Increasing Return Rates of Parental Permission Forms

1. Obtain signatures on all forms asking parents to check ‘Yes’ if they agree for their child to participate and “No” if they do not. Offer a small incentive (e.g. a pencil) to each student returning a signed form regardless of their parent’s decision.
2. Obtain signatures on all forms asking parents to check ‘Yes’ if they agree for their child to participate and “No” if they do not. Offer an incentive to the class (e.g. a pizza party) if 90% (or some other percentage) of parents return the forms, regardless of their decision whether or not to allow their child to participate in the study. Return rates can be tracked on the bulletin board or some other fashion to encourage participation.
3. Send reminders to return forms in hard-copy, via phone, or email.
4. Include a provision in your IRB protocol for obtaining verbal consent (i.e. over the phone) from parents who forget to return the Parent Permission Form.
5. Obtain parent permission during regularly scheduled school meetings such as Back-to-School night, PTA/PTO meetings, or other regularly scheduled meetings. You can always follow up with parents who did not attend by sending information home in another way.
6. If schools retain email addresses for parents, use email as a way to send forms, reminders or other communication regarding the research.