

# KENT STATE UNIVERSITY CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER RESEARCH POLICIES

## **Introduction**

A model educational program protects the rights of all participants in research including children, families, faculty, staff, and researchers. The Child Development Center (CDC) values and respects the basic needs and rights of children, their families, and teachers. Research within the center must be conducted in such a way as to value and respect the needs and rights of children, families, and teachers. These procedural guidelines insure that all research conducted at the CDC adheres to basic standards set forth by federal guidelines while also respecting the values and participants of the CDC.

First and foremost, the research must adhere to the ethical guidelines established by Kent State University's Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). Secondly, it must adhere to additional principles which acknowledge the age and power differences between research involving children and that which involves adults. It is this last issue that necessitates a two step screening process for those wishing to conduct research at the Child Development Center.

The first step involves becoming familiar with and adhering to the Code of Ethics of the Society for Research in Child Development for conducting research with children ([www.srkd.org](http://www.srkd.org)).

## **Preliminary Review Process**

The Preliminary Review is an exploratory process to consider the "goodness of fit" between the researcher's interest and the center's operation. It consists of completing a brief form outlining the purpose and procedures for study included. Primary concerns at this stage are that the research is appropriate, respectful of race, class, and gender and is safe and healthy for young children. This application is submitted to the center director.

## **Main Review Process**

If there appears to be a good fit between the proposed project and the educational goals of the CDC, then the research enters into the main Review Process which includes submission of the full HSRB document, verification of approval by this body, and the CDC main research review form to the director. Upon receipt of these documents, the director will schedule a meeting with the researcher and the CDC Research Review Committee to obtain final approval for the study. The CDC is interested in assisting persons to develop a research design that meets both CDC and HSRB standards.

The researcher must show how the following requirements will be met:

- 1) The researcher must adhere to the HSRB regulation that all research is strictly voluntary for teachers, parents or other family members, and children. The researcher must fully inform each classroom teacher and parent in a letter of consent about the goals and procedures of the research study and what will be expected of them. All participants in the study must sign an informed consent form and receive a copy to keep. If, during the course of the study, additional participants are desired or the design is altered in any way,

the researcher must revise the HSRB form, gain approval from that body and the Center Director. All parents within a classroom will be notified of research taking place there.

- 2) Assent by children is an important element of the research process. If children give any verbal or nonverbal indications that they do not wish to participate or to continue participation after beginning, the researcher is obligated to stop immediately and calmly return the child to classroom activities. Children may not be coerced to participate or continue participation with either verbal or tangible rewards. **NO CANDY OR OTHER FOOD OR NON-FOOD GIFTS MAY BE GIVEN TO CHILDREN AS A REWARD FOR PARTICIPATING OR TO MAINTAIN PARTICIPATION.**
- 3) For all research involving interactions with children, the researcher **MUST** describe and negotiate the time needed with lead classroom teacher to ensure minimal disruption to the children's educational experiences. For all research involving interactions with children, and prior to conducting research, the researcher must first spend time at the classroom observing and interacting with the children in order to get to know them and be familiar with the daily life of these children in the classroom. The time required is negotiable with the lead classroom teacher depending on the research purposes and the degree to which children are involved.
- 4) If children participate in a research study that involves interaction with the researcher, on the day of the interaction the researcher must leave a note informing each child's parent of the following:
  - Name of research project and the researcher
  - Contact information for the researcher, in case parents have questions
  - A brief description of what the child did that day in the research project.
- 5) Upon completion of the research, the researcher must provide the CDC, teachers and parents with a one-two page written summary of the research. The researcher must report findings to the CDC research committee prior to reporting to parents. When important to the mission of the school, the Center also encourages researchers to give an oral presentation of their findings and implications to an audience of teachers and parents. Such summaries should be comprehensible and useful to an informed general public.
- 6) At all times, the identity of each participant and the school must be protected.