

UBC

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

Parenting

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Lab



From the Director of the Parenting Lab, Dr. Charlotte Johnston:

Fall has definitely arrived, and with it the next edition of the Parenting Lab newsletter. As always, we want to first acknowledge how thankful we are to the parents, kids, and teachers who participate in and make our research projects possible. In this newsletter, we report some of our findings from the studies you helped us conduct.

Of course, we also hope that you will be willing to be involved in future studies, and that you'll tell your friends and family about us.

As usual, the fall brings changes to students coming and going from the lab. One of our graduate students, Yuanyuan Jiang has successfully completed her internship at UC San Francisco and is set to graduate with her PhD this fall. She is now in a post doctoral position in San Francisco. Congratulations Yuan!!! Natalie Miller and Dave Williamson have both successfully defended their dissertations and are off on internship – Natalie in Seattle and Dave in Calgary. We wish them great years! Sara Colalillo and Joanne Park are both planning their dissertation research projects and keeping things buzzing in the lab. We have two great research assistants in the lab – Lizzy and Bethany, and they are joined by Becca our wonderful volunteer. So, the lab is a full and fun place to be these days.

As always, we thank the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and UBC for research funding and student scholarship support.

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CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Institut de recherche en santé du Canada



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

RESEARCH REPORTS

Parent and Child ADHD – Sometimes a good fit

by Charlotte Johnston, David Williamson & Margaret Weiss

This study was one part of the larger study we conducted with families with children and/or parents with ADHD symptoms and was published in the *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*. In this aspect of the study, we tested an idea called similarity-fit, which predicts more positive parenting when both parent and child have high levels of ADHD symptoms, compared to when only one does. Mothers and fathers of 156, 5 to 13 year old sons with and without ADHD participated. We tested whether ADHD symptoms in the parents worked together with child ADHD to account for parents' positive parenting, including tolerance and empathy for the child. We found modest support for the idea of similarity fit - among parents who themselves had low levels of ADHD symptoms, the presence of child ADHD was associated with less positive parenting, whereas positive parenting was not affected by child ADHD among parents with more ADHD symptoms. Considered alongside the well documented difficulties associated with parental ADHD, our findings suggest that ADHD symptoms in parents also may help to buffer them from the challenges of parenting children with ADHD.

Compensatory Strategies in Adults with ADHD Symptoms

by Kate Kysow, Joanne Park, and Charlotte Johnston

Again, these findings were derived from our larger study of families of children and/or parents with ADHD. The study is published in the journal *ADHD: Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorders*. Lots of studies have found that adults with ADHD symptoms experience difficulties across multiple areas of life, including at work and at home. In this study, we wanted to focus on how adults with ADHD symptoms are coping and whether their use of compensatory strategies helps to reduce their experience of impairment. 49 adults (55% female) completed an interview assessing ADHD and were asked questions about their ADHD symptoms in childhood and in adulthood. We coded whether the adults mentioned using compensatory strategies such as organizational supports, adapting situations, or seeking help from others in dealing with their symptoms. The majority of the adults reported using a variety of these compensatory strategies! Also, the strategies they remembered using in childhood were similar to the ones they were currently using as adults. There were no differences in the strategies used by men versus women. Certain strategies, like organization and seeking external support, were used most often to cope with inattention symptoms. Adults who adapted or chose environments that are suited to ADHD symptoms or altered tasks to make them more manageable reported better functioning in areas such as employment and family routines. Excitingly, the more strategies adults used, the less their ADHD seemed to negatively impact their parenting. We hope these findings encourage adults with ADHD to focus on developing compensatory strategies and encourage therapists to build on such strategies in treatment programs.

Social Skills in Girls

by Natalie Miller

Natalie finished collecting data from girls for the Social Skills Study, as an extension of her dissertation research which focused on boys. We greatly appreciate the time and effort of the girls and parents who participated. This study sought to better understand the factors that contribute to how well children get along with others. In particular, Natalie was interested in whether the ways children pay attention to different social cues (e.g., how fast children notice angry, happy, or neutral facial expressions) are related to how well they get along with their peers. Similar to the results she found with boys, Natalie found that girls who were faster to notice the angry facial expressions of other girls (compared to other facial expressions) were more likely to have difficulties getting along with others compared to girls without this attention pattern. Importantly, and again parallel to her findings with boys, she found this relation only among girls who had more difficulties controlling or regulating their impulses or urges. Taken together, these results suggest that the ways children pay attention to social cues is an important factor to consider when understanding children's social difficulties, especially among children who tend to act on their first urge or impulse in social situations. Natalie has successfully defended her dissertation based on these results, and will be submitting the findings for publication in a clinical psychology journal in the near future.

STUDY OPPORTUNITIES



NEW ONLINE PARENTING STUDY!

Who?

Parents with a son between 6 - 12 years old with or without attentional/inhibition problems

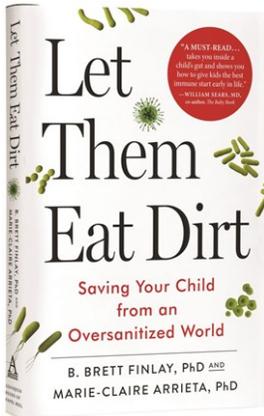
What?

Online questionnaires, two computer tasks, and a phone interview on parenting and child behaviour. Each parent will receive up to \$25.

When & Where?

You will be able to complete the study at any convenient time and from anywhere with phone and computer/internet access!

RESOURCES



<http://letthemeatdirt.com/>

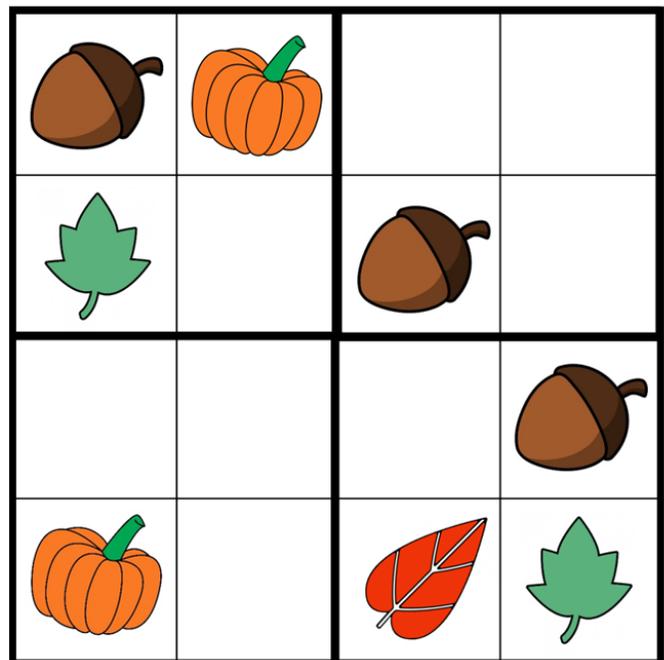
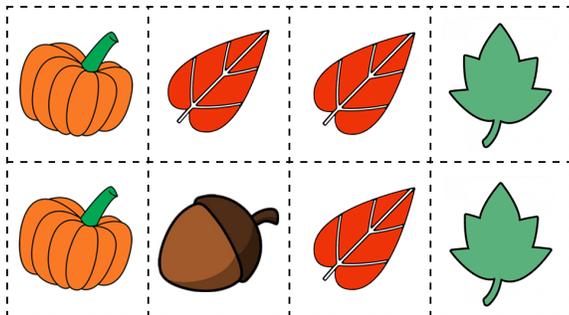
This is a great new book, written by Dr. Brett Finlay from UBC, that talks about the importance of microbes in early immune system development.

<http://www.caddra.ca/>

This is a website for CADDRA, a Canadian non-industry, not-for-profit, independent association. CADDRA is an alliance of healthcare professionals supporting patients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and their families. As leaders in the field, members conduct research, treat patients and produce the Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines for treating ADHD. On the webpage, you'll find a tab for public information that yields lots of recommended readings for parents and individuals with ADHD.

SUDOKU

Cut These Out !



Cut out the shapes on the left. Place each shape in a blank square so that every row, column, and bolded group of 4 squares has one of each shape.