**Child Assent Template**

Unless a study has the potential to directly benefit participants, child assent is required.

To provide the necessary information to enable participants under 15 years of age to decide whether to agree to research participation, an assent form is needed. For your convenience, an assent template is provided on the next page. **To reduce the potential for IRB revision requests and delayed study approval, please use our template.**

The contents of the consent template have been organized to facilitate comprehension. **Assent documents should be written in plain language at a reading level applicable to the participants’ age/grade.** For more information on plain language, go to <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>.

If child participants are not old enough or capable of reading and signing the consent form (e.g., preschool to kindergarten), it may be read to them, and they may indicate their consent verbally or by nodding their heads. **The lack of a positive response should never be interpreted as assent.**

Please note the following:

1. Text in [brackets] represents information about your study that you must add.
2. A forward slash (/) indicates that you must select an option specific to your study (e.g., “will/will not” or “I/we”) and remove the remaining option(s).
3. Additional instructions or sample text are provided in boxes.
4. Before you submit your consent document to the IRB, delete this cover page, all brackets, and the boxes. You’ll also need to remove any extra spaces created when the boxes were removed.
5. Please follow the **instructions in blue** below, revising or providing the information in **red**. You will need to remove the instructions as you go, including these instructions. The font color of your completed document should be **black**.
6. The finished document should reflect what you will give to prospective participants.
7. If your study involves multiple types of participants who will complete different procedures (e.g., students in some classes will only take pre- and post-surveys, but students in other classes will also receive an intervention), you will need to create different assent forms for each participant group.
8. When you save your newly created assent documents, please use a file name that clearly identifies the document and the intended audience (e.g., assent(control), etc.).

For questions about child assent, please contact the IRB at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

**Child Assent to Participate in a Research Study**

Provide your study title, **ensuring that it matches the title you listed on your IRB application**, followed by your name.

***What is the name of the study and who is doing the study?***

The name of the study is [study name], and the person doing the study is [principal investigator’s name].

In one sentence and in plain language, please list the purpose of your study. Do not include details about your procedures as they will be discussed below.

***Why is [principal investigator name] doing this study?***

[Principal investigator name] wants to know [simplified study purpose].

The next section should include your participant criteria. Make sure that all participant eligibility requirements are listed and that **they match what is on your IRB application and recruitment document(s)**. An example is provided.

***Why am I being asked to be in this study?***

You are being asked to be in this study because you are [List your participant criteria.] [e.g., a 4th grade student at Liberty Elementary].

\* Next, you will need to list your study procedures **in order** and **include expected time estimates for each**. You may provide an overall time estimate for total participation at the end of your procedures list if your study involves multiple procedures that will take place **during a single visit**.

\* If you choose to withhold information about an aspect of your study, it will involve deception, and you will need to note this on the Consent page of your IRB application and potentially create and submit a debriefing statement for IRB review.

\* Please **do not list reading/signing the consent form as a procedure**.

\* If your study will involve the collection of photographs/video/artifacts (pictures, drawings, etc.) of or from participants, and you plan to include the photographs/video/artifacts or images of the artifacts in your paper/thesis/dissertation/publication or as part of a future presentation(s), your participants’ parents will need to sign a release form allowing you to do so.

***If I decide to be in the study, what will happen and how long will it take?***

If you decide to be in this study, you will [procedures and time estimates.]

\* You may delete the below sentence if participants will not be compensated.

\* If you do plan to compensate participants, include payment/reimbursement/incentive information here. If participants will receive class points or some other token, include that information here.

\* Include information about when participants will be compensated.

\* Because participation in research is voluntary and participants have the right to end their participation during the study if they so choose, if a study involves more than one procedure, compensation should be prorated or even staggered (e.g., a small item or $5 per procedure as opposed to receiving a single payment of $10 after all procedures are completed.)

\* If you will provide a snack or refreshments for your participants, include related information below.

[After the [survey/interview/focus group/each procedure/etc.] you will be given [a $\_\_ [Chick-fil-a/McDonalds/etc.] gift card/a set of colored pencils/etc.].

The voluntary-participation wording provided in the following two sections **is required** for all research.

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

No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then tell the researcher. If you don’t want to, it’s OK to say no. The researcher will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It’s up to you.

***What if I have a question?***

You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you again.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

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Signature of Child/Witness Date

[If your participants are not capable of reading the prepared assent form, it may be read to them in the presence of a witness other than the principal investigator. If this is the case with your study, please remove “Signature of Child” and replace it with “Witness.”]

[Researcher’s Name]

[Researcher’s Email/Phone]

[Faculty Sponsor’s Name]

[Faculty Sponsor’s Email]

Liberty University Institutional Review Board

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