Infant Learning Project

Developments

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| • | |
|--|-----|
| Current Research Findings | 1 |
| In the Lab | 1 |
| Current Projects | 1 |
| Helpful Websites | 2 |
| Research for Older Children | 2 |
| Your Infant's Development | 2 |
| The Center for Children & Families | 2 |
| CCF Lecture Series | 3-4 |

Current Projects:

- Face
 Discrimination
 Studies:
 3-4 and 8 months
- Infant-Directed Speech Categorization: 4 and 6 months
- Contact us to participate!

We recently finished two series of studies and are pleased to share the results.

Infants at 6 and 10 months participated in a study investigating their ability to differentiate videos of two different women displaying the same expression, e.g., happy. This study was completed as part of a larger project that examined whether infants can differentiate two different expressions (happy vs. disgust) seen on multiple faces. If infants can differentiate emotions across different faces, AND they can differentiate two different faces displaying one expression, then infants are forming categories of facial expressions. Our results suggest that infants at both 6 and 10 months differentiated two moving videos of people showing the same emotion, indicating they are detecting differences in the

individual faces. However, 10-month -olds, but not 6-month-olds, detected the same facial expression displayed by multiple people and distinguished that expression from another (happy vs. disgust), which is evidence for categorization of expressions. This ability is important because at around 10 months of age, infants begin to look at adults for information on how to respond to new people and situations. For more information on these categorization findings, please visit our website and click on "Past Findings" on the left.

We also conducted a study looking at whether 4– and 6-monthold infants differentiate videos of two women producing infantdirected (ID) speech that is intended to communicate a comforting message or an approving message. ID speech is the special way adults and children speak to infants, using high pitch and exaggerated intonation. We found that both 4– and 6-monthold infants can tell the difference between the individual video examples of speech. The videos used in these discrimination studies will be used in categorization studies recently begun at the lab (See "In the Lab" for more information).

We want to thank all of the families that participated in this research! None of our work would be possible without your help. Thank you for advancing our knowledge of infants' abilities and your contribution to scientific knowledge!

In the Lab...

We are proud to congratulate Dr. Emily W. Touchstone on the completion of her dissertation and graduation last spring. Emily's projects in the lab included work investigating 6– and 10-month-olds' categorization of emotions on moving faces. Emily has recently accepted the position of Community Liaison Specialist of the new Center for Children and Families at UTD. Kristin Kuhlman Atchison successfully defended her dissertation proposal on October 17th. Kristin has already begun collecting dissertation data with 4– and 6-month-old infants on categorization of infant-directed speech. Kristin hopes to complete the research in the spring and graduate soon after.

Kate Shepard and her husband Grant welcomed a new addition to their family, Tucker Arnold.



Tucker was born October 6th and weighed in at 7lbs 5 oz. Kate is now back in the lab and is preparing a research project that will further investigate the role of moving faces during infants' early interactions.

Current Research Findings:

INFANT LEARNING PROJECT

The University of Texas at Dallas

School of Behavioral & Brain Sciences Callier Center for Communication Disorders



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> Faculty Lab Director: Dr. Melanie Spence

We are on the web: http:// bbs.utdallas.edu/ilp

Helpful Websites:

www.zerotothree.org "ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization that supports the healthy development and well-being of infants, toddlers and their families."

- **www.cdipage.com/index.htm** "Information on child development, parenting, family life, teenagers, learning, health & safety, child psychology and mental health."
- <u>www.pbs.org/wholechild</u> Information from the series "The Whole Child" on development from birth to age five
- **www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl** "NCEDL is a national early childhood research project with information focuses on enhancing the cognitive, social and emotional development of children from birth through age eight."
- stokes.chop.edu/programs/carseat Information on car safety for infants and children

Research with older children:

<u>Healthy Development Project (Pre-school)</u>: Aims to better understand factors that promote healthy social, emotional, and physical growth in children and families. For more information visit: http://bbs.utdallas.edu/healthydevelopmentproject/index.html

<u>Children's Speech Processing Lab (3-14 years)</u>: CSPL is looking at children's listening abilities and their understanding of some basic words. For more information visit: http://bbs.utdallas.edu/cspl/

<u>Think Lab (3– 14 years)</u>: Aims to discover how children think about the world around them. For more information visit: http://www.utdallas.edu/research/thinklab/ index.html

What can you do for development?

Below is information from Zero to Three, a national center for infants, children, and families. Visit: www.zerotothree.org

Language and Communication

Babies express their needs and feelings through sounds and cries, body movements, and facial expressions. Your baby will begin using words sometime around I year. By the time she is 3, she will be speaking in short (3-5 word) sentences.

• Watch and listen to see how your baby communicates what she is thinking and feeling.

• Repeat the sounds and words your child uses and have back-and-forth conversations.

• Read, sing, and tell stories. These are fun ways to help your child understand the meaning of new words and ideas.

• Talk about what you do together—as you play, do errands, or visit friends and family.

Thinking Skills

Your child is learning how the world works by playing and exploring. Through play, babies and toddlers learn about how things work and how to be good problem-solvers.

• Encourage your child to explore toys in different ways—by touching, banging, stacking, and shaking.

• Turn everyday routines into playful learning moments. For example, bath time is a chance to learn about ideas like sinking/ floating and wet/dry.

• Follow your child's interests. Children learn best through activities that excite them.

• Ask your child questions that get him thinking as he nears age 3.

For example, when reading a book together, ask "Why do you think the girl is laughing?"

Self-Control

Over the first 3 years, your child is beginning to develop self-

control—the ability to manage his feelings and actions in acceptable ways. He is also learning to wait, share, and work out problems with his friends.

• Use words to help your child understand his feelings. "You are really mad because we have to leave the park."

• Give choices to older toddlers. "Would you like to read books before or after we brush teeth?"

• Stay calm when your child is upset. This helps him feel safe and get back in control.

From: http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/early_learning_handout.pdf? docID=3081&AddInterest=1153

The School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences

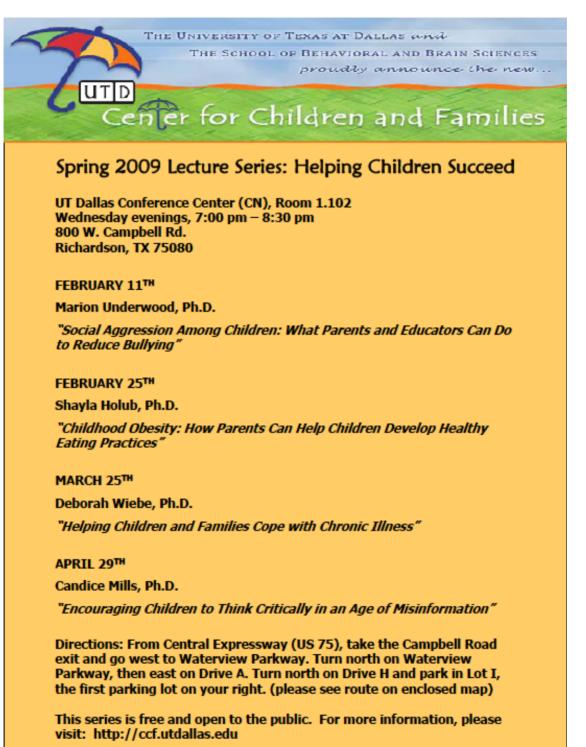
announces the

Center for Children and Families

The Infant Learning Project is proud to be affiliated with this new Center. Find out more at:

http://ccf.utdallas.edu/

See the following page for the Lecture Series schedule!



The University of Texas at Dallas is an equal opportunity/affirmative action university.

Map to the CCF Lecture Series

Note: Directions to the Infant Learning Project can be found on our website (http://bbs.utdallas.edu/ilp/)

