Assent Template Information

This document contains guidance for developing an assent form or assent language for children participating in research studies. When children are capable of giving assent (taking children’s age, maturity, and psychological state into consideration), researchers should obtain assent before children take part in research activities. Written assent is typically required for children age 14 to 17, while verbal consent may be obtained for children age 13 and younger. Please note that the IRB may determine which type of documentation, if any, is appropriate, based upon the characteristics of a specific study. See the policy [Children as Research Subjects](https://research.cc.lehigh.edu/sites/research.cc.lehigh.edu/files/documents/ORSP/22-Aug-2018%20Children%20as%20Research%20Subjects.pdf) for further information.

Use of this template:

The following template should be used to create an assent form that is signed by children age 14 to 17. This template may also be used to create an assent script that is explained to children age 13 and younger so that children can provide verbal assent. Please ensure the language and content of your assent information is appropriate for your study’s age group. The amount of detail included in the form or script should depend upon the age and cognitive abilities of your participants. Only include sections that participates will be able to comprehend. If your research involves children in multiple age groups, it may be appropriate to create assent language that is specific to each age group.

Please keep in mind that children may have a reading comprehension level that is lower than their grade level. Even for older teenagers, all materials should be written at an 8th grade reading level. See the [Readability and Comprehension Guidance](https://research.cc.lehigh.edu/readability) for helpful tips for drafting forms in simple language.

Please note that parents/guardians must also provide permission for children to take part in research studies. To create a separate Parental Permission Document, please see the [Standard Informed Consent Template](https://research.cc.lehigh.edu/irb-forms-and-worksheets). Modify the sample language to make it clear that parents are providing permission for the child to take part in research. This form should not refer to the parent’s own participation unless both the parent and child are taking part in the study.

Assent Template

Note: All red text provides instruction or examples. Please delete all red text from your assent language. The black text may also be edited or deleted in order to make the template appropriate for the children taking part in your study.

You are invited to be part of a research study. A research study is when people collect a lot of information to learn about a topic.

This research study is about (topic). This study will help us learn about how (briefly explain the study topic).

**The researchers’ names are**: (list researchers’ names and affiliation)

**If you would like to be part of our study, this is what we will ask you to do:**

* (Explain the study’s procedure.)
* (Use vocabulary that is age-appropriate. Do not use jargon. When using acronyms or abbreviations, use the complete phrase or name in the first reference. Use short sentences and bullet points.)
* (If participants are old enough to understand privacy concerns, explain what identifiable data will be collected, if any. Identifiable data includes audio and video recordings.)
* This is not a test. We just want to know about what you think. There are no right or wrong answers.

**How long will the study take?**

The study will take about (expected duration, e.g., 30 minutes).

**Are there good things about being in the study?**

(List potential benefits to participants, as well as benefits to society more broadly, if appropriate. E.g., “You will help us learn about how teenagers use strategies to focus on difficult tasks. This might help other teenagers focus on difficult tasks in the future.”)

**Are there things you might not like about being in the study?**

(List the risks, and explain if it’s likely the risks will occur. E.g., “If you are part of this study, there is a small chance that you might feel embarrassed talking about your grades. ”)

You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do. If anything makes you feel bad, please tell me. You don’t have to be in the study if you don’t want to be.

**Will you get anything if you’re in the study?**

(Describe any compensation participants will receive.)

**Will people know you were in this study?**

We will try very hard to make sure everything you tell us stays private. We will not tell your (family/teacher/friends) about anything that you do or tell us today. But, if you tell us that someone is hurting you, or if you are hurting yourself, or if you are hurting others, we will need to let someone else know.

(Include if you plan to share data from this study with other researchers or with journals)

If we share the information from this study with other people who do research, we’ll take your name off of everything you share with us. Nobody will know who said what.

(Include if you plan to share data from this study)

We will take your name off of everything you share with us. We won’t share your information with anyone else who does research.

If we write a report about this study, we’ll share what we learned from all the kids who were in this study put together. Nobody will know you were in the study.

**Do you have to be in this study?**

You don’t have to be in this study if you don’t want to. If you are not part of this study, nothing bad will happen. Nobody will be upset with you.

If you do want to be in the study, we can skip any part you want to skip. You can also change your mind later, and you can stop being in the study at any time. If we ask you to do something that you do not want to do, you can say no. You don’t have to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

**What if you have questions?**

If you have questions now, please ask. You can also talk to your parents before you decide.

You can ask questions any time during the study.

If you have questions after the study is over you can contact the researchers at: (researcher’s contact information)

If you have questions and you don’t want to talk to the researchers about them, there are other people you can talk to at Lehigh University. These people help kids and adults who are in research studies. Their phone number is 610-758-2871. Their email address is [inirb@lehigh.edu](mailto:inirb@lehigh.edu).

We will give you a copy of this paper to take home.

**If you want to be part of this study, please sign here:**

Child’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Assent signatures should be collected from participants age 14 and older, unless a waiver of assent is requested in the New Studies Application and the waiver is approved by the IRB.)