

Parent Handbook, CDCLR
Educational and Research Procedures Section

Research at the Child Development Center for Learning and Research

Welcome to the Child Development Center for Learning and Research! We are excited about the opportunity to play, learn with and teach your child or children, and to get to know and work with your family.

As part of our mission to best nurture young children, we conduct research aimed at deepening our understanding of children's development and how to best support that maturation. Recent brain research underscores what parents and educators have suspected for a long time: from infancy to about five years of age are critical years for setting children on a path that optimizes their capacity for learning, getting along with others, and remaining vitally engaged in work and play. How to best foster these abilities is one central focus of our research program.

Research at the Child Development Center for Learning and Research site generally takes the following forms:

1. Curriculum or classroom assessment. In order to ascertain the effectiveness of a given practice or module in the classroom, or to assess the "climate" of a given room, we may periodically conduct a formal evaluation. Methods to evaluate curriculum or classroom processes might include observation, videotaping, behavioral coding, analysis of children's conversations, group activities, teacher reports, parent reports, interviews with children, and/or tests or experimental procedures designed to assess a given skill or capacity.
2. Basic research on child/family development. These studies typically examine a specific facet of development, such as cognitive or social development. Methods are diverse, and may include researcher observations, interviews, parent and teacher observations, standard assessment procedures, and so on. One current program of research undertaken by several investigators concerned various aspects of social development.
3. Other. Studies on playground development and toy design have been conducted in the past, and we anticipate our site may be used in future research related to a variety of disciplines.

Participation and informed consent

As part of enrollment, we ask that you carefully review our consent form ("Parent Permission Form") regarding our use of observations, statements from, and works by your children, as well as our use of pictures, video and audiotapes of your children for

research purposes. Research activities covered by this consent form cover ongoing projects undertaken by CDCLR staff as part of our laboratory school mission. This curriculum-oriented, intergenerational and some basic developmental research for the most part. No more than minimal risk is anticipated in any of these projects. Studies that involve any elevation in potential risk level to your child or your family require separate procedures that seek your permission for specific tasks.

Research activities related to the ongoing activities of the Child Development Center are part of classroom life and as such, it is hoped that all children enrolled in the program will participate as a matter of course. At times, procedures to evaluate a teaching practice or module require individual or group assessment. If this means asking your child to do anything besides her normal routine, you will be asked for permission under a separate consent process.

“Informed consent” refers to a process in which you have been told or have read about procedures involved in research, been informed of possible risks and benefits to you, have had your questions answered, and that you agree that you and/or your child may participate. Children are also asked if they will take part (“Child Assent.”).

Giving your permission does not mean you can never withdraw it. If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of research at the Center, we urge to contact our Research Director Dr. Isabel Bradburn, at 231-1863.

All research conducted at the Child Development Center for Learning and Research has been reviewed through the standard internal review process at Virginia Tech for research involving human participants, to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

Please let us know if English is not your native language and you need translation services for this document or informed consent forms. We will do our best to find an appropriate translator.

How to be involved

As parents, you know your children best. We ask you to be partners with us in making the Child Development Center for Learning and Research childcare program truly exemplary by participating as fully as you can in our ongoing research efforts. Your involvement will help us understand more about children’s and family’s development, about what aspects of our program are working well, and what might benefit from changes.

Communicating research findings

As part of our collaboration with you in our research programs, we want to let you know what we are discovering. Several media will be used to communicate results:

1. Panels placed in classrooms and hallways describe and document some projects.
2. CDCLR Research Round-Up: Study results will be communicated through a community newsletter, parent meetings, or another specified venue. (Please note that it will take a while for these results to come in, if studies are just beginning.)
3. Researchers may also have their own ways of communicating with their family participants that should be noted in the Parent Permission forms for individual (separate

IRB) studies. Occasionally we may invite one of these scientists to speak to our parent group.

If you have any additional thoughts or observations that seem important but that we did not ask you about, please communicate them to us. Also, if you would like to become more involved in research at the Center, contact the research director, Isabel Bradburn (231-1863). Thank so much for your family's participation in the Center's research endeavors.