.nfer.ac.uk/eecu\\_parents\\_privacy\\_notice](https://www.nfer.ac.uk/eecu_parents_privacy_notice)

### Is it safe for my child to join this study? (Covid-19)

Activities for this trial will start in January 2022, which is still some time away. Children's University Trust and local Children's Universities will work with your child's school to ensure that the school follows the most current government safety guidelines at the time of running these activities.

Participation in activities is voluntary (taking place during lunch times, after school and outside of school hours). Parents and children will have the opportunity to review activities and decide whether they are comfortable in taking part.

### Who can I contact for more information?



If you have any questions about this research and providing data, please do not hesitate to contact Priscilla Antwi at NFER on 01753 637429 or by email ([CUtrial@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:CUtrial@nfer.ac.uk)).