

# Working with Babies

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## Code of Conduct for Oxford BabyLab

The following are general guidelines for working with young children.

1. Ensure parent/caregiver and child(ren) remain together, in the same room, at all times during the laboratory visit (with the exceptions highlighted below – see point 2).
2. Never remain alone in a closed room with a child, whether participant or accompanying sibling.
  - When going to the toilet, most parents/caregivers will take their child with them. If they prefer otherwise, make sure to always accompany them to the toilet and wait outside with the child(ren), in a common area (i.e. Developmental Science reception area).
  - If the parent/caregiver needs to leave the building for a really short period of time (e.g. to go back to their car to get something) and prefers to leave the child in the play area, ensure that another researcher is around, available to help if needed.
  - If you are looking after a sibling, remain in the play area of the Developmental Science reception, where others can find you easily. Never take any child into a closed-off room, including your office or the toilet.
3. Never leave a child unattended.
  - If the parent/caregiver brings siblings for the laboratory visit, ensure that another researcher with DBS clearance stays with them while the parent/caregiver is away with the infant for the testing session. This also applies to young infants sleeping in their buggy.
  - If at any point the sibling becomes unexpectedly upset/unwell/distressed/needs to go to the toilet or other unforeseen events happen, the researcher minding the sibling should immediately inform the investigator collecting data. The latter should immediately offer the parent/caregiver the option to interrupt or abort the testing session to allow them to comfort their child.
4. Avoid, if possible, taking children into the Control Room of the BabyLab where there are many potential hazards and distractions.
5. We have a nappy changing room, a changing mat, nappy disposal bags and baby-wipes which parents/caregivers can use for their children. The child's personal hygiene is not your responsibility (e.g. nappy changing, toilet routine), so never volunteer or accept requests to help with that.
6. Informed consent
  - Clearly describe the experimental methodology on the day (as well as in advance), including any potential risks.
  - Make sure the parent/caregiver is aware that they may cease participation at any time, for any reason and without penalty.
  - Make sure that the parent/caregiver signs the consent form before running the study.

7. Confidentiality

- All records containing personal data must be kept in secure locations and on password protected machines.
- All records of individual child performances should be anonymised before being discussed or presented to people outside the immediate research group.
- Explicit written permission from a parent is needed for use of images/videos of them or their children.

8. Responsible Researchers

- All BabyLab researchers go through face-to-face interviews, before acceptance into the group.
- All BabyLab researchers undergo police background checks.
- All BabyLab researchers must sign their agreement to these working practices, before they may supervise or work directly with infants.
- All BabyLab researchers must read the necessary professional guidelines listed in the Protocol for their research\*:
  - CUREC Best Practice Guidance 09\_Version 3.0 ‘Management and Protection of Data Collected for Research Purposes’
  - DOH ‘Seeking Consent: Working with children’ (2001), Department of Health
  - RCP ‘Guidelines for the ethical conduct of medical research involving children’ (2000); Compiled by the Royal College of Paediatrics, Child Health: Ethics Advisory Committee and Prof. Sir David Hull, *Arch. Dis. Child*, 82, 177-182.
- All BabyLab researchers must complete (using the University of Oxford and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board e-learning platforms):
  - the Integrity and Ethics University of Oxford Online Training
  - the University of Oxford Information Security Training Module
  - the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Introduction to Safeguarding

**I have read the above and agree to adhere to the guidelines as outlined.**

**Signature of Investigator Collecting Data:**.....

**Print name:**.....

**Date:**.....

\* All the documents can be found both online and on the BabyLab network drive:  
*BabylabShare\Ethics\BabyLabEthicsDocuments\_2019\ProfessionalGuidelines*