



“Culture changes...  
*children develop.*”

-Arnold Gesell

## GDO Study Newsletter

### GDO National Renorming Study

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL! Gesell Institute's national study is well underway, with normative and exploratory data being collected on the Gesell Developmental Observation (GDO) from schools across the nation. This important study will result in brand new, current norms for the GDO, a widely used and deeply



loved assessment tool among early childhood educators. This newsletter is to keep each site up to date on the progress of the study, provide interesting links, and give you a place to

make comments or pose questions as we go along! We hope that interested observers will want to also take part.

#### Who's Who on the GDO Study Team?

##### **Marcy Guddemi, PhD, MBA**

Marcy is Gesell Institute's Executive Director, and a widely recognized expert in early childhood education, as well as a proponent of the rights of the child and the importance of play in early learning. She is an accomplished author and early childhood educator, with extensive corporate experience in educational publishing and specifically early childhood assessment products.

##### **Crista Marchesseault, MAT, MA**

Crista is the Institute's Associate Director, focused on project management and program development, including public awareness initiatives and community-based collaborations such as the Parent-Teacher Connection Program in New Haven. Her varied background includes experience in both applied and

academic research, early childhood education, and literacy development, as well as work in public relations, web development, and professional editing.

##### **Andrea Sambrook, MA**

Andrea joined the team as Program Coordinator in June 2009, and brings to Gesell not only a dedication to applied child development, but a wealth of experience in community based research with parents and toddlers from low income neighborhoods. Andrea has extensive experience developing grassroots initiatives in school and community settings centered on issues of environmental health, safety, and wellness for children and families.

##### **Stefanie Foster, MS**

Stefanie has been working as a consultant for the Institute on a variety of projects over the last year, and most recently has been working hard to enter large volumes of incoming data for the study, also diligently checking dates and details. She is a trained School Psychologist and will be relocating soon to New York with her new husband. We will miss her!

##### **The GDO Volunteer Examiner Team in Connecticut:**



**Aleesha** is trained in clinical social work and mental health counseling, also experienced with early childhood classroom observation tools.

**Alexander** is a New Haven Kindergarten teacher with a MA of Science in Education.

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**Andrea** is an assistant teacher in a child development lab school who in the future will pursue graduate clinical work with children. She also trains horses in her free time.

**Eliza** is a recent graduate of Villanova with experience working in youth programs and domestic abuse counseling.

**Joe** is an artist, teacher, and Marcy's helpful husband.

**Philip** is an English university student who loves politics, soccer, and advocating for social justice policies. Philip collected lots of Pilot data, and will always remember the 4-year-old who asked him if he was James Bond...!

**Sue** is a former Gesell Institute clinician, presently a Special Education Expert at Darcy School in Connecticut.

**Victoria** is a public and home school teacher, artist, parent, and lifelong learner.

### **SITES CURRENTLY PARTICIPATING...with more being added each day!**

*Amberley Elementary, MI*  
*Appleby Elementary, NY*  
*Bolles School, FL*  
*Brookwood School, MA*  
*Canterbury School, FL*  
*da Vinci School, TX*  
*Dwight Pre-School, CT*  
*Early Childhood Learning Center, CT*  
*Elm Drive Elementary, NY*  
*Forsyth Country Day, NC*  
*Greenhill School, TX*  
*Heathwood Hall Episcopal School, SC*  
*Hill Central Music Academy, CT*  
*John Martinez School, CT*  
*Naugatuck Early Child Dev. Center, CT*  
*Naugatuck Valley Community College  
Child Center, CT*  
*Noah's Ark Pre-School, MI*  
*Ravenscroft School, NC*  
*St. Maria Goretti Preschool, AZ*  
*Truman Head Start, CT*  
*Upland Country Day, PA*  
*Westminster Academy, TN*  
*Zigler Head Start, CT*  
*Your School Name Here?, USA*

### **What's What for Study Participation**

Participating in the GDO Study consists of the full administration of the GDO along with some additional pilot items for children, as well as completion of a Teacher



Questionnaire and Parent/Guardian Questionnaire for each participating child. Children eligible to participate must be between 2.3 to 6.3 years of age with English as their primary language. As a **thank you**, we provide all GDO study forms FREE to each participating school, and remunerate schools \$10 per completed set of data (4 forms).

**GDO:** [30-40 min] Responses to each item on the assessment tool will be analyzed in aggregate to show us what typical responses are for children 2 ½ - 6 years of age. This information will in turn help GDO users in understanding each child's developmental readiness for other academic challenges.

**PILOT:** [10 min.] This short interview with the child includes new items developed to augment the classic GDO. It includes items that assess developmental numeracy, developmental literacy, and social emotional growth.

**TQ:** [5 min] Teacher's observations of child behavior in the classroom are a valuable complement to the information unveiled by the GDO. This new Teacher Questionnaire is intended to be used as another piece of the puzzle in understanding a child's development.

**PGQ** [10 min.]: Likewise, parent observations of a child's behavior at home (via the Parent/Guardian Questionnaire) contribute to a deeper understanding of the child's development in context. This tool is also intended to be used in tandem with the GDO and TQ. For the purposes of the study, this form is vitally important to return as it collects information such as ethnicity, maternal level of education, and a child's behavior in the home. Since we hope to approximate our sample's demographics to that of the US census, this information is vital to accurately understand the sample.

Community-based research is a rich and rewarding form of study. It allows us the privilege to measure a child's growth in his or her school and family contexts in a

personal way. We at Gesell Institute are grateful for the many hundreds of families already enrolled in the study, and for their willingness to support the continued development and use of the Gesell Developmental Observation. Likewise, teachers and other examiners play a core role in the data collection process by giving their time and attention to the administration of the GDO, as well as the administrative focus to transcribing, collecting, and packaging the materials for Gesell.



We understand the complexities of collecting data with children in “the field” and our GDO Study team is available to assist schools in participating to the fullest extent

possible. We acknowledge that some data may not be able to be collected at some sites due to circumstances beyond their control (children graduate, families move, etc.). However, the more complete a set of data is, and the closer the administration dates are to one another, the more we preserve the depth and integrity of the overall study.

There is no doubt that Gesell Institute will be proud to publish the final, peer-reviewed report with new norms, and have an opportunity to formally recognize each and every school that enabled us to achieve this important and timely distinction for the Institute, for the GDO, and for the field of early childhood education.

### Ready to Send in Your Data?

Dates on all data forms should be in YEAR MONTH DAY order. If either of these dates is missing on a form, or a child’s age is incorrectly calculated, that data may be disqualified from the study. If you have any questions before you send in your data, please don’t hesitate to call

Andrea at 1-800-369-7709 x 706. We are here to help!



### Data Update

Our goal for this national sample is over 1600 children, and more data is expected on an on-going basis. So far, 509 GDOs have been entered into our database and we eagerly await your completed forms. Don’t delay: be sure to send your data as soon as it is ready!

### Could your school be a good match for the study?

- ✓ Do you work with children between the ages 2.3 and 6.3 years of age?
- ✓ Do you have Gesell trained examiners (within the last five years) who screen children using ALL tasks on the GDO or who would be willing to administer all the tasks?
- ✓ Are you interested in administering our new Pilot items?
- ✓ Are you able to obtain completed forms about your students from teachers and parents?
- ✓ Is your school interested in receiving recognition for participation in a national study on child development—a highly prestigious award that can be used in promoting your school?



If **YES**, then please email Andrea Sambrook,

Program Coordinator at [andrea@gesellinstitute.org](mailto:andrea@gesellinstitute.org) or call 1-800-369-7709 x 706 to discuss a possible match!

## PSSTT...!

Hot off the presses: check out a new article by Marcy and Crista on the quandary of Kindergarten entry age, published last month in SEEN Magazine, available on our website at <http://www.gesellinstitute.org/announce.html>.



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