



# Factors influencing families' decision to preserve children's artwork

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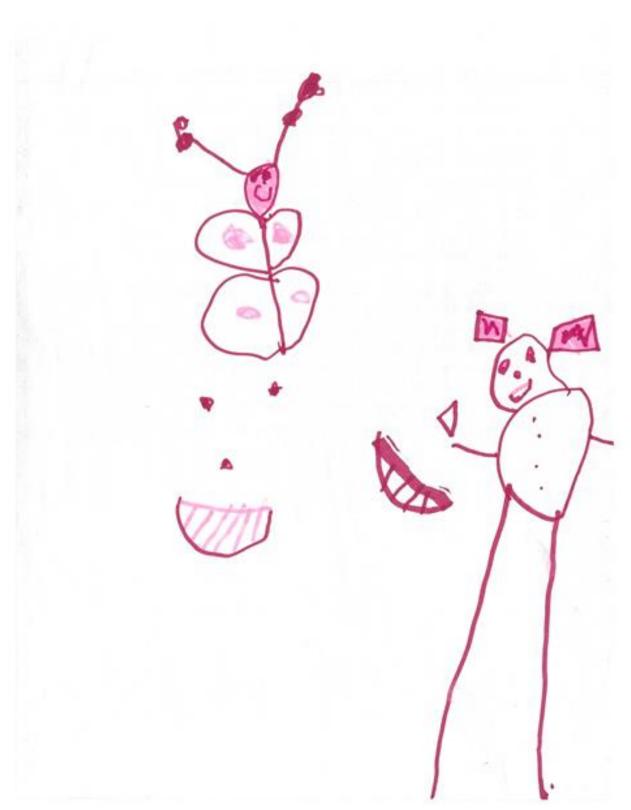
Children's Design International Collection

In

September 2024

Bv

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Artwork from the CDIC collection (c2004)

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# **Executive Summary**

Children's artwork holds untapped potential for understanding social, cultural, and developmental aspects of childhood, yet it remains undervalued compared to adult-created art. This study aimed to identify motivations and barriers influencing the preservation of children's artwork and contributions to the Children's Design International Collection (CDIC) archive. Understanding these factors is crucial for the CDIC to increase archive submissions, thereby enhancing its ability to educate the public on the significance of children's art and preserve it for future generations.

We conducted semi-structured interviews and an online survey targeting parents, guardians, and grandparents to identify the motivations and barriers to both preserving children's art and submitting it to the CDIC archive. Our findings reveal that emotional connection, tracking artistic progress, and aesthetic value are key motivators for preserving children's art. The main barriers include lack of space and time constraints. For contributing to the CDIC archive, the opportunity to share and celebrate children's art broadly was the primary motivator, while reluctance to part with originals and lack of awareness about the CDIC were significant barriers. A child's desire to contribute to the CDIC archive also had in impact on whether a parent would decide to contribute. Offering an incentive of some type was also reported as a potential motivator for submitting to the archive.

While our sample may have been biased towards those with an interest in art, the mixed-method approach provided detailed insights on both emotional and practical factors that play into decisions about preserving and sharing children's artwork. To increase archive submissions, we recommend that the CDIC focus on raising public awareness, establishing community partnerships, streamlining the submission process, addressing emotional attachments to artwork, implementing recognition programs, and providing space-saving solutions for families.

# Introduction

#### Overview

The Children's Design International Collection (CDIC) is an organization dedicated to the preservation of artwork created by children around the world. The CDIC's mission is to collect, classify, preserve, and exhibit children's artwork, with the broader goal of educating the public on the social, historical, educational, and psychological significance of children's artwork. They are primarily interested in child-created pieces of significance, not just those perceived as high-quality and created for the specific purpose of contribution to a collection.

The CDIC is hoping to expand their archive and the range of contributors. They reached out to the McMaster Research Shop requesting support in researching some of the hypothetical factors related to the decision to contribute (or not) to CDIC's collection. The findings are intended be used by the CDIC to increase the number of submissions to their archive.

## Report structure

The report findings are derived from interviews and an online survey conducted with parents, grandparents, and guardians. We sought to identify the factors that impact the decision to preserve or not preserve children's artwork. These factors are examined at two levels: 1) preservation of children's artwork within families' homes; and 2) willingness to further preserve the artwork in an archive. By focusing on these factors, our research provides actionable insights that CDIC can use to develop strategies to increase the number of submissions to their collection and expand their archive of children's artwork.

This report is structured as follows:

- **Methods and Limitations:** This section describes the data collection methods and any limitations encountered during the research.
- **Findings**: This section presents the key findings from the interviews and online survey.
- **Discussion:** This section expands on and discusses the implications of the findings.
- **Recommendations:** This section provides suggestions for increasing the number of submissions to the CDIC archive.
- Conclusion: This section summarizes the key findings and their significance.

# **Methods and Limitations**

To answer our research question, we first used semi-structured interviews to generate lists of hypothetical factors that might influence someone to contribute, or not, to the CDIC collection. We then used this information to develop a survey that tested the prevalence of these factors among a convenience sample. Each of these methods is explained in more detail below.

#### Phase 1: Semi-Structured Interviews

In order to design a useful survey, the researchers must possess a baseline level of knowledge of the phenomenon they're researching—in this case, we felt we needed to have a sense of the potential factors that could influence the behaviour of parents submitting children's artwork to an archive. To gauge some of these potential influences, we first conducted semi-structured virtual interviews with a small sample of Canadian parents, grandparents, and guardians. The CDIC helped recruit participants via their blog, spring newsletter, and social media accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and X). Recruitment flyers were posted at the following schools, childcare centres, community centres, libraries, and cafés: École Secondaire Georges-P.-Vanier (Hamilton, ON), University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre (Guelph, ON), Forest Heights Community Centre (Kitchener, ON), Stanley Park Community Centre (Kitchener, ON), Victoria Hills Community Centre (Kitchener, ON), Breithaupt Centre (Kitchener, ON), Forest Heights Library (Kitchener, ON), Second Cup (Hamilton, ON), William's Fresh Café (Hamilton, ON), Democracy on Locke (Hamilton, ON), and Red Brick Café (Guelph, ON). Interested individuals completed a brief screening survey to confirm their eligibility and willingness to participate in a virtual interview. All participants received a \$25 CAD gift card to their choice of Walmart, Cineplex, or Amazon.ca. See Appendix 1 for the interview questions we used.

We transcribed interview recordings verbatim. We reviewed the transcripts to ensure accuracy and removed any identifiable information. This process involved correcting any transcription errors and standardizing language for consistency. We analyzed the resulting transcripts and organized our findings according to the following themes that were pre-determined based on the purpose of this project: 1) Motivating Factors for Saving Artwork; 2) Barriers to Saving Artwork; 3) Motivating Factors for Contributing to the CDIC; and 4) Barriers to Contributing to the CDIC. Themes 1 and 2 include factors affecting private preservation (i.e., keeping children's artwork privately within the family). Themes 3 and 4 include factors affecting the decision to contribute to the CDIC archive.

# Phase 2: Online Survey

In the second phase, we deployed an online survey. See Appendix 2 for the survey questions we used. We designed the survey based on findings from the Phase 1 interviews. Our survey questions included both close-ended and open-ended response

options to ensure the responses received were relevant and comprehensive. Parents, grandparents, and guardians that completed the survey were asked about their thoughts on children's art, preserving their children's art, methods of preservation, the determinants of preserving or not preserving children's art, and factors impacting their decision to contribute to the CDIC archive. We also assessed affinity for art, as we theorized this would be correlated with the decision to both preserve within the household and contribute to an archive. To assess art affinity, the survey asked participants about whether they had experiences with the visual arts at various levels of education (i.e., elementary school, high school, university/college undergraduate and graduate programs), in a work setting (i.e., creating or teaching art), creating visual arts in their free time, and whether they would describe themself as having a strong appreciation for the visual arts. We created an index of low, medium, and high art affinity based on their responses (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1.** Art affinity index statements and responses.

Statement	Low Affinity	Medium Affinity	High Affinity	
		Response		
I have studied visual arts in school as a young child (e.g., elementary or primary school).	No			
I have studied visual arts at the high school level (e.g., secondary school).	No	Yes to only one of these statements		
I have studied visual arts beyond the high school level (e.g., college or university).	No		Yes to at least 2 of these statements	
I have studied visual arts at the post-graduate level (e.g., beyond my undergraduate or first degree).	No			
I create or have created visual arts as my main role in a current or past job.	No			
I teach or have taught visual arts as part of a current or past job.	No			
I regularly make art in my free time	No			
I would describe myself as someone with a strong appreciation for the visual arts	Yes or No	Yes	Yes	

Similar to Phase 1, the data sources for the survey were parents, grandparents, or guardians, but they did not need to live in Canada. CDIC helped recruit participants via their blog, summer newsletter, and social media accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and X). McMaster's Office of Community Engagement also recruited for the survey through their Instagram account. Recruitment flyers were posted at the following schools, childcare centres, community centres, libraries, and cafés: École Secondaire Georges-P.-Vanier (Hamilton, ON), University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre (Guelph, ON), Forest Heights Community Centre (Kitchener, ON), Stanley Park Community Centre (Kitchener, ON), Victoria Hills Community Centre (Kitchener, ON), Breithaupt Centre (Kitchener, ON), Forest Heights Library (Kitchener, ON), Second Cup (Hamilton, ON), William's Fresh Café (Hamilton, ON), Democracy on Locke (Hamilton, ON), and Red Brick Café (Guelph, ON). All participants had the option to be entered in a draw to win 1 of 10 \$50 CAD gift card to their choice of Walmart, Cineplex, or Amazon.ca.

We analyzed the survey results differently depending on the type of data (i.e., close-ended vs. open text boxes). We counted the number and percentage of responses for all response categories to close-ended questions. We reclassified Likert scale questions (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree) into a two-point scale (strongly disagree/disagree and agree/strongly agree). For survey questions with an open text box, we reviewed each entry and either assigned it to the most appropriate existing categorical response option (if it obviously fit); or retained it as an open text entry (if it did not obviously fit in an existing option) and reported it descriptively.

In Question 10 of the survey, we presented options to gauge the respondents' art affinity (i.e., their level of interest in art and how it fits into their life). Using their responses, we created an index of low, medium, and high art affinity. We performed exploratory analyses to identify factors that correlated with participants being "very interested" in contributing to the CDIC archive, including having parents who saved their artwork and having a high art affinity. Chi-square analyses were conducted, as this test is appropriate when examining the association between two categorical variables. A logistic regression was deemed inappropriate due to the relatively small sample size and multicollinearity of the independent variables.

#### Limitations

There are important limitations that need to be considered when interpreting our findings. Regarding the interviews, language barriers caused researchers to miss some insights, which were only discovered during transcription. If we had identified these ideas during the interviews, we could have asked participants to elaborate. Occasionally, interview participants also misunderstood questions, affecting the clarity and depth of their responses. Most participants kept their cameras off during interviews, making it impossible for researchers to observe body language and non-verbal cues. Technical issues, including unstable internet connections, affected the flow of conversation, leading to lost trains of thought and the need to revisit topics to ensure the questions were adequately answered. Despite these setbacks, the information gathered

from the interviews provided the research team with a range of insights useful in developing our survey.

A second major limitation is with regards to our survey sample. We recruited participants for both the interview and survey phases through the CDIC blog and newsletters, social media, and physical flyers at community centres and libraries in southwestern Ontario. The survey did not track from where the participants were recruited (e.g., CDIC newsletter vs. social media posts vs. physical posters). It is quite possible that the majority of participants came from CDIC's distribution channels, and as such were likely to be familiar with their work/engaged in the arts. As such, this limits the generalizability of our findings because they may not reflect the perspectives of the broader population. Another limitation is that both the interviews and survey required participants to have an internet connection and possess the technical skills to either participate in a video call or complete an online survey. As a result, the perspectives and opinions of those without an internet connection or these technical skills were not captured.

# **Findings**

# Participant Demographics

In total, 113 participants completed the online survey. The survey asked participants to provide responses to several demographic questions, including gender, age, ethnicity, and country of residence (Table 2). Most survey participants were women (74%), in the 35 to 44 age group (59%), identified as European/White (49%), and resided in Canada (96%). Of the respondents living in Canada, 28% lived in Ontario and 16% lived in British Columbia. The majority of survey participants had two children (46%) and none had more than three children.

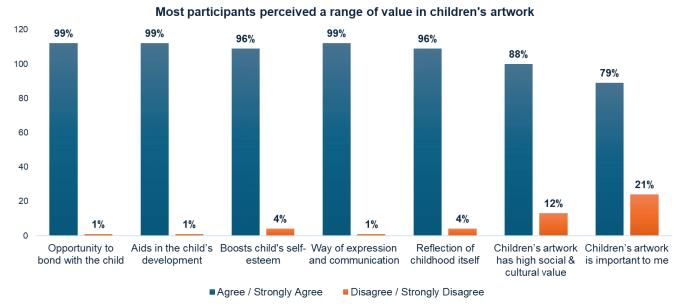
**Table 2.** Demographic information of survey participants.

Response	Count (%)
Gender	
Male	40 (35)
Female	84 (74)
Non-binary	0 (0)
Age	
18 to 24	5 (4)
25 to 34	25 (22)
35 to 44	67 (59)
45 to 54	13 (12)
55 to 64	3 (3)
Ethnicity	
African/Black (including African-American, African-Canadian, Caribbean)	19 (17)
East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)	4 (4)

European/White Indo-Caribbean, Indo-African, Indo-Fijian, West-Indian Latin, South or Central American Polynesian (e.g., Samoans, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Island Maori, Tahitian Maaohi, Hawaiian Ma'oli, Marquesan, New Zealand Maori) South Asian (e.g., Afghan, Nepali, Tamil, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Sri Lankan, Punjabi) Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian, Malaysian, Filipino/a, Laotian, Signaporean, Indonesian) West Asian (e.g., Iraqi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Saudi, Syrian, Yemeni, Armenian, Iranian, Israeli, Turkish)	55 (49) 2 (2) 7 (6) 1 (1) 6 (5) 1 (1) 1 (1)
Indigenous within Canada (e.g., First Nation, Métis, Inuit)  Country of Residence	33 (29)
Australia Canada France United States of America	1 (1) 108 (96) 1 (1) 3 (3)
Province or Territory in Canada Alberta British Columbia Manitoba New Brunswick Newfoundland and Labrador Northwest Territories Nova Scotia Nunavut Ontario Prince Edward Island Quebec Saskatchewan Yukon Number of Children	9 (8) 18 (16) 4 (4) 6 (5) 8 (7) 3 (3) 10 (9) 1 (1) 32 (28) 4 (4) 6 (5) 6 (5) 1 (1)
Number of Children  1 2 3 4 5+	47 (42) 52 (46) 14 (12) 0 (0) 0 (0)

# Importance of Children's Artwork

The survey asked participants to rate their level of agreement with statements about children's artwork. The results are summarized in Figure 1. Across all statements, it is clear that the majority of survey respondents (at least 79%) highly value children's art.



**Figure 1.** Agreement with statements about children's artwork.

## Preserving Artwork at Home

Ninety (80%) of the survey participants reported that their parents saved their artwork when they were children. Twelve (11%) reported that their parents did not save their artwork as children. Nine (8%) reported that they did not know if their parents saved their artwork as children. Finally, two participants (2%) reported that they did not make art as a child.

The survey asked about the participants' practice of keeping their children's artwork. 44 (39%) kept all or most and 57 (50%) kept a lot but not most of their children's artwork. Nine (8%) kept very little of their children's artwork, and three (3%) didn't keep any of their children's artwork.

The survey asked participants about the methods used to save their children's artwork (Figure 2). Seventy-two participants (65%) stored images of the artwork locally on their devices (e.g., smartphone), 62 (56%) physically stored the artwork in their home, 52 (47%) stored images of the artwork using a cloud storage service (e.g., Google Drive), and 41 (37%) stored images of the artwork on social media.

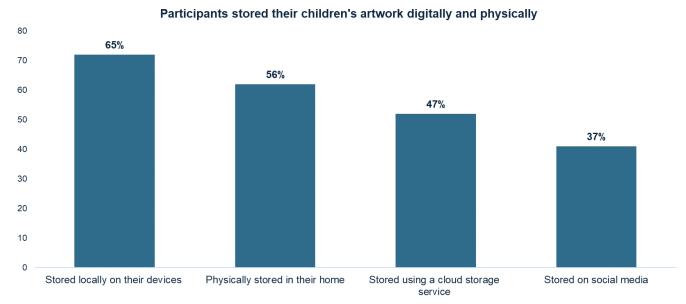
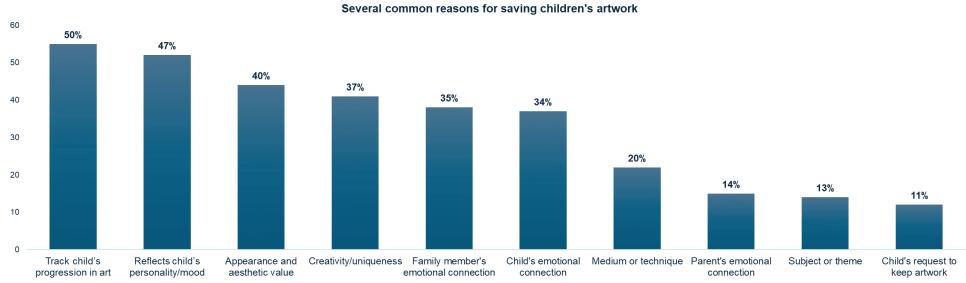


Figure 2. Methods of saving children's artwork.

Motivations for Preserving Artwork at Home

The survey asked the 110 participants who saved at least some of their children's artwork to rank their top 3 reasons for keeping the artwork from a list of 10 possible options. Figure 3 illustrates the relative importance of each reason by ranking them according to the proportion of participants who identified it as one of their top three reasons. From this, we discerned three groups of major motivators for keeping artwork: 1) Documentation of their child's development (including tracking their artistic development as well as their personal/emotional development), 2) High artistic value of the artwork (including both appearance and creativity), and 3) Family's emotional connection to the artwork.

The most common reason for preserving children's artwork, according to 50% of survey respondents, was to track the child's progress in art. Participant 20 shared this sentiment in their interview, explaining, "I saved my son's artwork to see how far he has come, to see what he has done, what he has learned on the journey." Another common motivator, chosen by 47% of respondents, was that the artwork reflected their child's personality or mood. Participant 20 expressed during their interview that children's artwork reflects "what they are and who they are at that moment in time," showing that parents often see artwork as a snapshot of their child's identity. The aesthetic value of the artwork motivated 40% of respondents to keep it. Creativity and uniqueness were also important, with 37% of respondents valuing these qualities. Additionally, family members' emotional connection to the artwork was a motivator for 35% of respondents. Participant 20 emphasized during their interview that appreciating their children's artwork was a way of showing appreciation for their children themselves.



**Figure 3.** Reasons selected as one of the top 3 reasons that participants kept their children's artwork, in order of most frequent to least frequent.

#### Barriers to Preserving Artwork at Home

The survey asked the respondents that saved their children's artwork about barriers to keeping their children's artwork (Figure 4). Sixty-nine participants (63%) cited being too busy with other commitments (e.g., work), 68 (62%) cited lack of space, 30 (27%) cited family members preferring to discard the artwork, 18 (16%) cited their culture and/or family not valuing children's artwork, and eight (7%) cited their child not wanting their artwork saved.

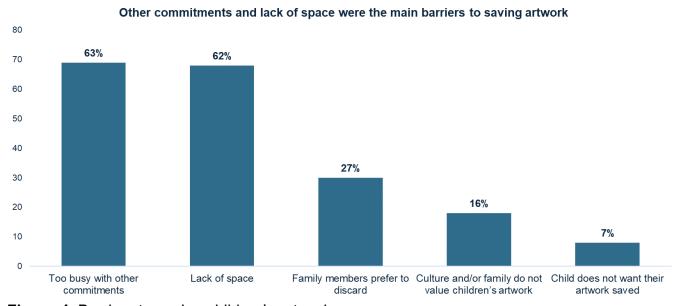


Figure 4. Barriers to saving children's artwork.

The three participants that did not keep their children's artwork were asked to select and specify their reasons for not doing so. Two participants cited being too busy with other commitments (e.g., work), two cited their culture and/or family not valuing children's artwork, one cited lack of space, and one cited their child not wanting their artwork saved. Additionally, one participant mentioned that their child was a toddler, and their artwork was on scrap paper and chalk boards that were recycled and erased.

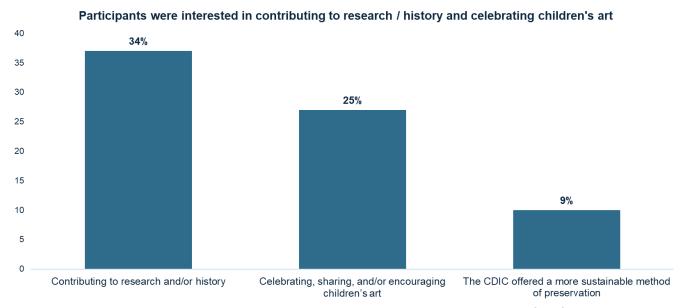
## Submitting Artwork to the CDIC Archive

The survey asked the participants to rate their level of interest in contributing to the CDIC archive. Fifty-four participants (48%) were very interested, and 54 (48%) were somewhat interested. Three participants (3%) were not very interested, and two (2%) were not interested at all in contributing to the CDIC archive.

# Motivations for Submitting Artwork to the CDIC

The survey asked those who were very interested or somewhat interested to explain why they had an interest in contributing to the archive (Figure 5). Thirty-seven (34%) cited contributing to research and/or history and 27 (25%) cited celebrating, sharing,

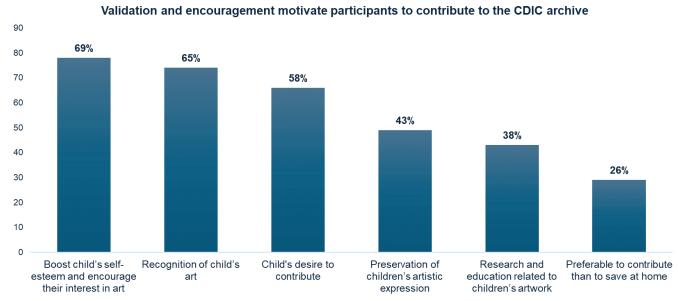
and/or encouraging children's art as reasons for their interest in contributing to the CDIC. A smaller proportion of participants were interested in submitting their children's artwork because the CDIC offered a more sustainable method of preservation (N=10, 9%). There were other miscellaneous responses, including the desire to capture sentimental moments and track their children's progress.



**Figure 5.** Reasons why participants were interested in contributing to the CDIC archive.

Building from the broader question about why participants were interested in contributing to the archive, the survey asked the participants to rank six factors that would motivate them to submit their child's artwork to the CDIC archive. The factors selected most frequently as one of the top 3 factors are summarized in Figure 6. The top three factors all revolve around external validation and encouragement around their child's artwork, i.e. the positive impact that sharing the artwork via the archive can have on the child's confidence, motivation, and sense of accomplishment.

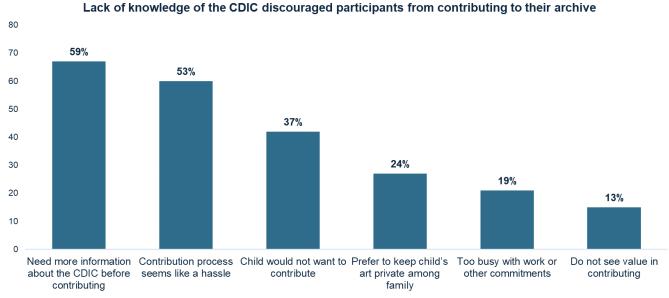
The main motivator for contributing to the CDIC was the potential to boost children's self-esteem and encourage their interest in art, chosen by 69% of respondents. Participant 1 noted in their interview that "just knowing that there are people out there who admire their creations is a big deal" for children, reflecting the positive impact of external recognition. Recognition of the child's artwork was also important for 65% of respondents. Participant 13 mentioned during their interview that sharing children's artwork with society would "showcase it, and others can enjoy it," adding a broader societal value to the contribution. Furthermore, 58% of respondents said that their child's desire to contribute would encourage them to submit artwork to the CDIC. The idea of preserving children's artistic expression was another motivator for 43% of respondents.



**Figure 6.** Factors selected as one of the top 3 factors that would motivate participants to submit their children's artwork to the CDIC archive, in order of most frequent to least frequent.

Barriers to Submitting Artwork to the CDIC

The survey asked participants about barriers or factors that would discourage them from submitting their children's artwork to the CDIC archive. The barriers selected most frequently are summarized in Figure 7.



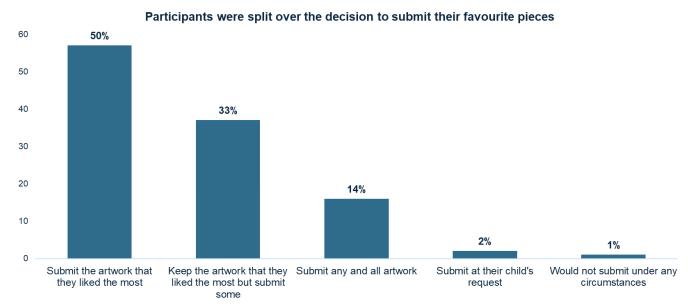
**Figure 7.** Barriers to contributing their children's artwork to the CDIC archive, in order of most frequent to least frequent.

A lack of information about the CDIC was the top barrier, with 59% of respondents needing more details before committing to a submission. In addition, 53% felt that the submission process seemed like a hassle. Some families (37%) believed their children would not want to contribute, and 24% of respondents preferred to keep the artwork private within the family. The latter barrier was mentioned by several participants that were interviewed, including Participant 19, who stated, "I'll definitely not submit something I will regret submitting," expressing hesitancy to contribute precious pieces. Finally, 19% of respondents said they were too busy to contribute, and 13% did not see the value in contributing.

The five participants who said they were not very interested or not interested at all in contributing to the archive were asked to explain their low level of interest. Their responses largely reflected the barriers mentioned above. Three cited having a lack of time, one cited the contribution as an additional task to do, and the final participant cited uncertainty about how the CDIC will use, display, or protect the submitted artwork.

#### Other Considerations for Submitting Artwork to the CDIC

The survey asked participants about the conditions under which they would submit their children's artwork to the CDIC archive (Figure 8). Fifty-seven participants (50%) would only submit the art they liked the most. Thirty-seven (33%) would keep the artwork they liked the most but would still submit some artwork to the archive. Sixteen (14%) would submit any and all of their children's artwork to the archive. Two (2%) would submit to the archive if their child wanted them to do so. One (1%) would not submit to the archive under any circumstances.



**Figure 8.** Conditions under which participants would submit their children's artwork to the CDIC archive.

The survey asked additional questions to understand other potential motivations or barriers surrounding the decision to submit to the CDIC archive. Of the 113 participants, 108 (96%) agreed that they would contribute to the archive if the CDIC were to pick up the artwork, 107 (95%) agreed that they would contribute if the artwork were used for research purposes, and 106 (94%) agreed that they would contribute if it led to more exposure to their child's art. The survey also asked 62 participants who had at least one child under 18 years of age if they would wait until the child reached the age of 18 years to contribute to the archive. Of these 62 participants, 58 (94%) agreed they would wait.

The survey asked about potential incentives to increase their likelihood of submitting to the CDIC archive. Ninety-three participants (82%) responded that crediting the child as the artist would increase their likelihood of submitting. Sixty-nine (61%) responded that receiving art supplies or a prize in return would increase their likelihood of submitting. Four (4%) did not specify any incentive that would increase their likelihood of submitting. Two (2%) suggested money or gift cards as incentives, and another two (2%) suggested certificates that are issued to the children to recognize the submission.

The impact of parents saving artwork and art affinity on preservation

We completed explorative chi-square analyses to identify factors that correlated with participants preserving artwork within the household and being very interested in contributing to the CDIC archive. We theorized that the art affinity of participants (i.e., their level of interest in art and how it fits into their life) would be correlated with the decision to both preserve within the household and contribute to the archive. In our sample, 83 participants (73%) had a high art affinity, 8 (7%) had a medium art affinity, and 22 (19%) had a low art affinity. Participants whose parents saved their artwork were more likely to preserve their own children's artwork within the household,  $\chi^2$  (1, N=113) = 12.06, p = 0.001. There was no association between participants having a high art affinity and preserving within the household,  $\chi^2$  (1, N=113) = 2.54, p = 0.111. Participants whose parents saved their artwork were more likely to be very interested in contributing to the CDIC archive,  $\chi^2$  (1, N=113) = 5.45, p = 0.02. Participants with a high art affinity were also more likely to be very interested in contributing to the CDIC archive,  $\chi^2$  (1, N=113) = 5.18, p = 0.02.

# Key takeaways

Results from our survey reveal that participants highly value children's artwork, recognizing its importance for child development, self-expression, and cultural significance. The main motivations for preserving children's artwork within the home are:

- Tracking the child's artistic and personal development
- Appreciating the artwork's aesthetic value, and
- Maintaining emotional connections to the pieces.

By far, the biggest barriers to preserving artwork in the home were a lack of space to physically store the artwork and time constraints.

Regarding contributing to the CDIC archive, the main motivating factors were:

- The opportunity to share and celebrate the artwork with a broader audience,
- The child desires to contribute to the archive, and
- Incentives can be provided, including crediting the child as the artist and/or providing the contributors with art supplies, gift cards, or money.

Factors that discouraged participants from contributing to the archive included:

- A lack of knowledge about the CDIC and its mission,
- Perceived logistical challenges with the artwork submission process, and
- A reluctance within the family to part with the original artwork.

Notably, participants whose parents saved their childhood artwork and those with high art affinity were more likely to be very interested in contributing to the CDIC archive. This insight suggests that cultivating a culture of art appreciation could have long-term benefits for archive contributions, and that targeting this demographic would likely be fruitful in building a baseline collection.

# Recommendations

The research team has developed a set of recommendations for the CDIC to leverage motivating factors and address barriers identified in the survey. We anticipate a combination of strategies could be useful in boosting overall contributions to the archive.

#### 1. Enhance Public Awareness and Education

To address the lack of awareness about CDIC and its mission, we recommend developing a comprehensive marketing campaign. This campaign should not only raise awareness but also educate the public on the value of preserving children's art for research, cultural, and historical purposes. When onboarding to this project, we were particularly enamoured by Leo's conviction around the emotional, intellectual, and cultural value of artwork and his ability to articulate the organization's mission and vision – we think this should be a major asset and opportunity for the CDIC to gain traction with broader audiences and invite buy-in.

The CDIC should tailor messages to both high art affinity and low art affinity audiences to broaden its reach and appeal. For high-affinity individuals, emphasize the cultural and historical significance of contributions. For all audiences, especially those with lower art affinity, emphasize the benefits for their child, any offered incentives, and the ease of contribution.

#### 2. Streamline the Submission Process

Given that the submission process was identified as a significant barrier, simplifying the process is crucial. We recommend developing a user-friendly online submission process that allows for quick digital uploads of artwork as an alternative to providing

physical copies. Though this can currently be accomplished via the website, consider creating a mobile app for easy photo capture and submission. Provide clear, step-by-step instructions to guide contributors through the process. By making submission more convenient, the CDIC can overcome the perceived hassle that currently discourages potential contributors.

#### 3. Address Emotional Attachment to Artwork

Recognizing the reluctance to part with original artwork, we suggest implementing strategies to ease this emotional barrier. Offer a "digital return" option where contributors receive high-quality digital copies of submitted artwork. Additionally, consider a "temporary loan" program for particularly cherished pieces, allowing families to reclaim physical copies of artwork after they've been digitized. These options can help alleviate the sense of loss associated with donating original pieces.

## 4. Leverage Community Partnerships

To increase submissions and reach a wider audience, we recommend collaborating with schools, daycare centers, libraries, and community art programs:

- Meet with school representatives, hold assemblies, and provide other information resources in schools and childcare centres to educate children, parents, and educators about the CDIC and its mission. Once these spaces have buy-in, codevelop a streamlined submission process to collect artwork.
- Develop partnerships with community art programs to collect physical and digital copies of artwork that children produce in these programs.
- Organize local "art drive" events in community spaces where the CDIC representatives can collect submissions in person, making the process more tangible and accessible for families.

These partnerships can facilitate ongoing submissions and provide a trusted intermediary between the CDIC and potential contributors.

# 5. Implement Incentives

Given the positive response to potential incentives, we suggest developing a recognition system for child artists, such as featured artist spotlights or certificates of contribution. The existing contribution form could be modified to allow contributors to indicate if they would like the child artist to be publicly credited for the piece. The CDIC could also consider creating a points-based reward system where multiple submissions can earn art supplies or other prizes.

Noting that tracking a child's development and artistic ability is a major motivator for parents saving their child's artwork, consider developing a "growing archive" program where families can submit artwork periodically as their child ages, creating a longitudinal record. The CDIC then sends families a digitized portfolio of their child's artwork (e.g., when they turn 18), showcasing their submissions over the years.

## 6. Enhance the Value Proposition

The CDIC could reinforce the value of contributing by regularly sharing research insights gained from the archive to demonstrate its scientific and cultural importance. Create virtual galleries or exhibitions to showcase submitted artwork and invite all contributors to attend as valued guests, increasing the "prestige" of contributions. This approach can help potential contributors see the broader impact of their donations and feel part of a larger cultural initiative.

## 7. Address Space Constraints

Recognizing that lack of space is a major barrier to preserving artwork at home, provide resources and tips for digitizing and storing artwork. Moreover, we suspect that many families will be enthusiastic about a guilt-free alternative to disposing of old artwork in the trash to free up space – consider offering a bulk submission service whereby numerous hard copies of art are picked up by a CDIC volunteer (or mailed in) and contributors receive digital copies in return. This approach addresses both the space issue at home and the reluctance to part with original pieces.

# Conclusion

This report aimed to identify the motivations and barriers surrounding the decision to preserve children's artwork and contribute to the CDIC archive. Our findings reveal a complex interplay of factors influencing these decisions.

The main motivators include tracking children's artistic progression, a general appreciation for art, the aesthetic value of the artwork, and emotional connections to the artwork. Interestingly, we uncovered a paradox where the strong emotional attachment to the artwork hindered them from contributing to the CDIC archive, as families seem to prefer to keep cherished pieces for themselves.

Contributing to the CDIC was viewed as an opportunity to share and celebrate the artwork with a broader audience. However, we identified several barriers, including the perceived hassle of the submission process and, most significantly, a lack of awareness of the CDIC and its mission.

Our research also revealed that participants whose parents preserved their childhood artwork and those with high art affinity were more likely to express interest in contributing to the CDIC archive. Based on our findings, we recommend multiple strategies to increase archive contributions:

- 1. Increasing public awareness of CDIC and its mission
- 2. Educating the public on the value of preserving children's art
- 3. Streamlining the submission process
- 4. Addressing emotional barriers to parting with artwork
- 5. Engaging key community partners to facilitate contributions
- 6. Implementing incentive programs

# 7. Enhancing the perceived value of contributing to the archive

By implementing these strategies, the CDIC can address the identified barriers, leverage key motivators, and create a more engaging and accessible archive contribution process. This approach should help increase both the quantity and diversity of submissions to the CDIC archive, furthering its mission of preserving and celebrating children's artwork for future generations.

# **Appendices**

# Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

- 1. For background, how many children do you have and what are their ages?
- 2. How does art fit into your life?
  - a. How would you describe its importance?
  - b. Clarification: For instance, some people view art as just a passing consideration (not a big part of their life). For others, art holds a lot of meaning. It may have emotional value, educational value, cultural value, or historical value. So for you, how important is art in your life?
- 3. We also would like to know your thoughts on children's artwork in general. What importance do you place on children's artwork?
  - a. Prompt: Do you view children's artwork in the same way as artwork made by adults?
    - i. In what ways are they different?
  - b. In spite of these differences, does children's artwork hold any significance for you? [Omit if you feel it is redundant to ask]
- 4. We would like to learn a bit about you, [participant's name], and your experiences making art as a child. Did you enjoy making art as a child?
  - a. Prompt: Could you share some memories you have of making art?
  - b. Where did you usually make art at home, school, elsewhere?
  - c. Did you tend to make art alone? With friends? With family members?
- 5. Now we would like to hear about your children. Do your children enjoy making art?
  - a. (if not at all or not really) Why do you think that is? What are their interests and hobbies?
  - b. (If yes) How often do they do it?
    - i. Where do they usually make art at home, school, elsewhere?
    - ii. Do they tend to make art alone? With friends? With family members?
- 6. So, we've asked some questions about making artwork. Now we want to shift gears to the topic of saving or preserving artwork. Have you ever saved your child's artwork?
  - a. (If not) Why not?
  - b. (If yes) What do you usually keep?
    - i. Why do you save it? What motivates you to save the artwork?
    - ii. For how long?
    - iii. Is preserving or sorting artwork something you ever discussed with your child?

- 7. Do you think people believe only certain types of children's art are worth keeping?
  - a. Why or why not?
  - b. Clarification: We are curious to know about how people choose which artwork to keep. Are there certain characteristics or features of the artwork that make them worth keeping? A certain topic or subject (e.g., nature, favourite TV show character, etc)? Overall appearance? Emotional meaning?
    - i. If they are unsure how to answer it about others, ask them to reflect on their own children's artwork. Which ones are they likely to keep?
    - ii. Prompt (if necessary): Imagine you can only save 1 of children's pieces of artwork. Which one would it be and why that one?
- 8. Do you know of others (i.e., other families) that keep their children's art?
  - a. What do you believe motivates them to do so?
  - b. If a participant saves their children's artwork, ask them to reflect both on their experiences and others that they have observed.
- 9. Continuing with the topic of preserving children's artwork, what barriers or challenges have you faced in preserving their children's art?
  - a. Prompt: What barriers or challenges may others face in saving their child's art?
- 10. As a reminder, we are a part of the McMaster Research Shop. We are conducting this interview on behalf of the Children's Design International Collection (CDIC for short). CDIC is an archive. It collects and showcases children's art for its cultural and historical value. Their collection can be viewed online and there are plans to develop a physical gallery in the future.
  - a. Were you aware of this registered charity before hearing about this interview?
  - b. Clarification: Prior to this interview, did hear of the CDIC?
- 11. Currently, to submit artwork to the collection, families fill out a form and mail their child's original artwork to CDIC's address in Hamilton.
  - a. What could motivate people to contribute to the collection?
    - i. What do you think the benefits are of contributing?
  - b. What would prevent people from contributing to the collection?
    - i. What are the disadvantages of contributing to the collection?
  - c. What do you think your children (or children generally) would think about their art being sent to an archive?
    - i. Would they be excited?
    - ii. Would they not show much of a reaction?
- 12. CDIC has noticed that those who typically contribute to the collection are families that highly value artwork (e.g., the parents have artistic backgrounds).

- a. The CDIC would like to receive contributions from families of all backgrounds, including those that don't highly value artwork. How do you think CDIC could attract a more diverse range of contributors?
  - i. Prompt: Are there any incentives or outreach ideas that you think would work in getting different families involved in contributing to the children's art collection?

# Appendix 2 – Survey Questions

# **Demographic Questions**

- 1. Which of the following genders do you most identify with? Check all that apply.
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Non-binary
  - d. Other (specify)
  - e. Prefer not to answer
- 2. What is your age group?
  - a. 18 to 24
  - b. 25 to 34
  - c. 35 to 44
  - d. 45 to 54
  - e. 55 to 64
  - f. 65 or over
  - g. Prefer not to answer

- 3. Which of the following best describes you? Check all that apply.
  - a. African/Black (including African-American, African-Canadian, Caribbean)
  - b. East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)
  - c. European/White
  - d. Indo-Caribbean, Indo-African, Indo-Fijian, West-Indian
  - e. Latin, South or Central American
  - f. Polynesian (e.g., Samoans, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Island Maori, Tahitian Maaohi, Hawaiian Ma'oli, Marquesan, New Zealand Maori)
  - g. South Asian (e.g., Afghan, Nepali, Tamil, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Sri Lankan, Punjabi)
  - h. Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian, Malaysian, Filipino/a, Laotian, Signaporean, Indonesian)
  - i. West Asian (e.g., Iraqi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Saudi, Syrian, Yemeni, Armenian, Iranian, Israeli, Turkish)
  - j. Indigenous within Canada (e.g., First Nation, Métis, Inuit)
  - k. Other (specify)
  - I. Prefer not to answer
- 4. Do you live in Canada?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Prefer not to answer
- 5. [If no to #4] Select the country that you live in [drop-down list with Other option]
- 6. [if yes to #4] Select the province or territory that you live in [drop-down list with Other option]
- 7. How many children do you have?
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4
  - e. 5 or more
  - f. Prefer not to answer
- 8. Are <u>all</u> your children currently 18 years or older?
  - a. Yes

b. No Note: If they select 'Yes', they will answer questions that are slightly rephrased to suit participants that have adult children.

- 9. [if b to #8] How old are your children? Check all that apply (for example, if you have one child who is 13 years old, and one child who is 20 years old, you would select options 'c' and 'd').
  - a. 0-4 years old
  - b. 5-11 years old
  - c. 12-17 years old
  - d. 18 years or older
  - e. Prefer not to answer

10. Select yes or no to the following:			
I have studied visual arts in school as a young child (e.g., elementary or	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
primary school).	answer		
I have studied visual arts at the high school level (e.g., secondary school).	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
	answer		
I have studied visual arts beyond the high school level (e.g., college or	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
university).	answer		
I have studied visual arts at the post-graduate level (e.g., beyond my	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
undergraduate or first degree).	answer		
I create or have created visual arts as my main role in a current or past job.	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	answer		
I teach or have taught visual arts as part of a current or past job.	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
	answer		
I regularly make art in my free time	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
- <b>3 3 3</b>	answer	-	
I would describe myself as someone with a strong appreciation for the visual	a. Yes	b. No	c. Prefer not to
arts	answer	2	3 3. 3 3
	a.150001		

#### **Main Questions**

- 1. Did your parents/guardians save your artwork when you were a child?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know (e.g., I never asked my parents, or they never told me)
  - d. I didn't make art as a child
- 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about children's artwork? A child creating artwork is an opportunity for family a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. members/friends to bond with the child Strongly Agree a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree Creating artwork aids in the child's development (e.g., d. sensorimotor functions, art skills/technique, problem Strongly Agree solving and critical thinking skills, creativity/imagination, etc) Keeping a child's artwork boosts their self-esteem b. Disagree a. Strongly Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree a. Strongly Disagree Children's artwork is a way of expression and b. Disagree c. Agree communication Strongly Agree Children's artwork is a reflection of childhood itself a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree Children's artwork has high social and cultural value a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree Children's artwork is not important to me a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
  - 3. Describe other reasons that children's artwork is important to you that was not captured above. [open-text]
  - 4. Select 'Option 1' below.
    - a. Option 100
    - b. Option 10
    - c. Option 1
    - d. Option 1000

Note: This is a data quality check question. We will flag respondents who select the incorrect response.

- 5. Do you keep your children's artwork?
  - a. I keep all of it (or most of it)
  - b. I keep a lot of it (but not most)
  - c. I keep very little of it (e.g., exclusively their "best" pieces)
  - d. I don't keep any of it
  - e. I don't know
- 6. [if a, b, or c to #5] Rank the <u>top 3</u> reasons for why you keep your child's art. The option listed at the top would be the most important reason. The option listed at the bottom would be the least important reason.
  - a. The artwork's overall appearance and aesthetic value
  - b. The artwork's subject or theme (e.g., nature)
  - c. The medium or technique used to create the artwork
  - d. The creativity/uniqueness of the artwork
  - e. The artwork reflects my child's personality/mood
  - f. I want to track my child's development/progression in art
  - g. My child has an emotional connection to the artwork (e.g., captures an important moment/memory, nostalgia)
  - h. I have an emotional connection to the artwork (e.g., captures an important moment/memory, nostalgia)
  - i. A family member (other than my child or me) has an emotional connection to the artwork

### For participants who only have children 18 years or older:

- 5. When your children were kids, did you save their artwork?
  - a. I kept all of it (or most of it)
  - b. I kept a lot of it (but not most)
  - c. I kept very little of it (e.g., exclusively their "best" pieces)
  - d. I haven't kept any of it
  - e. I don't know
- For participants who only have children 18 years or older:
  - 6. [if a, b, or c to #5] Rank the **top 3** reasons for why you kept your child's art. The option listed at the top would be the most important reason. The option listed at the bottom would be the least important reason..
    - a. The artwork's overall appearance and aesthetic value
    - b. The artwork's subject or theme (e.g., nature)
    - c. The medium or technique used to create the artwork
    - d. The creativity/uniqueness of the artwork
    - e. The artwork reflected my child's personality/mood
    - f. I wanted to track my child's development/progression in art
    - g. My child had an emotional connection to the artwork (e.g., captured an important moment/memory, nostalgia)
    - h. I had an emotional connection to the artwork (e.g., captured an important moment/memory, nostalgia)

/o a continuo on important	i A family manch on (other than may abild an are)
(e.g., captures an important moment/memory, nostalgia) j. My child requests that the artwork is saved	<ul> <li>i. A family member (other than my child or me) had an emotional connection to the artwork (e.g., captured an important moment/memory, nostalgia)</li> <li>j. My child requested that the artwork was saved</li> </ul>
7. [if a, b, or c to #5] Apart from those listed in the previous question, are there other reasons that you would keep your child's art? [open-text]	For participants who only have children 18 years or older: 7. [if a, b, or c to #5] Apart from those listed in the previous question, are there other reasons that you kept your child's art? [open-text]
8. [if a, b, or c to #5] How do you store your children's artwork? Check all that apply.  a. Stored locally on devices (e.g., phone, computer, external hard drive)  b. Cloud storage (e.g., Google Drive, OneDrive, Apple iCloud, Dropbox)  c. Social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Tumblr, etc)  d. Physical storage at home  e. Other (specify)	For participants who only have children 18 years or older:  8. [if a, b, or c to #5] How did you store your children's artwork? Check all that apply.  a. Stored locally on devices (e.g., phone, computer, external hard drive)  b. Cloud storage (e.g., Google Drive, OneDrive, Apple iCloud, Dropbox)  c. Social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Tumblr, etc)  d. Physical storage at home e. Other (specify)

- 9. [if d to #5] Why don't you keep your children's artwork? Check all that apply.
  - a. Lack of space/too much artwork to save
  - b. Too busy with work or other commitments to save my child's artwork
  - c. Other family members prefer that I discard my child's artwork
  - d. Culture/family do not value making and/or preserving children's artwork
  - e. My child does not want their artwork saved
  - f. Other (specify)
- 10. [if a, b, or c to #5] What challenges or barriers to keeping your children's artwork have you encountered? Check all that apply.
  - a. Lack of space/too much artwork to save
  - b. Too busy with work or other commitments to save my child's artwork
  - c. Other family members prefer that I discard my child's artwork
  - d. Culture/family do not value making and/or preserving children's artwork
  - e. My child does not want their artwork saved
  - f. Other (specify)

## For participants who only have children 18 years or older:

- 9. [if d to #5] Why didn't you keep your children's artwork? Check all that apply.
  - a. Lack of space/too much artwork to save
  - b. Too busy with work or other commitments to save my child's artwork
  - c. Other family members preferred that I discard my child's artwork
  - d. Culture/family did not value making and/or preserving children's artwork
  - e. My child did not want their artwork saved
  - f. Other (specify)

# For participants who only have children 18 years or older:

- 10. [if a, b, or c to #5] What challenges or barriers to keeping your children's artwork did you encounter? Check all that apply.
  - a. Lack of space/too much artwork to save
  - b. Too busy with work or other commitments to save my child's artwork
  - c. Other family members preferred that I discard my child's artwork
  - d. Culture/family did not value making and/or preserving children's artwork
  - e. My child did not want their artwork saved
  - f. Other (specify)

11. The Children's Design International Collection (CDIC) is a charity dedicated to collecting, preserving, and showcasing children's artwork for educational and research purposes. It aims to highlight the social, historical, educational, and psychological significance of children's creativity.

To contribute art, contributors need to fill out a form (online or via PDF), providing the child's first name, age at time of drawing, year of creation, and context/motivation. The contributor then mails the image to CDIC in Hamilton, Ontario. CDIC then digitizes the item, where it gets put in an online gallery for viewing. For safety, private information (e.g., the name, age, and location of the contributor) are not published.

Please rate your interest in contributing to the CDIC.

- a. Not interested at all
- b. Not very interested
- c. Somewhat interested
- d. Very interested
- 12. [if a or b to #11] Why are you not interested in contributing to the CDIC archive? [open-text]
- 13. [if c or d to #11] Why are you interested in contributing to the CDIC archive? [open-text]
- 14. Rank the following factors that would **motivate** you to submit your child's artwork to the CDIC archive. The option listed at the top would be the most important factor. The option listed at the bottom would be the least important factor. Note: Respondents will be able to move around the options.
  - a. My child would want to submit their artwork.
  - b. I would want my child's art to be recognized.
  - c. It would boost my child's self-esteem and encourage them to create more artwork and develop their art skills.
  - d. I would want to contribute to research and education related to children's artwork.
  - e. I would want to contribute to the preservation of children's artistic expression.
  - f. It would save me from having to store my child's artwork at home.
- 15. Apart from those listed in the previous question, are there other factors that would motivate you to submit your child's artwork to the CDIC archive? [open-text]
- 16. Please select the factors that would *discourage* you from submitting your child's artwork to the CDIC archive. Check all that apply.

- a. I would prefer to keep my child's art private and only shared among family.
- b. My child would not want to submit their artwork.
- c. The contribution process seems like a hassle.
- d. I would need to know more about the CDIC before contributing.
- e. I don't see the value in contributing.
- f. I am too busy with work or other commitments.
- g. Other (specify)
- 17. Which description best captures your thoughts on submitting your children's artwork to the CDIC archive?
  - a. I would submit any and all artwork (I want all of my child's artwork to be included in the CDIC archive).
  - b. I would only submit the artwork that we liked the most (I only want my child's best artwork to be included in the CDIC archive).
  - c. I would submit some of the artwork, but I would keep the artwork that we liked the most within the family (I want to contribute to the CDIC archive, but I want to keep my child's best artwork within the family).
  - d. I would contribute my child's artwork under specific conditions not mentioned above (specify).
  - e. I would not submit any artwork (I am not interested in contributing to the CDIC archive).
- 18. [if d to #17] Under what conditions would you contribute your child's artwork to the CDIC archive? [open-text]
- 19. [if e to #17] Why would you not submit any artwork to the archive? [open-text]

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  I would contribute my child's artwork a. Strongly		For participants who only have children 18 years or older: 20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	
if it were used for research purposes.	Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree	I would contribute my child's artwork if it were used for research purposes.	<ul><li>a. Strongly</li><li>Disagree</li><li>b. Disagree</li><li>c. Agree</li><li>d. Strongly</li></ul>
I would contribute my child's artwork if there were more exposure provided (e.g., dynamic online gallery, live exhibitions, featured images, etc.).	a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree	I would contribute my child's artwork if there were more exposure provided (e.g., dynamic online	Agree a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree

	d. Strongly Agree	gallery, live exhibitions, featured images, etc.).	d. Strongly Agree
I would contribute my child's artwork if CDIC picks up the artwork at no cost to my family (instead of having to mail it in).	a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree	I would contribute my child's artwork if CDIC picks up the artwork at no cost to my family (instead of having to mail it in).	a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Agree d. Strongly Agree
I would contribute my child's artwork but would hold on to it until my child has reached maturity.	<ul><li>a. Strongly</li><li>Disagree</li><li>b. Disagree</li><li>c. Agree</li><li>d. Strongly</li><li>Agree</li></ul>		

- 21. What incentives would increase your likelihood of submitting to the CDIC archive? Check all that apply.
  - a. Crediting the child
  - b. Receiving art supplies or some other prize in return for a submission
  - c. Other (specify)
  - d. None of the above
- 22. What other factors, if any, would make you more willing to submit your children's artwork to the CDIC archive? [open text]
- 23. Thank you for completing the survey. If you wish to be entered in a draw to win a \$50 CAD gift card to your choice of Walmart, Cineplex, or Amazon.ca, please provide your email below. [open-text]