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| Title: | RESEARCH |
| Purpose: | *Defines requirements for conducting research involving the Birth to Three System.* |

# Overview

The Birth to Three System supports involvement in research designed to improve the field of early intervention. Any request made to an individual provider program or the Birth to Three System involving access to personally identifiable data, families, staff, or children in the Birth to Three System must adhere to this procedure. This applies to all researchers including CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) employees or contractors, and non-OEC researchers, including but not limited to: faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, and others. The goal of this procedure is to safeguard the rights, welfare, and confidentiality of children, families, and staff, as well as their personal information.

# How to Handle a Research Request

When a Birth to Three program director or staff person is approached by a researcher with a request for access to children, families, providers or their information they should:

1. Instruct the researcher to contact the Birth to Three System Part C Manager to discuss the proposed research study.
2. The Part C Manager will direct the researcher to the Office of Early Childhood webpage entitled, “[Research with OEC](https://www.ctoec.org/research-with-oec/)”. This page contains information about the researcher’s responsibilities, guidance for conducting safe research, a data request form, and more. The Birth to Three System Part C Manager will also describe the required process to request a Letter of Support from the Family Support Division Director.
3. The Part C Manager will bring it to the attention of the Family Support Division Director or administrative designee who will agree or decline to provide a Letter of Support.

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# Role of the Birth to Three System in Research

When proposed research involves people or data associated with the Birth to Three System, a Letter of Support (LOS) must be requested from The Family Support Division Director by the person wishing to conduct the research study. The Family Support Division Director will consider the potential benefits to the field of early intervention that the study may produce, and weigh the merit and feasibility of the request before choosing to provide, or declining, the request for a LOS.

If the Director agrees to provide a LOS, the principal investigator must still seek and obtain approval from their home institution (e.g., university or hospital of employment) Investigational Review Board (IRB). If an IRB has already granted approval for the proposed research, the Director may still agree or decline the invitation to provide a LOS.

**Right of Refusal to Participate**

Neither the LOS, nor approval by any IRB, obligates any Birth to Three program, staff person, parent, or child to participate in any research project. Individual provider programs and families always have the option of agreeing to participate, to agree then terminate their participation, or decline to participate - for any reason - without any repercussions or impact on their eligibility for, or receipt of, supports to which they would otherwise be entitled.

**Distribution of Research Opportunities**

Service Coordinators may share research opportunities in their community. Families' participation in research is voluntary and a decision that should not be influenced by involvement in Part C Birth to Three, nor should it take the place of services provided by Birth to Three. Service Coordinators should take care to not endorse or promote participation of any research that does not have a LOS.