



Guidelines for Ethical Montessori Research

The following guidelines are intended to provide an ethical framework for individuals pursuing Montessori-related research. The guidelines are aligned with the American Montessori Society's statement of ethics and are drawn from research guidelines of the following organizations: the Society for Research in Child Development, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the American Psychological Association. Researchers working with an Institutional Review Board must adhere to their institution's requirements.

Principle I - Commitment to the Participants

In fulfillment of ethical obligations to participants, Montessori researchers

- Shall do no harm in the course of their research. This includes both physical and psychological harm. If at any time participants express they have been harmed or researchers observe that harm has occurred or is imminent, the research process should be stopped immediately and resume only if and when the possibility of harm has been eliminated. In such cases researchers should confer with institutional review boards, professionals in the field, and other appropriate sources in order to mitigate the impact of harm and to preclude subsequent harm.
- Shall conduct research only with informed consent when appropriate. For participants who are minors, both participant assent and parent/legal guardian consent should be obtained. Assent forms should be presented in terms appropriate for the age of the participants. Informed consent requires that research participants be informed of all the features of the research that may affect their willingness to participate. This information should include the profession and institutional affiliation of the investigator. In the case of minors their parent/legal guardian should be informed in this same manner.
- Shall afford the opportunity to decline participation or to terminate participation at any time. Not only should the right of the responsible adults and students to refuse consent be respected, but also they should be informed that they may refuse to participate without incurring any penalty.
- Shall obtain institutional consent when research will take place in a school setting. Depending on the nature of the research this may include consent of classroom staff, support personnel, and the head of school/principal. When required by the institution, school board or institutional review board consent should be sought as well.
- Shall specify the amount of time required of participants in advance and shall schedule research activities in a manner that respects the sanctity of the Montessori work cycle and minimizes classroom disruption.

- Shall collect only data that specifically will be used to address the research questions of the study as described in the informed consent agreements. When research is conducted in school settings, observational data shall be collected only when observation is of study participants from whom the researcher has informed consent. Photographic and video data as well as any personal data will be collected with permission of the participants and only when it will be used as data.
- Shall maintain confidence of data provided by participants except in situations when disclosure is required by law, such as by mandated reporter statute. When institutional records are used as data sources, permission to access records should be sought from a person who holds authority to grant access to the documents. Such records should be provided in a manner that maintains the anonymity of the people to whom the records refer. When research assistants, statisticians or other researcher aides are employed, researchers should obtain and maintain signed confidentiality agreements from them.
- Shall refrain from offering participants unduly large incentives for participation. Any incentives offered should be nominal and should not influence the participants' responses in any manner.
- Shall, as appropriate to the research study, provide opportunities for member checking and participant debriefing to ensure the quality of the data and the well-being of the participants.

Principle II - Commitment to the Public

In fulfillment of ethical obligations to the public, Montessori researchers

- Shall be mindful of the social, political, and human implications of their research and should be especially careful in the presentation of findings from the research.
- Shall avoid misconduct in the process of conducting research. Misconduct is defined as the fabrication or falsification of data, plagiarism, misrepresentation, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, analyzing, or reporting research.

Principle III - Commitment to the Profession

In fulfillment of ethical obligations to the profession, Montessori researchers

- Shall, in the course of conducting research, extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the Montessori education profession and the education profession at large.
- Shall represent their own professional qualification and institutional affiliations with clarity and true intent.
- Shall seek opportunities to share the results of their research through presentations, publications, and other means of distribution.