

**Research Ethics Board**

**ASSENT GUIDELINES**

These guidelines are intended as suggestions for the amount and complexity of information that should be communicated to children, and to others who have limited cognitive capacity, in order to obtain their assent to participate. Researchers should exercise their judgment concerning the developmental capacity and linguistic ability of their participants. They should then decide how much information to include in the assent protocol. The goal is communicate the essential elements of consent without obscuring the important information in a lot of detail; the greater the cognitive capacity of the participant, the greater the amount of information that should be communicated. The choice of whether to present the information orally or in writing will depend on the literacy level of the target population.

***Requirements for Below Minimal Risk*** (to be included in all assent protocols, written or verbal).

1. These must be communicated in age-appropriate language, and be free of technical jargon:
2. A statement that the child is invited to participate in a research project.
3. It must be clearly communicated that this participation is not part of the child’s regular class work, medical treatment, etc., and is an optional activity.
4. A description of the activities that are involved, and the length of time they will take.
5. A clear statement that the child may withdraw at any time, for any reason, and that this will not cause anyone to be upset or angry, and will not result in any type of penalty.
6. If the research involves any degree of risk or discomfort, this must be described.
7. An assertion that child’s contribution will be kept private, and not shared with other children, their parents, or their teachers.

***Additional Requirements for Above Minimal Risk*** (to be included as appropriate, given the cognitive capacity of the participants. Note that the researcher may choose to include some, but not all of the following, based on the nature of the research project and the intended population of study).

1. A statement of risks and benefits
2. Depending on the nature of the study, a statement to the effect that if the participant withdraws their data will be removed or their data collected up until the time of withdrawal will be retained.
3. A description of how confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained.
4. Contact numbers should the participant has any questions.
5. A statement that acknowledging that the research projectand Consent Form have been explained, that the participant understands them, and agrees to participate.

***Remaining Elements*** (to be included as appropriate, usually for cognitively advanced populations.).

1. A statement to the effect that the participant has received a copy of the Consent Form.
2. A description of how the data will be used.
3. A statement advising the participant that he/she will be informed of any new information that may affect their decision to participate.
4. A statement to the effect that the research has been approved by the University of ReginaResearch Ethics Board on (insert date).