



UBC PARENTING LAB NEWSLETTER

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Email us at
cjlab@psych.ubc.ca
with the heading
“newsletter”

Greetings from Dr. Charlotte Johnston

We extend Happy New Year wishes for 2018 to all of the families who have assisted with our research over the past years!

As usual, this newsletter serves to update you on recent happenings in the Parenting lab and findings from our studies. We are always so grateful for the participation of families in our projects – your assistance and time are what make our ongoing research possible.

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. Feel free to pass this newsletter on!

We have said good-bye to some of the Parenting Lab graduate students this past year – as they successfully completed their programs and headed off to new, exciting adventures. Dr. David Williamson is now a psychologist at the Alberta Children's Hospital and Dr. Natalie Miller is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Maryland. We miss them, but wish them well. Sara Colalillo is working to finish up her dissertation, and is busy interviewing for internship training next year. Joanne Park is in the midst of conducting her very interesting dissertation research project (see more on page four). The lab welcomed two new research assistants this year – Emma and Kyle – and they are proving invaluable in keeping the lab humming along! And finally, we have numerous volunteer research assistants and directed studies students – Arianna, Melanie, Aaron, Anson, Diane, Tom, Julia, Peter, Luke, and Chelsie – whose time and efforts are vital to the lab and our research.

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.

Research Reports

Correlations Between Parent and Teacher Ratings of Child Behaviour Problems

Elizabeth (Lizzy) Leong worked together with Joanne Park, Carly Parsons and Dr. Johnston on a project that she presented at the Canadian Psychological Association in Toronto in the summer of last year. In this project, Lizzy looked at parent and teacher ratings of children's behavior. Previous research has shown that there is often poor agreement between the ratings from teachers and parents and when this occurs, common practice is to place more weight on teacher ratings based on the assumption that teachers have greater knowledge of developmental norms because they work with many children. We wonder whether, parents who have more children also have more knowledge of developmental norms and would show more agreement with teacher ratings than parents who have fewer children. Using ratings from over 300 parents and teachers, we found no evidence that having more children is associated with better agreement between teachers and parents. Therefore, differences in how parents and teachers perceive children's behaviors do not seem to be due to differences in experience with children but instead are likely because of differences in factors such as context (e.g., children act differently at home vs. at school).

Implicit and Explicit Attributions for Child Misbehaviour

Along with former research assistants in the lab and Dr. Johnston, **Joanne Park** has been working on understanding how parents explain why children do things (e.g., "He knocked the cup over on purpose") as we know these explanations or attributions can influence parenting responses. We usually measure parents' attributions for child behavior using questionnaires (you may have done such a questionnaire where you read about a child behavior and then had to rate why the behavior had occurred). These types of questionnaires are useful, but they only capture the thoughts that parents are aware or able to report. Some thoughts or attributions about child behavior occur very quickly and outside of awareness. We have been trying to measure these more automatic or "implicit" attributions to see if they are related to parenting behaviors. In three studies, we had mothers offer attributions for child behavior under two different conditions. In one condition, mothers completed the attribution questionnaire as usual and in the other condition they completed the questionnaire while also try to remember a difficult string of 8 numbers. It is assumed that trying to remember the numbers results in people making quicker or more automatic ratings of the attributions. So far, across the three studies, our findings are a bit mixed. But, we do see some evidence that more implicit or automatic attributions are related to parenting choices and that these relations are distinct from the relations between parenting and responses to the questionnaire given in the usual form. We are continuing this line of inquiry and hoping to improve our ways of tapping into the various ways that parents think about child behavior and make decisions about parenting.

Research Reports

Factor structure of ADHD

Joanne Park presented her research on ADHD symptoms in adults at the International Society for Research in Child and Adolescent Psychopathology (ISRCAP) in Amsterdam in June 2017. Although ADHD is commonly viewed as a childhood disorder, research demonstrates that 50-90% of children with ADHD continue to experience the symptoms in adulthood. However, it is possible that the ways the symptoms of ADHD go together (i.e., some symptoms reflect problems with Inattention while others reflect problems with Hyperactivity or Impulsivity) changes in adulthood. For instance, hyperactivity symptoms might not be as relevant in adulthood as in childhood. In this study, we examined ratings of ADHD symptoms in over 400 adults (many of them parents of children with ADHD). Similar to studies with children, the best-fitting picture of the symptoms of ADHD in adults suggested that Inattention and Hyperactivity/Impulsivity symptoms form different clusters. However, there was also evidence that the hyperactivity and impulsivity symptom clusters could be separated, suggesting that impulsivity symptoms may be more distinct in adulthood compared to in childhood.

Format and Description of Parenting Interventions Influence Parents' Ratings of Treatment Acceptability

Sara Colalillo also presented her research at the ISRCAP conference in Amsterdam! She was curious about mothers' thoughts and opinions about treatments for child behavior problems, and surveyed a large group of mothers of 5- to 12-year-old children with various levels of behavior problems. Mothers read descriptions of treatments that included different strategies to target child behavior problems: sometimes the treatment description involved behavior management strategies (e.g., praising good child behavior), and sometimes the treatment description included both behavior management strategies and mindfulness techniques (e.g., meditation for parents). Furthermore, sometimes the treatment was described in a group format with multiple families participating, and other times the treatment was described as one-on-one time with a therapist. Mothers were asked how much they liked the strategies described, and how likely they would be to try them out. Overall, mothers preferred individual to group treatments. However, for group treatments, mothers preferred when behavioral strategies were combined with mindfulness techniques, compared to behavioral strategies alone, especially if the treatment was described as being beneficial for both the child (improving child behavior) and the parent (reducing parenting stress). From this study, we have learned that mothers are more interested in treatments that involve one-on-one interactions with a therapist, rather than group treatments. Nevertheless, if a group format is the only option, treatments that combined child behavior management and mindfulness strategies that benefit the parent are the most appealing to mothers.

Research Opportunities

Parenting and Communication Study

Hi Moms!

If you have a **6- to 10-year-old child**, the **UBC Parenting Lab** needs your help in our **Parenting and Communication Study**

Who is involved? We are looking for mothers of 6- to 10-year-old children to participate.

What is Involved? A 2.5-hour visit to our lab that involves completing several questionnaires, as well as computer and communication tasks.

When and where? A visit at our lab on the UBC Campus will be scheduled for a time that is convenient for you, including evenings and weekends. If needed, childcare can be provided.

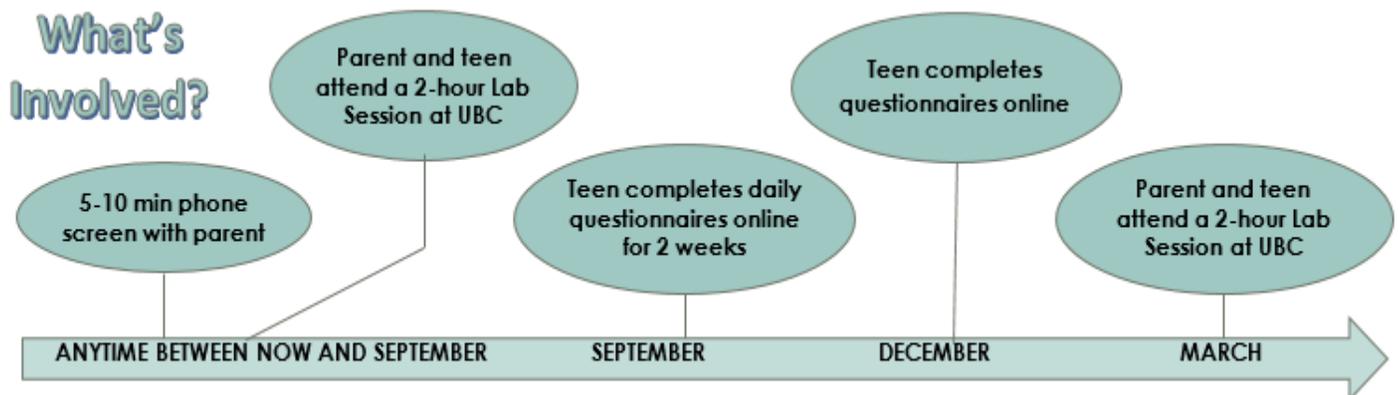
Compensation: Mothers who participate will be compensated with \$40 and can earn a potential bonus amount depending on the in-lab tasks.

Please email cjlab@psych.ubc.ca or call **604-822-9037** for more details!

Transition to High School Study

Is your child in grade 7 or going into grade 8?

We are **CURRENTLY RECRUITING** for a study examining how the transition to high school affects mental health and well-being in youth. Specifically, we're interested in how youth communicate with friends, and we want to find out what factors help youth cope with stress.



Participating families will be compensated with an honorarium of \$85. If you are interested in participating, please contact our lab anytime to learn more and determine eligibility at:

daslab@psych.ubc.ca or call **604-822-9951**

Resources

This link leads to a wonderful, nonprofit resource for parents, with all sorts of information about children, child development, and child treatments. It was created by psychology experts who formed a consortium to develop a web resource center for behavioral science-based information on children, youth and families. Feel free to check it out at: <http://infoaboutkids.org>

Word Search

R X R K Y G F A B Y K J F B H
K A J A A N L D B L I V L B C
U T L R I L N M L F T Z O Z T
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BUNNY
BUTTERFLY
CATERPILLAR
FLOWER
GARDEN
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NEST
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