**Recruitment Strategy Document**

**for Child Participants**

**in Psychology Lab Study 2024**

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## Executive Summary

Our study aimed to explore and analyze recruitment strategies used to engage children in psychological research labs. To achieve this, we first conducted an extensive literature review to understand existing methods of recruitment in psychological research settings. Our review highlighted various traditional and digital approaches, with a focus on identifying techniques that are both effective and ethical. Key findings from the literature suggested that social media advertising and in-person recruitment in high-foot-traffic areas, such as popular family-friendly locations, were particularly successful in reaching and engaging child participants and their caregivers.

Following the literature review, we reached out to various psychology labs to gather real-world data and validate or contrast our findings. Through this outreach, we aimed to compare the theoretical approaches discussed in the literature with the practical recruitment strategies currently used by research labs. Our contacts with lab coordinators provided insights into the methods they employ, revealing that social media platforms, especially those frequented by parents, remain a favored tool due to their wide reach, cost-effectiveness, and ability to target specific demographics. Additionally, in-person recruitment efforts in high-traffic, child-friendly spaces, such as libraries, playgrounds, and community centers, also proved to be a successful strategy. These locations allow for direct interaction with potential participants in familiar environments, enhancing trust and likelihood of engagement.

In summary, our combined literature analysis and practical inquiry underscore that social media advertising and in-person recruitment at popular, high-foot-traffic areas are among the most effective strategies for recruiting children into psychological research. These approaches not only maximize outreach but also provide accessible, convenient opportunities for caregivers to engage with study coordinators, ultimately contributing to a more robust recruitment process.

## Objective

To develop a strategic approach for recruiting children for participation in a psychology lab study, focusing on maximizing engagement with both children and their parents through targeted digital and physical outreach methods. The aim is to achieve high visibility and build trust within the community by delivering professional, informative, and engaging recruitment materials.

## Strategy Outline

### Development of New Promotional Materials

**Design and Content of Posters/Flyers**

* **Objective:** To produce high-quality promotional materials that are visually appealing to children and convey clear, essential information to parents.
* **Design Specifications:** Utilize vibrant, family-friendly colors and playful, approachable fonts. Ensure the lab’s branding elements (logo, tagline)consistently presented to reinforce credibility.
* **Content Focus:** Highlight the study’s objectives in accessible language, outline participant eligibility, and provide information on the benefits of involvement. Include a QR code linking directly to an online registration form for convenient access, provide contact information and more about the study.

**Distribution Strategy for Physical Materials**

* **Placement Locations:** Identify and target high-traffic, family-oriented locations such as:
  + Public libraries and community centers
  + Schools and after-school programs (subject to appropriate permissions)
  + Playgrounds, parks, and recreational facilities
  + YMCA locations, children’s museums, and other local attractions frequented by families
  + BMO Field
* **Objective:** To reach a broad audience of potential participants and caregivers in environments where they naturally congregate.

### Digital Outreach Strategy

**Digital Outreach Strategy**

* **Web Poster Development for Facebook Ad Campaigns**
  + **Objective:** Design two distinct versions of the digital poster to test and compare which version has higher engagement and conversion rates on Facebook.
  + **Call to Action**: Both posters include a QR code and a link to the lab’s website, with prominent “Learn More” and “Sign Up Today” buttons.
  + **Comparison Metrics**: Engagement rates, click-through rates, and sign-up conversions will be tracked and analyzed to determine the most effective messaging and design for future campaigns.
* **Social Media Video Production**
  + **Objective:**Create a 30–60 second video for Facebook and Instagram that can serve as an ad or organic post, increasing lab visibility and encouraging family participation.
  + **Content Elements:**
    - A friendly introduction from lab staff or the principal investigator
    - A clear overview of the study’s objectives and potential benefits to children
    - Visuals of the lab environment and activities that are safe, engaging, and educational
    - Short testimonials from previous participants, if available, to build trust with new families
  + **Call to Action:**Include a clear and direct call to action (“Register Now,” “Learn More”) with an embedded link to the study’s informational website or registration page.

**Targeted Ad Strategy**

* **Objective:**Leverage Facebook and Instagram ads to maximize visibility and recruitment for the study, targeting local families with children. The primary goal is to increase enrollment of child participants who meet our eligibility criteria.
* **Audience Identification:**
  + **Demographics:**Focus on parents aged 25–45 with children approximately 8-14 years old within the lab’s geographical radius.
  + **Interests:**Target users who are interested in child development, early education, science, and community activities. Tailor ads to appeal to parents looking for educational activities for their children.
  + **Behavioral Targeting:**Utilize Facebook’s behavioral targeting options to reach parents who frequently engage with family-related content.
  + **Ad Format:** We will make two different types of ads, one being an infographic style similar to the original poster format. The other being a real image of either the lab environment or stock image of children with a larger western logo and less study specific information. This will be done to test which ad format would generate the most hits to inform which ad format is best used
* **Campaign Placement and Duration:**
  + **Platform Selection:**Run ads on both Facebook and Instagram to ensure comprehensive coverage of the target demographic.
  + **Ad Duration:**Start with a two-week campaign to assess initial engagement. After gathering data, adjust audience targeting, ad design, or messaging as needed to optimize for performance.
* **Promotional Intensity:**
  + **Initial Phase**: Run ads with a moderate daily budget to measure engagement and response. Adjust budgets based on the highest-performing ad version and audience segments.
  + **Ongoing Campaigns:**Use insights from initial engagement metrics to increase promotional intensity, focusing on high-engagement times (e.g., evenings or weekends) and scaling up successful ad elements to maximize recruitment reach.

### On-Site Engagement Strategy (Boots on the Ground)

* **Location Selection**
  + **Objective:** Identify family-centered public venues with high potential for reaching parents and children in the local community.
  + **Primary Locations:**
    - BMO Field during family-friendly events
    - YMCA centers and other local community hubs
    - Children’s museums and Berry Farms, particularly during peak visitation times
* **Preparatory Observation**
  + **Objective:** Conduct preliminary visits to each location to assess peak traffic times, observe family dynamics, and identify ideal areas for engagement.
  + **Execution:** Designate lab representatives to observe visitor behaviors at different times (e.g., weekends, weekday afternoons) to gather insights on crowd flow, demographic characteristics, and prime engagement opportunities.

### Monitoring and Optimization

* **Engagement Metrics Tracking**
  + **Objective:** Monitor the effectiveness of digital and physical outreach efforts on a weekly basis, evaluating social media metrics (likes, shares, comments), website traffic, and in-person inquiries.
  + **Key Metrics:** Track engagement rates on social media platforms, conversion rates from QR codes, and responses to informational inquiries at physical locations.
* **Continuous Refinement of Materials**
  + **Objective:** Utilize feedback and engagement data to refine and improve recruitment materials and approaches.
  + **Execution:** Adjust flyer designs, video content, and social media messaging based on engagement insights and target audience feedback, ensuring all communication remains relevant and effective in attracting participants.

## Conclusion

This recruitment strategy leverages both digital platforms and on-site outreach to build a robust, professional approach to recruiting child participants for the psychology lab study. By utilizing strategically designed materials and continuously refining the approach based on observed data and feedback, this plan aims to maximize recruitment potential, foster trust with parents, and encourage community engagement.