In-Lab Studies

For in-lab studies, children and/or adults will come to the third floor of Meyer for studies. Participants can be recruited through a variety of means, but the most common recruitment strategies are phone calls and emails. The specific recruitment protocols will differ slightly depending on the participant population (e.g. adults vs. kids) and study itself, but in general, you should adhere to the principles laid out below:

General rules of recruitment:

Baby & Child @ NYU (the 6 developmental labs at NYU) have a recruiter that goes into the NYU Tisch and Bellevue hospitals and asks parents who have just had babies if they’d like sign up to participate in our studies when their babies are older. If the parents express interest in participating, the recruiter takes down their information and enters it into our shared database of interested families. All 6 labs have access to the information in the shared database, and can call and schedule families for studies.

When you schedule, you are contacting these families who have offered, often months before you call them, to come in and participate. Like all research participants, they are in no way obligated to either be in our database or to come in for a study. They are basically coming in out of the goodness of their hearts — it’s often a hassle to take a child and stroller on the subway, or schedule appointments around children’s extracurricular activities, and in some ways, it’s amazing that parents agree!

With this in mind, we want everything about their experience with NYU to be as positive and enjoyable as possible, and this begins with scheduling. We need to be as polite and pleasant as we can be at all times. This is important for 2 reasons: if parents enjoy speaking to you, they are more likely to come in and participate. You are also representing the lab, NYU, and science in general when you’re calling, and we want parents to have a positive impression of all three, even if they can’t participate. Even if the person you’re talking can’t come in, or is being rude to you, you still need to be professional and polite. Always remember: Parents are not obligated to come into the lab because they agreed to be in the database. Being in the database is also voluntary. If a parent asks you to delete their information, do so politely and immediately.

We have access to the information in the database under the condition that we keep all of the information about children and parents absolutely CONFIDENTIAL. So if you write take a message and write down a parent’s name and phone number, that piece of paper needs to be shredded (the pile of paper to be shredded is on the second shelf on the green wall). No information about children or parents can leave the lab; this includes talking about participants in the hallways. If we break this rule, this violates our IRB (Institutional Research Board) approval and our access to children could be revoked, and we would have to shut down the lab. So confidentiality at all times is very important!

The families who agree to be in the database have a variety of family structures and backgrounds. It is very important not to be judgmental about atypical family structures. Use neutral words like ‘partner’ or ‘the child’s father’ instead of words like ‘husband’ unless the person you are speaking to uses them first. Don’t let your voice sound surprised or judgmental, whatever the situation. We want all of the families who have been kind enough to be in the database to feel welcome and included.

A note about the study-specific scripts used for recruitment (which can be found in the lab folder for a specific study on the CDSC Lab server). You might be tempted, especially when you feel like you’ve got the scheduling protocol down, to go off the script. DO NOT GO OFF THE SCRIPT. This script has been carefully worded to be neutral and non-judgmental. Every word choice in the script is deliberate and should not be changed! Off course, parents will take you off the script. Be pleasant and natural when you interact and respond to their queries, then get back to the script as naturally as possible.

Please see the following tutorials for more in-lab recruitment specifics. For study-specific information about running in-lab participants, please see the Study folder on the CDSC Lab server.

(1) General recruitment workflow.

(2) Baby & Child Database Tutorial
(3) General recruitment principles and example phone calling script.

(4) Email Scheduling/Boomerang Tutorial.

(5) MailChimp Email Blast Tutorial.