

Model Verbal Assent Script for Children Ages 5-12

Instructions: This model provides suggested language for verbal child assent for children between the cognitive ages of 5-12. Child assent should be sought only after written parental permission for the child's participation is obtained. Assent language should be modified as necessary to be age-appropriate for the specific study population. The IRB recommends that the researcher check the readability level using the "Readability Statistics" function in Word to assure appropriateness of language. For the 5-12 age group, assent may be obtained verbally. Unless specifically required by the IRB, signature of the child is optional. The decision of whether or not to obtain the child's signature should depend on the age of the child and the nature of the study. Note that a formal assent process is generally not required for children under age 5. The Model Consent Form used for adults should be adapted, with age-appropriate language, to serve as a written and signed assent for participants ages 13-20. Please remember to remove this header from your assent document before submitting it to the IRB for review.

Hi. My name is *[researcher's name]*. I'm a *[teacher at a college/student at a college]*. Right now, I'm trying to learn about *[insert topic of study in simple language]*. I would like to ask you to help me by being in a study, but before I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me.

I will ask you to *[describe what will take place using appropriate language from the child's point of view, including the time involved. If the study involves specific questions and if appropriate, indicate that there are no right or wrong answers. Note if you will be audio or video taping the child. If the study involves risks, explain them in child-friendly language. By being in the study, you will help me understand [the research question]. If there are direct benefits to the child, briefly explain them.*

Your *[parents, teacher, classmates]* will not know what you have *[said/written/draw/chose/other activity the child is being asked to do]*. When I tell other people about my study, I will not use your name, and no one will be able to tell who I'm talking about.

Your *[mom/dad]* says it's okay for you to be in my study. But if you don't want to be in the study, you don't have to be. What you decide won't make any difference *[with your grades/about how people think about you/other appropriate statement for the age group and nature of the activity]*. I won't be upset, and no one else will be upset, if you don't want to be in the study. If you want to be in the study now but change your mind later, that's okay. You can stop at any time. If there is anything you don't understand you should tell me so I can explain it to you

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me or ask *[your parents/teacher]* to call me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

Would you like to be in my study and *[talk to me/answer some questions/draw some pictures/play a game/begin whatever activity is planned]*?

NOTES TO RESEARCHER: The child should answer "Yes" or "No." Only a definite "Yes" may be taken as assent to participate.

Name of Child: _____

Parental Permission on File: Yes No
(If "No," do not proceed with assent or research procedures.)

Child's Voluntary Response to Participation: Yes No

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

(Optional) Signature of Child: _____