Willowbrook—Key Questions

(Fill out individually as homework.)

What is the **ethical question**?
Was the Willowbrook Study conducted ethically?

What are the **relevant facts**?

Who or what could be affected by the way the question gets resolved?
What are the relevant ethical considerations?

Group Participants (please list the names of those assigned to each position)

Those assigned to the Pro position:
(You will argue that the researchers acted ethically.)

Those assigned to the Con position:
(You will argue that the researchers did not act ethically.)

With your partner, develop two or three main points you wish to share with the opposing side. List these below. Record the main arguments of the students in the opposing side after they have shared them with you.

Pro: The benefits outweighed the potential harms. Researchers did not expose the children to greater risks than those they would otherwise have been exposed to (there was no “excessive risk”).

1.

2.

3.

Con: Respect for persons and fairness were violated. The study provided an undue inducement because students were given a coveted spot in Willowbrook in a newer part of the facility if they participated in the research. Parents and their children were not truly informed about the risks of the study. Also, the study could have been done on the adults in the facility instead of the children.

1.

2.

3.
Conclusions from Group Discussion

*Agreement* (if any)—After listening to both sides, did most people in your group agree on any points? If so, list those points here:

*Disagreement* (if any)—Is there strong disagreement on any points? If so, list them here:
Your Own Views

After listening to all the arguments, what are your own views on the Willowbrook Study?

- **Respect for Persons**
  Was this study respectful of the individuals involved? Why or why not?

- **Harms and Benefits**
  Did the benefits outweigh the risks (potential harms)? Why or why not?

- **Fairness**
  Was this study fair to the individuals involved? Why or why not?

Do you think that researchers conducted the study ethically? Does it meet the guidelines for research that your class identified? If so, how? If not, why not?