

Tips for Engaging Parents and Guardians of Children with Learning Disabilities in Research

Sharing Research Findings with Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians are busy. Here are some tips to communicate research findings with them effectively.



Start with the most important takeaway message. Highlight key points.



Use examples to describe complex ideas. Provide anecdotes or references to everyday life.



Describe the potential impact. Suggest ways findings can inform parents' and guardians' lives and decisions.



Avoid jargon. Replace scientific terms with everyday words.



Check the reading level. Use 6th to 8th grade reading levels for maximum clarity.



Keep it brief. Summarize your message in easy-to-read bullet points.



Partner with learning disability advocacy organizations to share research. Parents and guardians trust them and actively seek information from them.

Participating in Research: What Do Parents and Guardians Want to Know?

Parents and guardians of children with learning disabilities want to participate in research. Address common questions and concerns in an approachable, friendly way. These are the questions most important to them:



What's in it for you? Communicate clearly what your study's about and what you hope to achieve.



What's in it for them? Explain how their participation will make a difference.



What do you expect? Describe the time and tasks involved.



Who will see their information? Tell parents and guardians who will access the data and how it will be kept confidential.



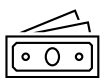
What if they are hesitant or uncomfortable? Explain that participation is voluntary and that they are free to leave the study at any time.



Why do you care? Share your motivation – professional or personal - if appropriate.



How will you protect them? Parents and guardians want to make sure their children are not harmed by the research. Specify privacy and safety plans in the research protocol and explain what they are and what resources can help support them.



Provide a gift card or stipend for participation and give them choices if possible.

Engaging Parents and Guardians Through Social Media

Parents and guardians of children with learning disabilities actively seek out information on social media. They may not be there looking for research, but social media posts may be a way to interest them. If you choose to use social media to engage them, these tips may help your efforts.



Use plain, everyday language and avoid jargon.



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Use forums and online message boards to engage.



Post a “call to action” letting parents and guardians know what you’d like them to do next. For example, they could:

- Comment on your post and share it with friends.
- Sign up for a newsletter or visit your blog.
- Contact you to request more information about your study.



Test versions of posts on each platform to see how they perform. All platforms provide you with tools to help with this.

Recruiting Parents and Guardians as Partners and Participants in Research

Parents and guardians want to contribute to research. Consider these points in planning your recruitment approach.



Recognize their expertise. Share how their perspective and experiences are important to research.



Highlight incentives. Share how their participation will have an impact and whether they will receive a gift card or stipend for their efforts.



Keep it clean and simple. Use plain language in bulleted text to make materials easy to read and understand.



Follow up. Respond quickly to parents and guardians who express interest. Connect directly in a phone call or email to let them know next steps.



Make it accessible. Create materials in multiple formats (e.g., printable text, videos, photos) to recruit through social media, email, and paper flyers. Provide flexible options for participation. Schedule sessions at their convenience, in modes they prefer (e.g., in-person, telephone, video conference).



Be empathic. Ensure that if they feel uncomfortable about questions, they can choose not to answer, take a break, or stop participating at any time.



Be respectful. Take a non-judgmental stance. Listen, but don't make assumptions. A mother's way of evaluating or making meaning of an experience may not be the same as yours.



Offer privacy. Ask about parents' and guardians' preferred mode of communication. Is it OK to leave a voice or email message?



Inspire curiosity. Include relevant and engaging infographics, memes, images, and videos.

Parents' and Guardians' Participation Throughout the Research Lifecycle

Parents and guardians want to provide useful advice on all aspects of research projects. Consider their perspectives and how they might be involved in each of these activities.



Selecting research topics that matter to the community.



Promoting the dissemination and use of results.



Advising on whether participating in the study is feasible for the community.



Interpreting findings.



Designing or reviewing protocols and procedures.



Participating in data collection and analysis.

How Do Parents and Guardians Find Trustworthy Information about Learning Disabilities Research?

Making decisions can be confusing when there are so many opinions out there about learning disabilities. Reach parents and guardians more effectively through sources they trust.



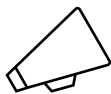
Where are you sharing the information? Parents and guardians look for sources that are reliable, like a well-trained healthcare provider, reputable professional or advocacy organization, or well-known university.



Partner with respected organizations in the learning disabilities space to disseminate study findings. Parents and guardians mentioned these trusted sources: LDAmerica.org, dysgraphia.life, understood.org, mayoclinic.org, and healthychildren.org.



Provide layperson descriptions of study results that use simple, plain language and describe the most relevant findings to parents and guardians. They want to know how the results may affect their day-to-day lives and decision-making.



Don't rely solely on social media to disseminate research results. Parents and guardians use social media to find information but are more ambivalent about whether it is trustworthy.