**Child assent form**

**Do you want to take part?**

****

My Name is

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please put an ‘X’ in the box



**Yes** I would like to take part



**No** I don’t want to take part

**Appendix 3 – Parental consent form**

**Can delayed gratification be enhanced in children through encouraging future thinking?**

Tick ONE set of options and please return to the school by *date month year*

I **give permission** for my child to take part in this study

I **confirm** that I have read the ingredients list for the sweets to

be used in the study.

I **consent** to the capture of audio recordings of my child.

I **understand** that I can withdraw my child from the

study without explanation and that I can request my child’s data

to be withdrawn for up to 2 months after they have participated.

OR

I **DO NOT give permission** for my child to take part in this study

Your child’s name (in capitals): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your child’s date of birth:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parental letter**

School of Psychology

Queen’s University Belfast

Belfast BT9 5BN

Telephone: 02890 974261

Email: t.mccormack@qub.ac.uk

*Date*

Dear Parent/Guardian.

Your child’s school has agreed to take part in a research project that is being carried out by the School of Psychology at Queen’s University. The study examines children’s ability to wait for rewards that are delayed. We are writing to ask for your permission for your child to take part. Details of the study are given in the attached information sheet, and we also include a consent form that you can return to the school.

I would like to stress that all information collected during the study will be anonymous and personal identification from any data files or subsequent reports will not be possible. The only personal details necessary from each child will be his/her date of birth and their gender. Your child will only be identifiable via a unique anonymised code. Prior to the study, your child will be asked to provide assent for their participation in the study. Your child can withdraw from the study at any time and their data can be removed from the analysis up to two months after the completion date of testing. The study will be held in your child’s school and will be conducted by Dr Patrick Burns, who is a researcher in the School of Psychology, Queen’s University Belfast. Patrick has enhanced Access NI clearance.

We would be really grateful if you would give permission for your child to take part in this study, and please do contact us if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa McCormack

Professor of Developmental Psychology

**Parent information sheet**

**Information Sheet**

**Can delayed gratification be enhanced in children through encouraging future thinking?**

Your child is being asked to take part in a study looking at how children’s ability to imagine past and future events is related to decisions that they make. Before you give your child permission to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further details.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The study will look at children’s ability to imagine the past and future. It will also look at what is commonly termed delayed gratification: specifically, the ability to reject an immediate small reward in favour of a larger delayed reward when presented with a choice between the two. We are studying this in children in Primary 5 and Primary 7 because we know that both thinking about the future, and the ability to delay gratification, improves within this age group. We also know that among adults, thinking about the future causes them to become better at delayed gratification. We suspect that children may also become better at delayed gratification when asked to think about the future.

**What will the study involve?**

Children will be asked to complete four short tasks:

1. In the first task we will ask children to describe some specific events that either will happen to them in the future, have happened to them in the past, or events that repeatedly happen to them. Their responses will be recorded on a Dictaphone.
2. The second task assesses children’s ability to delay gratification. Children will be given the choice between a small reward available right away and a larger reward available later (e.g. 1 sweet now or 3 sweets tomorrow). Before they make their choice they will be reminded of the event details they reported in the first task. We are interested to see whether children who were asked to think about a future event are more likely to delay gratification than children who were asked to think about a past event or usual events.
3. The next task is also a delay of gratification task. It differs from the first, however, in that it involves imaginary rewards only. Children will play a computer game in which they choose between a small hypothetical sum of money available now and a larger hypothetical sum available later.
4. In the final task children will judge how far away various future time points feels to them by pulling a length of string from a specially constructed box.

**What sort of rewards will children receive?**

Children will receive Percy Pig sweets, a stationery set, stickers and novelty bendy pencils. The Percy Pig sweets used will be vegetarian, and contain no artificial flavourings or colours. They contain the following ingredients: glucose syrup, sugar, maltodextrin, glucose-fructose syrup, apple juice concentrate (2.5%), acid: citric acid, gelling agent: pectin (from fruit), potato protein, flavourings, fruit and plant concentrates (elderberry, red grape, safflower, apple, spirulina), acidity regulator: E332, glazing agent: E901**.**

**Where will the study take place?**

The study will take place in your child’s school on a date agreed with their teacher. Dr Patrick Burns, who is a researcher in the School of Psychology, Queen’s University Belfast, will conduct the study. Dr Burns has enhanced Access NI clearance. (This is the highest level of criminal record check provided by the Department of Justice NI, and is normally required when a researcher will be working closely with children). The study will be completed in two sessions across two consecutive days. Each session will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

**Will my child’s data be kept confidential?**

All data gathered will remain anonymous. As an assurance of this, each child’s data will be stored under a participant number rather than their own name. Once we have completed our study an anonymised copy of the data will be available to other scientists.

**What if my child decides they do not want to complete the study?**

Your child has the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and we will explain this to your child. All data collected prior to withdrawal will be deleted. You can also decide to withdraw your child’s data from the study at any point up until two months after the date of testing.

If you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Professor Teresa McCormack
School of Psychology,

Queen's University Belfast,
Belfast, BT9 5BN

+44 (0)28 9097 4174

t.mccormack@qub.ac.uk