

About the study:

At the Child Neurodevelopment Research Lab, located within the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Department of Psychology, we are conducting a study about early brain growth and its psychological consequences for children with developmental disabilities. The focus of this research centers on two major questions: (1) how measures of head size (also called head circumference) taken at birth and at later check ups identify children who are eventually identified with a developmental disability (2) what are the potential effects of early brain growth on cognitive abilities. For this study, we would like to collect information from children with difficulties in communication and social interaction, including children for whom the possibility of a pervasive developmental disability or an autism spectrum disorder has been considered. We would appreciate your participation in this study. It will help advance our understanding of individuals with developmental disabilities so that they can be better supported to develop to their full potential.

What's involved:

For this study, your child will complete tasks designed to look at his or her intellectual strengths and weaknesses and language abilities. Your child will also be administered a play-like standard measure examining the presence or absence of symptoms often present for children with pervasive developmental disorders. Your child will also be asked to complete a set of simple experimental tasks that examine psychological abilities and problem solving. We will look specifically at your child's ability to maintain information over time, recognize when rules change, and solve problems involving objects. All procedures will be administered by a graduate student in Clinical Psychology who has training in interacting with children, or by a faculty member. The total amount of time required of your child for participation will not exceed four hours and will include ample opportunities for breaks. Also, if necessary, testing can be conducted over multiple sessions

You will be asked to complete a number of questionnaires about your child's developmental history, current school placement, behavior, and personality characteristics. It is expected that completion of the questionnaires will take about 1 hour; they can be returned to us by mail in an envelope that will be provided or at your first appointment. In addition you will be asked to participate in a standardized interview that assesses childhood history of difficulties with communication and social interaction and the presence of repetitive behaviors or interests. This interview is often used to examine whether a child shows behavior consistent with a pervasive developmental disorder or autism spectrum disorder. It is expected that this interview will take approximately two-to-three hours to complete. You may also be presented with a questionnaire about your child's behavior for a teacher to complete, together with a stamped envelope addressed to the Child Neurodevelopment Research Lab at UWM. Your child may participate even if there is no completion of a teacher questionnaire.

What are the benefits of participating:

There are a number of potential benefits to participation. First, you can receive, if requested, a summary of your child's performance on the developmental assessment measure administered, which may be helpful in educational planning. In addition, you may also request a meeting to receive feedback summarizing information from any diagnostic assessments administered. If you choose to schedule and attend such a meeting, a report summarizing the diagnostic results will also be provided following feedback. Unfortunately, we cannot provide this feedback to you unless you attend a feedback meeting, due to the sensitive nature of the information and the need to provide you with an opportunity to ask questions face-to-face. We are also available to answer any additional questions about the feedback or the report that you may have at a later date.

If you are interested in participating or would like further information please contact:

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