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Children's Hospital Boston

## Hello from Dr. Nelson

Hello from the Labs of Cognitive Neuroscience! I hope that everyone has been staying cool in the unusually intense heat of this Boston summer. There has certainly been no shortage of excuses to break out the back yard sprinkler or hit the beach! We are keeping busy as always here in lab with new studies looking at stress and emotional development in adolescents, autism spectrum disorders, and infant face-processing. As always, please feel free to explore our [website](#) or contact our research team for more information about studies that you or your child might participate in.

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**



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## In the News

### "What is Neuroscience Telling Us About Babies?"

*Ab Initio International, Summer 2010*

Click [here](#) to read this interview with Dr. Nelson, in which he talks about some of our current research, how it relates to infant attachment, and the potential for research to inform the way that doctors work with infants.

### "Saving Face: Infants may be more skilled than adults at facial recognition"

*Harvard Medicine, Spring 2010*

Click [here](#) to read this article covering some of our work in the development of facial recognition skills, part of *Harvard Medicine's* issue looking at what research is telling us about our five senses.

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## Become Our Fan on Facebook!

This spring the LCN started our very own Facebook page, where fans can stay in the loop about our newest studies and lab happenings. Parents are also welcome to post photos of lab visits or their young "Neuroscientists in Training," like these two adorable twins who have paid us many visits and also happen to belong to our Lab Coordinator, Alissa!

We hope this will also be a way to reach out to new families via those who already know us, so if you are an LCN fan please take a moment to "like" our page! You can find us at [www.facebook.com/wherelabshelpkids](http://www.facebook.com/wherelabshelpkids).



## In the Community

### Martha Eliot Community Health Fair

**Date TBD in September/October, The Martha Eliot Community Health Center, Jamaica Plain**

Look for us at this fun-filled day of family friendly activities, ranging from dance troupe performances, to games, to free health screenings. We will be there with some fun new brain teasers and our giant brain puzzle! If you're in the JP area or just looking for a fun way to spend an early fall day (the Health Center is just a block from the Stonybrook T stop on the orange line), please check the Martha Eliot [website](#) in the coming weeks for an official date. Hope to see you there!

### 2010 Greater Boston Walk Now for Autism Speaks

**Sunday, September 26th, Suffolk Downs**

This will be our third year participating in the resource fair at the Autism Speaks walk, which will include a host of organizations providing services and information for children with autism and their families. For more information about the walk and how you and your family can get involved, [click here](#).



### Boston Children's Museum

In addition to study participation opportunities here in the lab, you can also visit us at Boston Children's Museum on Monday afternoons! Research Assistants from Dr. Margaret Sheridan's lab will be there with some fun memory studies for children ages 4 and up. Look for them at the end of the main hallway on the third floor!

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## Featured Study: Adolescent Stress & Coping (13-17 year olds)

The ability to regulate our emotional response to everyday challenges is critical to living successfully as an adult. Research suggests that these abilities have a long developmental trajectory over the course of childhood and into adolescence. Because of this long trajectory we believe that these abilities might be significantly impacted by the experiences that children and adolescents have.

**What parts of an adolescent's experience influence his or her emotional response? Could difficult and stressful experiences be part of what affects an individual's emotional development? And could stress reactivity predict differences in emotional sensitivity?**

In this study, adolescents will come to the lab and individually fill out some surveys that ask questions about challenges they may have faced as children. In addition, we will ask them about events that may have happened to them and their reactions to those events. We will then measure stress reactivity markers like heart rate while they do a challenging task.

The way children respond to stressful experiences when they are young may shape the way they react to experiences as adults and adolescents. This has major implications for their emotional and psychological health. By better identifying the biological substrates relating stressful experiences to emotional health during adolescence we aim to better identify how to help children cope with emotional challenges.

If you are interested in participating with your child, please contact Margaret Sheridan at [margaret.sheridan@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:margaret.sheridan@childrens.harvard.edu) or 857-218-5213.

