

**ETHICAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS INVOLVING
CHILDREN, FAMILIES OR STAFF
of the
Child Development Lab (CDL)**

The following guidelines are based on the Ethical Standards of the American Psychological Association and the Society for Research in Child Development and are applicable to all projects with children, staff, and families in the Child Development Lab, whether they participate directly in the activities or as control groups.

I. Rights of Children, Families, and Staff:

No matter how young the participant, s/he has rights that supersede the rights of the investigator of her/his behavior. In the conduct of projects, the responsible individual measures each procedure proposed against this principle and is prepared to justify her/his decisions.

II. Project Procedures:

No serious and/or permanent harm can be inflicted on any participant. However, “serious harm” is difficult to interpret when you are dealing with psychological variables. For example, some studies might cause children to think about themselves in an unfavorable light. If they continued to feel bad about themselves, then they might become depressed. Part of the function of HSRB committees and the CDL Research Advisory Committee is to help researchers evaluate the potential risks involved in their studies in order to avoid inflicting harm on their participants. Researchers must outline potential risks/benefits of their research procedures in the application. Any project which in the judgment of the CDL Research Advisory Committee has possible harmful effects will not be permitted in the Lab.

III. Informed Consent:

- A. Informed consent requires that the parents and staff be given accurate information about the purpose and operations of each project in lay terms. Consent shall not be obtained from the parents through any claims of benefit to the individual participant. The right of the children, parents, and staff to refuse consent and/or to withdraw participation shall be respected.
- B. Exceptions to the informed consent requirement will not be permitted unless so approved by a Human Subjects Review Board (for example, in cases where it is judged that securing such consent is inconsistent with the purpose and feasible conduct of the project and it is reasonable to conclude that a person would have no objection to participation). In such cases, the project shall be presented to parents in general terms and their right to refuse consent remains.
- C. Parents and staff have the right to discuss the ramifications of any project procedure or findings with the individual responsible.

IV. Study Participation:

- A. No individual shall be coerced into participating in a project. Each child or adult has the right to refuse and should be given the opportunity to do so.
- B. Person(s) responsible for a project must respect the judgments of Lab personnel regarding the participation of children in activities on any particular day.

V. Other Standards:

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- A. A participant's identity must be concealed in written and verbal reports of the results, as well as in informal discussions with students and colleagues.
- B. The project staff shall not assume the role of diagnostician or counselor in reporting observations to parents or the staff except at the discretion of the CDL Research Advisory Committee.