GUIDELINES FOR DOING RESEARCH AT THE CHILDREN’S CENTER

The Children’s Center was founded, in part, to give Purchase students the opportunity to work with and study young children. Over the years, that initial aim became formalized in the curriculum by the introduction of the course, Practicum in Child Development, and in the opportunity for psychology students and occasionally students from other majors to conduct senior projects using children at the Center as participants. Such research must ensure that the following goals are met: (1) students successfully complete their research, (2) the Children's Center staff is not over-burdened, and (3) the children are respected and their time at the center is not dominated by interruptions and absences from the classroom. A formal policy for conducting research has been in place since 2012 and is reiterated below:

1. Maximum number of senior projects. A maximum of 4 student research projects can be conducted per semester. If two students are both working on aspects of the same project, that counts as two.

 2. Completion of Practicum. Students must have completed the Practicum in Child Development before they can submit a proposal. The director must interview any student who requests an exception to this rule.

3. Obtaining approval of the topic. Within the first month of the student's first semester of Senior Project, the student, in consultation with the sponsor, should have prepared a proposal that includes the topic, the research question, and what the student hopes to learn from the project. This proposal needs to be approved and signed by the thesis sponsor before being submitted to the director.

4. Obtaining approval of the method. By the end of the first semester of Senior Project, the student in consultation with the sponsor, should meet with the director to discuss the method section that describes the materials, procedure, number and ages of the children, number and length of sessions. The director will assist the student to identify space, timeframes, and resources that would facilitate the implementation of the method.

5. Getting to know the children to be tested. If the student hasn't taken the Practicum as recently as the previous semester, he or she will need to get re-acquainted with the children prior to beginning the testing. The student should spend a minimum of 8 hours in the classroom prior to collecting data.

6. Obtaining parental permission. Students are advised to get started on this process early. The parental permission form must be clear about the method, number of children, number and length of sessions. The director needs to approve the parental permission form before it is distributed. The form should indicate that the parents will receive the results of the completed study.

 7. Feedback to parents. Upon completion of the research, the student must submit a one-page description of the study, including results to all parents whose children participated in the study.