Parental Permission & Child Assent

**Question:** Do parental permission and child assent have to occur at the same time or in any particular order?

**Answer:** The HHS regulations do not specify the order in which parental or guardian permission and child assent should be sought. Therefore, Institutional Review Boards (IRB) have the discretion to determine the appropriate order given the research and the context in which it will be conducted. In general, parental or guardian permission should be sought before seeking the assent of a child, particularly in more than minimal risk research, unless the requirement for obtaining parental or guardian permission can be waived.

There might be some cases, however, involving minimal risk research, where it would be reasonable to seek child assent prior to seeking parental permission. For example, a school-based study of minimal risk (e.g., investigating children’s responses to music), could be posed to children in the school setting. Children could be asked if they wanted to participate and if so, sent home with a request for parental or guardian permission. In all cases, except when the requirement for obtaining parental or guardian permission can be waived, parental or guardian permission, even if sought after child assent is provided, is required before the child can be enrolled in the study.


IACUC Approval

**Question:** Is IACUC approval required for the use of animals in breeding programs, as blood donors, as sentinels in disease surveillance programs, or for other non-research purposes?

**Answer:** Although animals used as breeding stock, blood and blood product donors, sentinels, or for other similar purposes may not be part of specific research protocols, their use is part of the institutional research program and directly supports research activities. Consequently, the IACUC should review protocols and SOPs that involve animals for such purposes, initially and at appropriate intervals.

Help Us Save Paper

When sending signature pages to the Office of Research Assurances through campus mail, there is no need to print and mail the entire protocol; we require only the signature page. Thank you for conserving paper!

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