The CYC is a research laboratory preschool which trains early childhood education teachers, provides opportunities for students in college courses to observe children, and enables faculty researchers in child development to conduct research on children’s social, cognitive, linguistic, motoric, and emotional development. The CYC is housed in the Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). Faculty members from the field of developmental science conduct research at the center and are from various departments around campus. Graduate and undergraduate research assistants participate on these research projects.

This document, Guidelines for Research, provides the expectations and instructions for faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students when conducting research at the CYC. A separate document, Rules and Etiquette, is a more general document for all visitors to the CYC. The Research guidelines are in place to provide a positive environment for research to be conducted, and for researchers to be aware of the rules and regulations that enable research to be carried out in a way that respects the children, the Center, and the CYC program.

1. Contact the Director of the CYC about forthcoming research. Initially faculty must contact the Director of the CYC by email, phone, or in person about forthcoming research.
2. Send both the Consent for Research Form and the IRB approval letter to the Director for review. IRB typically requires a letter from the Director indicating that the study has been approved for the Center. Please inform the Director if this is required for your study.
3. Since there is only one research room, the initial date of contact with the Director will be the determining factor in scheduling research. Researchers will be accommodated on a first-come first-served basis.
4. Criminal background checks are required for anyone who will be working alone with a child at the CYC. Please contact the Assistant Director of the CYC for the procedures. As long as an RA has a clear background check (whether they have the clearance initiated through CYC or whether they have the clearance somewhere else) and it falls within the 365 day acceptance period, then the RA will not need to do another background check for as long as they are continuously doing research at the CYC. At the end of each Academic year, faculty will inform the CYC Assistant Director of any RAs who have left the UMCP and/or have no plans to conduct any further research while at UMCP. At this point, their names will be removed from licensing and state paperwork. This means that RAs should remain on the list for as long as they will conduct research at the CYC, or for their time at UMCP.
5. RAs will distribute parent consent forms as instructed by the Program Administrative Specialist. Consent forms will be placed in the children’s mailboxes outside of the classroom. Returned forms will be stored in a folder labeled for each research project across from the front office desk. RAs may pick up signed parental forms during CYC business hours. When feasible, it is preferred that RAs present a brief description of their research project at parent Open School Night (see the Director for the schedule of the parent orientation night). Research groups are also encouraged to contact the Program Specialist to schedule a day to set up a table in the front lobby during “pick up hours” (3:30 - 5:30 p.m.) to personally distribute consent forms and answer questions that parents may have about their study.
6. The Program Specialist will set up and maintain a cyc-research@umd.edu e-mail list. This list will include the Director, the Program Specialist, PIs on research at the CYC, and one designated RA or lab manager per research group (PI is responsible for choosing this person and informing the Program Specialist).

7. RAs will contact the CYC Program Specialist to make an appointment to visit each classroom where the consent forms are distributed. The RAs will spend 5 minutes describing the study to the children and what will be done, and will then spend about 20 minutes joining the classroom activity in an informal manner. A classroom schedule will be given to the RA to assist with scheduling these visits. Teachers will help RAs identify children who will participate.

8. The Research Room may be scheduled for up to one month in advance. Scheduling will be done via online calendar. Those on the cyc-research@umd.edu e-mail list will have access to the online calendar. The maximum amount that any one research group can access the Research Room is three times per week for three hours; however, if in consultation with other researchers (using the cyc-research@umd.edu e-mail group) it is determined that other researchers do not need the research room at that time, groups can schedule for more. If a group releases time they had reserved, they are expected to e-mail the research group to let everyone know that this time is available.

9. Research during the academic year begins after October 1st and should be completed by the end of May each school year. Initiating research can begin 2 weeks prior to the start of data collection (mid-September for the fall, and mid-January for the spring). Initiating a project includes distributing parental consent forms, meeting with the teachers, and setting up the Research Room schedule.

10. Summer research: If existing research approved during the year is continuing then the RAs will contact the CYC camp coordinators during the staff orientation week to explain the project. If new research is requested then steps 1 -6 above apply (submitting materials to the Director for review prior to Orientation week). Contact the Program Administrative Specialist (301-405-3168) for scheduling visits and research during orientation week.

11. Researchers MUST log in their interactions with each specific child in the logbook provided in the research room.

12. Any issues or concerns regarding research activities that arise will be shared with the RA’s and the supervising faculty member in charge of the project in a timely manner.

13. It is expected that all researchers will send a short report (one page) to the Director and the parents at the conclusion of the study. Parents and staff at the CYC are interested in the results of a study. Summaries can be drafted in parent-friendly text to provide general feedback (see webpage under Research for past examples).

We look forward to continued research from faculty and students. To add your project to the CYC web page under Research, please contact the Director at the contact information above.

(Revised July 29, 2016)