

Guidelines for Researchers at the Rutgers Psychology Child Development Centers

1. Please let us know your schedule for the project. Contact the Director's office to reserve research times. The Director can provide information about special events that may interfere with research. Talk to the teachers about the best times for working with the children. A teacher or aide can help you check attendance so you know which children are absent on the day you are visiting.
2. **Upon arrival, please sign in & wear a name tag that identifies you as a researcher.** These are available from the office or from the Director.
3. **Outside food & beverages are not permitted (except water)** in the preschools.
4. Enlist a teacher or aide to help you identify children and to introduce you to individual children before you ask them to participate in your activity.
5. **Each child MUST give assent to participate in your research project.** You can say, "I'm talking with most of the children in your class this week; are you ready to take your turn now?" or "I would like you to take a turn talking with me (or playing a game); would you come with me?" The child must agree before joining the researcher. Researchers usually work with children in a quiet part of the classroom, or if necessary, a research area where activities are easily monitored, visibly and audibly.
6. If a child is not willing to participate, you can ask again later, "I will check back later to see if you are ready." If a child refuses to participate after the second request, that child must not be asked again.
7. **Work with the teaching staff to identify a child with permission to participate before beginning any conversation or activity with a child.** Inform the staff of the estimated duration time for your activity (e.g., "in ten minutes"). This is essential information for the teacher, and it can also be reassuring to the child.
8. **You must maintain a research participation sheet and document each child you work with and the beginning/end time of your session with the child.** There will also be a list of children who do not have permission to participate in research. Check that list to make sure you are not working with any children listed. You may only work with children whose parent/guardian has provided written consent.
9. Try to keep interview or testing sessions brief – no longer than 20 minutes. Break longer testing sessions into two.
10. If a child becomes inattentive or asks about returning to the classroom during the interview or testing, you may encourage the child to finish, for example, "I have only two more questions I would like you to answer" or "One more try, and then we will be done." If the child does not wish to continue, you must return to the classroom.
11. **If a child shows any signs of distress at any time (e.g., looking frightened, looking embarrassed, crying) terminate the session immediately.** Try to comfort and reassure the child as you bring the child to the teacher so the teacher can provide comfort and reassurance.
12. **Never coerce or force a distressed child to continue to participate even if the child originally assented to participate.**
13. When you are ready to leave, please ensure that you have all of your materials/belongings and that you have returned any furniture or materials used/moved during your session. Ensure that you do not leave any type of garbage or refuse behind. Please let a staff member know that you are finished. Please sign out in the Visitor's book.