

# IRB Language Pack: Puppet-Based Interviews on iPad (Ages 4-8)

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Boilerplate protocol text, child assent screen copy, and a data-security checklist for deploying puppet-mediated, dichotomous interviews with young children. Use these as a starting point and adapt to your institution's policies.

## Primary context

- BPI Overview (UO): <https://dslab.uoregon.edu/about/berkeley-puppet-interview/>
- BPI Training (PDF):  
[https://pages.uoregon.edu/dslab/BPI\\_files/BPI%20Training%20Info%202010.pdf](https://pages.uoregon.edu/dslab/BPI_files/BPI%20Training%20Info%202010.pdf)
- CHAT-E: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/chate/>
- CHAT-E About: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/chate/about-2/>
- CHAT-E FAQs: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/chate/faqs/>

## 1) Method Rationale (Protocol Boilerplate)

We will use a validated puppet-mediated interview format to elicit developmentally appropriate self-reports from children approximately ages 4-8. Two identical animated puppets present dichotomous (either-or) statements on each topic and ask the child which puppet is more like me. This approach draws on the Berkeley Puppet Interview (BPI) method's evidence base and the tablet-based evolution exemplified by Northwestern's CHAT-E project. Digital delivery standardizes scripts and intonation, supports attention, and captures structured, analysis-ready responses.

Replaceable paragraph for your protocol:

[Study name] will administer an iPad-based interview in which two animated characters make opposing statements (e.g., "I have lots of friends." / "I don't have lots of friends."). Children indicate which character is more like them by tapping the screen. This developmentally appropriate design reduces literacy demands, maintains engagement, and produces structured data suitable for quantitative analysis.

## 2) Participants & Setting

Participants: Children in [grades/age band]. Inclusion criteria: [criteria]. Exclusion criteria: [criteria, e.g., child not fluent in language of administration unless translated audio is provided].

Setting: [classroom/clinic/intervention space]; children complete the interview individually on an iPad with a trained facilitator nearby to provide neutral instructions and technical help.

### 3) Procedures

- Session overview (5-12 minutes): a brief warm-up, on-device child assent, main item block, optional open-ended prompt, and a friendly closing.
- Items follow a paired-statement format (A vs. B). Side placement is randomized to minimize positional bias; A/B labels are retained internally for scoring.
- Facilitator support: adults read on-screen instructions verbatim if needed and avoid coaching or suggesting responses.
- Attention supports: short transitions and animations between items; optional breaks as needed.

### 4) Risks & Risk Mitigation

This is a minimal-risk activity comparable to typical classroom or clinic interactions. Potential risks include mild discomfort when reflecting on feelings or peer interactions. Mitigations: child-friendly language, option to skip any item, pause/stop upon request, and availability of a staff member to provide support or referral if a child becomes distressed.

### 5) Benefits

Participants may benefit indirectly from expressing feelings in a supportive format. The study/site may benefit from improved understanding of student well-being or symptoms.

### 6) Consent & Child Assent

Parental permission will be obtained prior to participation using IRB-approved consent forms. On-device child assent is collected immediately before the interview using age-appropriate language and a simple yes/no confirmation. Children are reminded they can stop at any time without penalty.

#### Sample Parent/Guardian Consent Snippet (adapt and integrate):

Your child is invited to take part in a short iPad-based activity where two friendly characters talk about everyday topics and ask which one is more like your child. The activity takes about [X] minutes. Participation is voluntary. You may stop your child's participation at any time. We will not collect names in the survey app unless required for school operations, and results will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Data will be protected using encrypted storage and role-based access. There is minimal risk; some questions may feel personal. If your child becomes upset, the activity will be paused or stopped. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate.

### Sample Child Assent Script - Pre-K / Kindergarten:

Hi! We are going to use the iPad to hear two little puppets. They will say opposite things, like one says "I like quiet" and the other says "I like noise." You can tap the puppet that is more like you. If you do not want to answer, you can say "skip." If you want to stop, just tell me and we will stop. Do you want to try this? (Yes / No)

### Sample Child Assent Script - Grades 1-2:

We are asking students a few questions with friendly puppet characters on the iPad. For each question, two puppets say different things. Choose the puppet that is more like you. If you do not want to answer a question, you can skip it. You can stop at any time. Do you agree to do this activity now? (Yes / No)

## 7) Privacy & Data Security

The app stores responses as coded choices; no audio/video is recorded by default. Identifiers are limited to [none / study ID / school roster linkage] as approved by the IRB. Data are encrypted at rest and in transit, access is restricted to authorized personnel, and exports are logged. We design for FERPA/COPPA/HIPAA-conscious deployments; formal compliance depends on your institution's configuration, policies, and agreements.

## 8) Data Retention & Sharing

Data will be retained for [X months/years] and then deleted or de-identified according to institutional policy. Aggregated results may be shared with [stakeholders]. Individual-level data will not be shared outside the approved team unless required by law or explicitly permitted.

## 9) Device & Infrastructure (Summary for IRB)

| Aspect       | Details                                                                                   |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Capture      | iPad app presents paired statements; child taps A or B; optional open comment.            |
| Offline mode | Responses can be stored securely on device and synced when connected.                     |
| Storage      | Encrypted cloud database with role-based access; least-privilege accounts.                |
| Exports      | Limited to approved formats (e.g., CSV/JSON); access logged; de-identification available. |

|         |                                                                                         |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Access  | Staff SSO or managed accounts; per-site data partitioning.                              |
| Support | Assessor on-screen guidance; pause/stop; break handling; adverse-event escalation path. |

## IRB Submission Checklist

- Protocol includes method rationale (paired puppet statements; dichotomous responses).
- Age-appropriate assent flow with skip/stop language; screenshots or copy included.
- Consent form describes minimal risk, privacy, and how to get help/stop.
- Data map: what identifiers (if any), where stored, who has access, how long retained.
- Offline capture plan and post-sync safeguards documented.
- Export/de-identification plan and audit logging described.
- Adverse-event and mandatory-reporting pathways listed (school/clinic policies).
- Translations reviewed (if multi-language); audio recorded with neutral tone.
- Accessibility: headphones as needed; visual pacing; breaks permitted.
- Training: staff read assessor prompts verbatim; no coaching; escalation steps.

## Appendix A - On-Device Assent Screen Copy (Drop-In)

| Title                                 | Copy                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Screen 1: Welcome                     | Hi! Two little puppets will say different things, and you can tap the one that is more like you. If you do not want to answer, you can press Skip. You can stop anytime. |
| Screen 2: Do you want to do this now? | Do you want to answer some questions with the puppets? [Yes] [No]                                                                                                        |
| Screen 3: Reminders                   | If you feel upset or need a break, tell the grown-up helping you. Tapping Skip is always okay.                                                                           |

## Appendix B - Sample Method Paragraph (Paste-Ready)

Children will complete a short iPad-based activity where two animated, identical characters present paired statements on topics such as feelings, friendships, and school. For each item, the child indicates which character is more like me by tapping the screen. The format is adapted from validated puppet-mediated interviews for early childhood and is designed to reduce

literacy demands while maintaining engagement. No audio or video is recorded by default; responses are stored as coded choices. Children may skip any item or stop at any time.

## Appendix C - Data Flow & Security Controls

| Step          | Details                                                                        |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Collection    | Child taps response on iPad; app stores item-level choices and timestamps.     |
| Local storage | Encrypted at rest; device passcode/MDM enforced; offline capture permitted.    |
| Sync          | Secure TLS to cloud; retries queued; integrity checked.                        |
| Processing    | Data partitioned by site; role-based access; audit logging enabled.            |
| Exports       | Restricted to authorized users; de-identification available; downloads logged. |
| Retention     | Retain for [X] then purge/de-identify per policy; backups follow same policy.  |