



Orchestrating Numeracy and the Executive – The ONE Project – REC R85139/RE003 Information for Parents / Guardians of Children in the year before entering Reception

Purpose of this document

This document is designed for parents of children who attend Early Years settings that are taking part in a study of “the ONE” (Orchestrating Numeracy and the Executive) - a programme consisting of nursery staff development and guided preschool play activities, which aims to support children’s numeracy skills.



What is The ONE Project?

The ONE is an Early Years programme involving guided play preschool activities to support the development of children’s numeracy and executive functions. Executive functions are a set of thinking skills such as focusing attention and thinking flexibly, that we now know are all essential to early years numeracy skills even before going to school. The ONE aims to improve numeracy most effectively by combining thinking and maths activities for children to play before they go to school.

The ONE was co-designed by a team of researchers from the University of Oxford, Sheffield, Ulster, collaborators in Australia and Canada, and with early years colleagues in UK preschools. The ONE consists of training educators to run 25 short and child-friendly games that support children’s numeracy and thinking skills for 12 weeks. The activities are embedded into preschool routines such as small group activities, outdoor play, and free play. The programme is delivered in an Early Years setting by the setting staff. Children will play three activities a week as part of a group, and these games will include key early maths skills including numbers, counting, ordering, patterns, and spatial awareness. The ONE was recently tested in a small-scale study that showed that educators and children liked the games and they also improved children’s maths, but we do not yet know if this will work on a large scale.

Who is involved in the current project and what are we trying to find out?

The current study involves a partnership between:

- The ONE team (staff at the Universities of Oxford and Sheffield) who are delivering the intervention;
- Researchers at RAND Europe (a not-for-profit research institute) who are responsible for the independent evaluation, along with their partners Qa Research who will assess children’s maths and thinking skills;
- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) as well as the Stronger Practice Hubs (SPH), which are providing the resources for the project.

Staff based at the University of Oxford and Sheffield University will train a small number of trainers, who will then provide the training to educators in each Early Years setting. Educators and children will take part in activities embedded in their weekly routines. The intervention activities will be carried out by setting staff, so children will not be interacting with researchers at this point of the study (although researchers might observe a lesson).

What will happen if my child takes part?

The study is being conducted to understand whether the staff training and activities offered by the ONE intervention have benefits for children's early numeracy and executive function. Your child would play games related to maths and executive functions, some of which will be conducted on a tablet. The games are designed to be fun, and child friendly, and children will never be unduly encouraged to take part if they do not want to. Their performance will be assessed by trained members of Qa research. This will occur once at the start of the study and another time after the study, in a quiet space within the preschool classroom. Each assessment will take approximately 30 minutes.

RAND Europe plans to compare the numeracy and executive functions of pupils in settings receiving The ONE for 12 weeks from January 2024 compared to those in similar settings who will receive The ONE later in 2024/2025. To do this the study needs the following information:

- Personal data about your child collected from the setting: name, date of birth, setting postcode, number of hours attendance and attendance patterns (i.e., which days and times your child attends nursery), eligibility for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), and whether your child speaks English as an additional language. This will help us work out who the intervention works best for.
- Information on your child's numeracy and executive function skills:
 - All assessors will hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and will never be alone with your child.
 - All visits by assessors will be in the classroom either during class time or break time and children will be asked whether they wish to take part in these assessments.
- The ONE team would like to contact the school welcoming your child in September 2024 and you, to collect further data that will help them find out if the programme has had benefits for children when they are in primary school.

These data will help us evaluate the intervention in the immediate and longer-term. You can find out more about how we will collect, use and safely store your child's data from the accompanying privacy notice.

What happens to the results of the study?

The research may be published in academic publications and websites, in addition to the mandatory report required by the EEF, who are funding this study. Part of this work will be written up as a student's doctoral thesis. It will be deposited both in print and online in the Oxford University Research Archive, where it will be openly accessible. We will never include any personal information in these reports. All data for each child will be kept strictly confidential and only used for research and evaluation purposes. Results from your child will be combined with the results from other children for statistical evaluation and will not be used in any way that would identify your child. At no time will your child's identity or individual data be reported. The team will not use your child's name or the name of the school in any report arising from the research nor provide information that identifies your child to anyone outside the study team.

Does my child need to take part?

No. It is voluntary to take part in the numeracy and executive functions games we use to assess outcomes. If you or your child prefers that they do not take part, please complete the attached [opt-out form](#). If your child has not yet completed the games, this means that they will not do so. If your child has already completed the games, this will mean that the RAND Europe team and The ONE team delete their data and will not use them in the evaluation or follow-up. Before the numeracy and executive functions games data are collected, a trained assessor from Qa Research will explain the project to your child and that they only have to do the games if they want to.

While the games are designed to be fun, and child friendly, if your child does not want to take part, they do not have to. There are no disadvantages or risks to your child from taking part. The research may help future children and preschool practitioners in the future.

What are the EEF archive and the Stronger Practice Hubs?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is a Foundation established by the Department of Education to evaluate what interventions work across settings in England. The EEF is funding the evaluation of The ONE. As part of their work, the EEF hold a data archive. At the end of the evaluation, they will become 'controllers' of the data obtained throughout the project. Data will be securely transferred into their archive. You can find more information about the EEF archive on the EEF's [website](#). Data collected as part of all EEF evaluations are archived for research purposes. The EEF are the data controller for the data archive which is managed by FFT Education as a data processor working on EEF's behalf. At the end of the evaluation, RAND Europe will submit the data from the evaluation (child assessment scores and some personal data of children, like full names, dates of birth, Unique Pupil Numbers) directly to FFT through a secure portal.

In the future, researchers might link the data deposited in the EEF's data archive to information held in the Department for Education's (DfE) National Pupil Database and other datasets. To do so, FFT Education would use the direct identifiers of children (like names, dates of birth) to request Pupil Matching References (PMR) from the DfE, who would transfer PMRs directly to the Office for National Statistics' Secure Research Space (SRS). FFT Education would use the SRS to match the data from the evaluation (i.e., child assessment scores) with the PMRs. This process ensures that future researchers will be able to link data from the evaluation to the National Pupil Database and other datasets without accessing direct identifiers of the children. This means that no one who looks at the information in the EEF archive will eventually know who it related to. In the future, people can ask to use the EEF archive to carry out more studies and find out if this project has helped children. Only researchers who are approved by the EEF will be able to look at the archive.

The Stronger Practice Hubs support the project by contacting settings about The ONE, and by covering costs for the intervention so that your nursery receives the intervention at no cost.

In addition, after RAND Europe publish the report evaluating the immediate benefits of The ONE, the University of Oxford, on behalf of The ONE team, will also become 'controllers' of the data, to understand if there are long-term benefits of the intervention in primary school. They will hold the data, with the highest level of security in encrypted and password protected storage, with access to personal data restricted to the ONE Team Oxford University staff only. Data will be held until September 2028 to allow for doctoral thesis completion. This time duration is dependent on the infrequent occasions in which reviewers or readers of publications ask researchers to re-analyse data in a different way.

What should I do next?

It is the school's decision to deliver the ONE intervention, but it is your decision whether we can include your child in this research. Participation is entirely voluntary. Your decision will not adversely affect your child's access to services or programmes at your child's school outside the research. You are free to decline or stop your child's participation at any time.

If you **do not** wish your child to take part in this study, please fill in the [opt-out form](#) and return it to your child's nursery as soon as possible. If you are happy for your child to take part, there is no form to sign. You are free to withdraw your child at any time, without penalty and without giving a reason, by notifying your child's nursery or the University of Oxford researchers via our [withdrawal form](#).

Any questions?

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact: **Principal Investigator:** Professor Gaia Scerif, University of Oxford; Tel: 01865 271403; Email: gaia.scerif@psy.ox.ac.uk or theONE@psy.ox.ac.uk. For further information, please see the project website [here](#).

If you wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible: Email: ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk ; Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Boundary Brook House, Churchill Drive, OX3 7GB.

Please keep this information sheet for your record.