



The Labs of Cognitive Neuroscience Division of Developmental Medicine Children's Hospital Boston *Spring 2012 Newsletter*

Hello from Dr. Nelson!

Hello from the LCN! I hope this newsletter finds you all well. It has been a very busy winter here at the LCN. Many of you have come into participate in current projects (thank you!) and we are planning several new studies for the spring. We've also been working with our partners in the [Division of Developmental Medicine](#) on some important steps toward growing our research program. As part of that effort, we are very excited to report that families in our Participant Registry will now have the opportunity to hear about studies across the Division, rather than just within the LCN. For more details, please see the announcement below. And please keep your eye out for additional updates in this newsletter and on our website in the coming months. It's a very exciting time, and we are moving ever closer to our goals of earlier identification, better treatment, and better outcomes for children and families affected by developmental disorders. As always, please feel free to explore our [website](#) or contact our research team for more information about studies in which your family might participate.



Whether you have already taken part in our studies or have recently joined our growing Participant Registry, I greatly appreciate your interest in our research. Your support of our work and participation in our studies are invaluable to us in answering many important questions related to infant and child cognitive development.

Warm wishes,

Charles A. Nelson, Ph.D.

Director of Research, Division of Developmental Medicine
Richard David Scott Chair in Pediatric Developmental Medicine Research
Professor of Pediatrics and Neuroscience, Harvard Medical School

The Participant Registry--An Update

If you are receiving this newsletter, it most likely means that you are also a member of our Participant Registry. As a member, you have opted to hear about studies for which your child may be eligible, either via e-mail or mail. In order to support the growing research programs across our department at Children's, the Division of Developmental Medicine, we will soon be making the Participant Registry accessible to researchers from across the Division. Currently, this only includes a handful of studies, including projects looking at autism spectrum disorders, adolescent substance abuse, and other elements of infant and child development.

The process by which you are notified about studies will remain the same, and you will always have the opportunity to opt out of further communication about any given study following the initial letter or email. We will also continue to ensure that you are not contacted by multiple studies at the same time, or even within the same month. And, as always, you may remove your family's information from the Registry at any time--simply call or email and we will promptly remove your

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information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rebecca Hansen at 857-218-3011 or rebecca.hansen@childrens.harvard.edu. Thank you, as always, for your support and your participation in our work!

Out and About

Spring is fast approaching, which means that we will be gearing up for lots of family-oriented community activities. Please stop by and see us if you are at any of these upcoming events!

Cambridge Science Festival, Friday, April 20th Science Carnival

Looking for something fun to do with the kids during April vacation? Stop by and see us at the Science Carnival! We will have a host of brain teasers and, as always, our giant brain puzzle. It's sure to be a day jam-packed with science fun. For details, visit www.cambridgesciencefestival.org.

YMCA Health Kids Day, Saturday, April 28th Huntington & Hyde Park YMCAs, 10:00-2:00

We will have activity tables at these two local YMCA branches (and possibly one or two more) for this annual event. This year, the focus is all about summer and how kids and families can keep their mind and body active. Click [here](#) for more information.

Newton Kids FunFEST, Sunday, May 13th Newton City Hall, 11:00-5:00

There will be tons of great family activities and even rides at this event, which happens to fall on Mother's Day this year. (A perfect excuse for all you moms to treat yourself to some cotton candy!) Click [here](#) for details. Hope to see you there!

Refer a Friend!

We do our best to make families in the community aware of our research efforts, but no one can do a better job of explaining what it's like to participate than those of you who have already been into the lab!

If you know a family who you think might be interested in our work, please feel free to forward along this newsletter or talk with them about your experience. If they have questions or would like to sign up for our Participant Registry, they can contact Rebecca Hansen at rebecca.hansen@childrens.harvard.edu or 857.218.3011.

Thank you as always for your support!

Featured Study: Spatial Memory Development in the First Two Years



During the first two years of life as infants are learning to crawl and walk, they build an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the space around them. Previous studies suggest that there are two distinct strategies for learning spatial representations and that these strategies emerge at different times during development. The first is an

egocentric spatial memory (memory for locations is coded in relation to the body) that has been observed as early as a few months old. The

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second is an allocentric spatial memory (memory for locations is coded in relation to the surrounding environment) that emerges around 21 months of age.

In this project, we aim to study the development of these two memory abilities and better understand the specific neural circuits underlying them throughout early childhood. Given the impact of several neurodevelopmental disorders, such as autism, schizophrenia, and Down syndrome on the behavioral and neural components of memory, it is of particular interest to understand the development of memory and the neural circuits underlying it.

We will be seeing infants at 9 and 24 months old for this study, using both EEG and eye tracking measures.

If you are interested in hearing more, please contact Adeline Jabes at adeline.jabes@childrens.harvard.edu. Thank you!

www.wherekidshelpkids.org