

Carnegie Mellon University
Children's School

Policies for Non-Psychology Course Projects
2007-2008

The Children's School is the laboratory school for the Psychology Department in the college of Humanities and Social Sciences. After all of the Psychology research and course projects have been scheduled, requests for course or individual projects from other departments and colleges will be considered.

Step 1: Obtaining Project Approval

- Dr. Sharon Carver (8-1499) must approve all requests to make observations or conduct projects at the Children's School. For standard course assignments, this step is completed by the instructor prior to preparing the course syllabus to avoid conflicts between courses. Individuals must complete a project request form and submit it to Dr. Carver. Requests for course and individual projects will be honored only if they do not significantly disrupt the school's educational program or conflict with the needs of Psychology courses.

- Dr. Carver communicates the nature and timing of projects to the Children's School staff. Because of tight scheduling, it is important that both instructors and students follow the approved schedule closely. Note that child observations and interactions are scheduled when the school program is in session, so the teachers are not available for conversation. Separate sessions must be approved and scheduled if interaction with educators is necessary.

***** Hints for maintaining good relations with the Children's School Staff *****

- Speak, behave, and dress in a professional manner.
- Make arrangements well ahead of time.
- Remember that you might want to conduct additional projects at the Children's School, so work on developing a good reputation here.

Step 2: Scheduling Project Sessions

- **Course instructors** will work with Mrs. Smith to develop a scheduling procedure to fit the needs of the class. It may involve making reservations by phone or on signup sheets. Please follow the instructor's directions and timeline closely.

- To **schedule individual project sessions**, call Mrs. Smith (8-2199) no later than noon on the Friday before the week that you want to conduct the project. Be as clear as possible about your needs so that Mrs. Smith can find the best time slot for your project.

- The teachers are only responsible for having children available during the scheduled times that they are given on Friday afternoons for the following week. Students should be willing to flexibly adjust to the unavoidable fluctuations in the daily schedule.

Step 3: Conducting Project Sessions

- Plan to arrive at the Children's School at least 5 minutes before your scheduled session time. You will need to **buzz at the entrance** to gain admittance to the school.
- When you enter the school, go to the office to **sign the log book** and **get a nametag**. You must wear the nametag at all times during your visit to the school.
- **Turn off your cell phone**. Cell phone use is not permitted in classrooms or labs. If you must make a call while in the office suite, please ask Mrs. Smith for an unobtrusive place to do so.
- **Wait in the office** until Mrs. Smith, or another Children's School staff person, is available to walk you into the classroom. You may leave your belongings in the office.
- Plan to **spend only the specified project time in the assigned classroom space**. Do not wander through the school or interact with children other than those assigned to you. REMEMBER, there may be over one hundred students conducting projects in the Children's School each week, so we depend on each one being as unobtrusive and causing as little disruption as possible.
- When approved in advance, **photographs** may be taken of children who have photo permission. Photos may only be used for project purposes and may never be posted in places where they could be seen by individuals outside the project course. **Videotaping** may be approved in special circumstances, but all tapes must be viewed and stored at the Children's School. **Audiotaping** is acceptable at any time.
- When you are finished with your session, **return to the office**. When you are ready, ask a staff member to deactivate the alarm before you leave. Otherwise, the alarm will sound when you exit the school.

General Guidelines for Classroom Observation

1. No more than two observers may enter the classroom at a time. (Three can use the kindergarten observation window and eight can use the preschool observation room.)
2. Observers do not join the group time circle or interfere with children's activities. (Please watch from a distance.)
3. Observers do not talk to each other while in the classroom.
4. Observers do not play with classroom materials that are not specifically identified in the project request.

General Guidelines for Individual or Small Group Interaction

1. Use your voice as a teaching tool (calm, moderate tones).

2. Use a tone of voice that will help the child feel confident and reassured, not afraid or guilty or ashamed.
3. Speak in a very matter of fact manner and avoid baby talk with children.
4. Make an effort to speak in simple sentences but in a regular tone of voice.
5. Make suggestions or state directions in a positive rather than a negative form. Example: "Hold the tool this way." - rather than "No, don't do it that way."
6. Give children a choice only when you intend to leave the situation up to them; do not offer the child a choice when there is no choice. For example: "It's your turn to play this game" instead of "Do you want to play this game?".
7. Redirecting the child is likely to be most effective when it is consistent with the child's own motives or interests.
8. When young children are drawing, it is better to ask "Would you like to tell me something about your drawing?" than "What is it?" since children may not always know what it is themselves.
9. Avoid trying to motivate a child by making comparisons between the child and another or by encouraging competition.

*Extracted from pages 313-331 of *The Nursery School* by Katherine Read, published by W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, 1971. Permission to reprint granted by the publisher.

NOTE: If the Fire Alarm rings while you are observing or interacting with a child, follow the teacher's direction and walk with the class outside. Be a good model for the children to follow. We will make every effort to avoid fire drills during project sessions, so assume that an alarm is signaling a fire.

Children's School Guidelines

In addition to following the project procedures, it is essential that undergraduates adhere to the following guidelines that apply to all participants in the laboratory school community.

Dress Comfortably.

Choose clothes that are comfortable and professional. Working with young children may mean stains, running, stretching, and bending. Avoid revealing clothing and items with slogans or characters.

Be Responsible.

Sign in the school office each day; arrive and leave the school promptly as scheduled; call 268-2199 if you need to cancel a project session.

Be Pleasant and Courteous.

Provide a consistent, fair model of behavior to children even when they are moody. A pleasant word from you may often change the direction of a situation. Children depend on you to be helpful, courteous and sincere. At the same time, you are in our school as an adult model, not a playmate.

Be Open.

Take your direction from the staff. Accept criticism as constructive, realizing that the staff members are trying to assist you in developing procedures and techniques for working with children.

Be Focused.

Be fully prepared and present for your coursework at the Children's School. Be clear about your assignment in advance. Bring all of the necessary materials. Turn off your cell phone. Avoid conversation with the children, the staff, and with other undergraduates.

Be Professional.

Keep confidential any discussions concerning the case of a specific child. The school staff trusts you to use such information and observations only to work more effectively with that child. Never discuss students with parents or in any situation other than with a Children's School staff person.

Carnegie Mellon University
Children's School

Non-Psychology Course Project Plans

Course Information

Course Number and Name:

Instructor:

Email:

Phone:

Date of Request:

Project Description:

Number of Students:

Working Individually or in Groups?

Specific Request for Children's School (Which children, doing what, where, when?)

Observation:

Interaction:

Recording (Notes, Audio, Photos, Video?):

Notes and photos

Acceptance of Responsibility for Following Written Procedures

I have read the Children's School policies for Non-Psychology Course Projects and agree to comply with them in full. I will take responsibility for having my students read them thoroughly and sign the acceptance of responsibility statement prior to beginning their work at the Children's School. I understand that students who fail to comply with the policies may be banned from further project work at the school.

Signature:

Date:

Carnegie Mellon University
Children's School

Project Request Form

Individual Information

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Date of Request:

Course Information

Course Number and Name:

Instructor:

Email:

Project Description:

Specific Request for Children's School (Which children, doing what, where, when?)

Observation:

Interaction:

Recording (Notes, Audio, Photos, Video?):

Acceptance of Responsibility for Following Written Procedures

I have read the Children's School 2007-08 Policies for Non-Psychology Course Projects and agree to comply with them in full. I understand that my failure to comply with policies may result in my exclusion from further project work at the Children's School.

Signature:

Date: