



# Nottingham Toddler Lab

## Newsletter, September 2006

### Greetings from the Toddler Lab team!

Welcome to the second Toddler Lab newsletter! The Toddler Lab team would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have registered with us or have come to visit us over the last year. Some of you may have seen Nikki and Gaia interviewed on East Midlands Today last October, which, we are pleased to say, has brought us even more volunteers. We now have almost 350 volunteers registered with us and we are always grateful for more! We may not have seen you this year because we do not always test children of all ages, but hopefully we will be seeing you soon.

### News from the Toddler Lab

You may have taken part in one or more of the studies that we have been running over the past year. Here are some of our findings:

#### Tell-Tale Study

Jenny ran a study for Tell-Tale Ltd looking at how different colour combinations of their new TV characters influence children's preference and attention. She tested 80 children and found which characters were preferred and attended to the most by boys and girls of different ages. This will help Tell-Tale to design the characters for their new TV series, coming to the UK soon.

#### Monster Search

Many of you will remember Gaia's study on the touch-screen computer where toddlers search for little "monsters" under coloured spots. Gaia will be presenting the results of this study at a conference in London later this month.

### Nuffield Colour Study

After testing more than 70 children, Emma has now finished her study of the effect of colour on preference, attention, memory, and naming. She found that older children preferred some colours and that they attended to, memorised, and learned to name these preferred colours more than others. This suggests that colour preferences may influence how easily colour words are learned.

### News from the Baby Lab

You may have also taken part in one or more of the studies from the Baby Lab over the last year. Here are some of the findings:

#### Infant Colour Preferences

Ellie has been running a study looking at infants' preferences for colours. She showed 39 babies pairs of colours and measured their eye movements towards each colour. She found that infants preferred brown and grey less than orange and pink. Interestingly, children usually learn the words for brown and grey much later than for other colours, so again this may mean that colour preferences influence colour word learning.



One of our toddler scientists in the baby lab

### Number Preference

Ellie has also been running a study looking at infants' preferences for numbers. So far she shown 44 babies groups of spots differing in number and measured their eye movements towards each group. We're still working on this study.

### Infants' Understanding of Preference

Huw has been running a study over the summer looking at how young children learn to understand the preferences of others. He showed 28 infants an animation where a character plays with some toys, which cause him to smile or not. Huw worked out how much time the children spent looking at the cartoons and found that children from an early age may understand that smiling shows preference.

We're still looking for babies between 0 and 24 months to help us with our new studies. If you and your baby would like to help us, please fill in a volunteer registration form or contact the lab.

### New studies about to start

Over the next four years we may contact you to ask you to take part in one or more of the new studies we will be running in the Toddler Lab. Nikki has three new research students joining her this October and this is what they will be working on:

### Development of motor and cognitive skills

Emma and Ellie are staying with us for their PhD research. They will be looking at how motor and cognitive skills develop during the preschool years, in both typically developing children and also with children that have had a brain tumour removed. This research is funded in part by the School of Psychology and the Children's Brain Tumour Research Trust. Prof David Walker from Queen's Medical Centre and Dr Debbie Serrien from Psychology are also involved with this study.

### Development of food preferences

Joanne Pybis will be joining our team to work on a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and Nutricia Ltd, investigating how food preferences emerge during the preschool years. Dr Ellen Townsend from Psychology is also involved with this study.

### Farewell to Gaia

Sadly, Gaia will be leaving us in October to take up a new position at the University of Oxford. She will however continue to work closely with the Toddler Lab team and you may even see her again on one of your future visits to the lab. We wish her all the very best for her new job at Oxford and have really enjoyed working with her.



### Many thanks to NTL

The Toddler Lab team would like to say thank you to NTL for sponsoring us over the past year. The stickers, teddies and T-shirts that NTL provided have been very popular with the toddler scientists.

### A big thanks to all our volunteers

Once again we would like to say a big thank you to all the toddlers and their families that have taken part in our studies so far. Your contribution is greatly appreciated, as we would not be able to carry out our important research without your help. We hope you have enjoyed your sessions at the Toddler lab and are interested in helping us in the future. With your continued support we hope to make the Toddler Lab a successful centre for research into child development for years to come.

### How to contact us:

If you would like any more information about the Toddler Lab please don't hesitate to contact us on (0115) 846 7920. We are always looking for volunteers, so if you, or a friend, have a baby or toddler and would like to join our team of young scientists please telephone us on the number above. You can also register online at: [www.psychology.nottingham.ac.uk/research/ntl/home](http://www.psychology.nottingham.ac.uk/research/ntl/home)

*With best wishes from the  
Nottingham Toddler Lab team*