



## Tips for Recruiting Pediatric Subjects

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As in clinical treatment, working with children in research studies really means working with the parent(s) or caregivers. In most cases, you recruit the parent first, then the child. Usually there is more than one caregiver involved.

### **Parents:**

1. Establish trust! Without gaining the trust of the parent and/or caregiver, you will not recruit your study.
2. Communicate in layperson's language. Nothing destroys trust faster than medical and research jargon.  
Consider both vocabulary and processes/procedures.
3. Approach consent in a stepwise fashion – don't rush.
  - Provide clear education about the disease or condition (layperson's level).
  - Relay your interest in improving care or outcomes for those with the disease or condition).
  - Discuss your qualifications and experiences.
  - Communicate your study goals in layperson's language.
  - Talk about how the parent and child can be a part of finding better ways to treat the condition.  
Allow time at each step for questions and engagement.
  - Have some simple and engaging print materials to hand out.
4. Be prepared to address risk concerns! Open up the dialogue yourself early.
5. Create promotional materials that are easy to understand.
6. If possible, provide feedback in the form of medical test results, an evaluation, or outcomes of the study that is of benefit to the parent.
7. Facilitate the parent's schedule. You may need to be available for visits on Saturdays or evenings.  
Consider home visits. Provide transportation via taxi; make sure parking is close by. If traveling by bus, you may need to meet the parent at the bus stop. Address childcare barriers.
8. Recruit where you will be doing the visits. Give the parent a tour.

**Infants/Toddlers:**

1. Try to avoid a blood draw if at all possible! Applying an anesthetic patch or cream may help (but can restrict blood flow). Nothing initiates a withdrawal of consent faster than a screaming baby!
2. Allow time for playing before the actual visit. Simple colorful blocks or dolls go a long way.
3. Provide a colorful sturdy bag to transport study supplies to the clinic that the parent can keep.
4. Have available a quiet place for parents to breastfeed, diaper, and change baby.

**Children**

1. My favorite clinic had a large fish tank in the lobby. Comforting and fun – Have something to look forward to at each visit.
2. Friendly smiling staff- goes without saying.
3. An age appropriate treasure chest to choose a prize from at each visit.

**Adolescents**

1. Flexible scheduling to work around activities.
2. Apps and text messaging are best for communication
3. Be prepared to answer a lot of challenging questions!
4. Cooperation is subject to change at a moment's notice. Be prepared for higher dropout rate than in other populations.
5. Parent/teenager relationship dynamics play a large role.
6. Adolescents don't want to be different or strange. Have data on studies that adolescents have participated in that have helped advance treatment of their condition.