

## Ethical guidelines for research on children

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A scientist can perform research on children if

1. Gaining more information about health and special care of children are the main goals.
2. The study can not be conducted on adults.
3. The investigation has neither benefits nor detrimental effects on children, but has beneficial effects for the next generations.
4. Risk evaluation should be done for all those involved with the research including parents or legal guardian, investigators, professionals, the ethics committee, participants in research and even children.
5. To obtain consent from children, they are divided into two groups: under 5 years and 5-10 years old.
  - Under 5 year: for this group of children, the consent must be obtained from legal guardian and every effort should be made to satisfy the child.
  - 5-10 year: Both the child and his/her legal guardian must consent. Should their decisions differ, the ethics committee should be involved.
6. Children should be involved in decision making for their health and safety. They have the right to receive useful information as much as they can understand, to express their opinions, and to decide. The methods of giving information and obtaining consent should be appropriate for their age and understanding.
7. If refusal of the legal guardian excludes the child from the study, and benefits cannot be achieved any other way, the ethics committee should decide.
8. In situations in which the parents decision is under debate (such as child abuse) the ethics committee or court should decide.
9. Parents under 17 years can decide on behalf of the child if they are competent.
10. Although parents or legal guardian decide for children, children should be involved in decision making according to their competency.
11. For publishing data of studies on incompetent children, if necessary, the parents should be informed.
12. A legal guardian can decline his/her responsibility at any time, so the other legal guardian should be substituted.
13. No monetary incentive should be paid to children or their legal guardians, but the financial expenses of the study should be compensated by researcher.
14. The parents must be encouraged to consult with their relatives and health professionals about participating in the study.
15. Parents should accompany their child during the study period.
16. The researchers should answer all of the parents' questions in order to improve their apprehension.
17. When there is no age limitation, older children should be enrolled first.
18. Research on children in emergency situations without their parents' consent and under the ethics committee approval is accepted.
19. After completing research in emergency situation, firstly the consent must be obtained from parents.
20. Research on debilitated children should be limited to cases which cannot be conducted on adults or healthy children.