The Infant Sibling Project

Children’s Hospital and Boston University

Meet the Staff

Saying goodbye:
The infant sibling project would like to wish a few of our staff members luck in their future endeavors.

Tara Augenstein is beginning a job as a research assistant in the Department of Psychiatry at the Children's Main Hospital.

Leah Casner will be pursuing a degree in public health in the fall at the Boston University School of Public Health.

Laura Kasparian will be pursuing a degree this fall in speech language pathology at Boston University.

New staff:

Kerri Downing began this June as our new Family Coordinator for the project. She recently graduated from the University of Connecticut with a bachelors in Psychology and a minor in Neuroscience. She was involved in a project on the motor development of infant siblings at Uconn and brings wonderful experience to our research program.

Kristin Concannon joins the Infant Sibling Project as a Research Coordinator. For the past two years Kristin acted as Lab Manager for the Health and Psychophysiology lab at Harvard University. She has her masters in Mental Health Counseling from Boston College and studied Child Development at Vanderbilt University as an undergraduate.

CALLING ALL FAMILIES AND FRIENDS:

Know any families who would like to get involved?
The Infant Sibling Project is currently recruiting infants as young as 3 months!

Have them call Kerri Downing at 617-455-7238
or e-mail at project.infantsibling@gmail.com
Meet the staff

Clinical Research Coordinator

Vanessa Vogel-Farley will be continuing as the clinical research coordinator at the laboratories of cognitive neuroscience, at Children's Hospital. She received her bachelors in Chemistry from the University of Minnesota twin cities. Her research interests include early brain development and early identification of autism.

Doctoral Students

Anne Seery is a graduate student in the Psychology PhD program in Human Development at Boston University. Currently, she is examining infants’ brain activity as they begin to learn the sounds that are used in the English language and how brain response relates to language development.

Meagan Thompson is a graduate student in the Psychology PhD program in Human Development at Boston University. She currently is investigating early behavioral development and the relationship between infant and maternal gesture and later language development.

Sharon Fox recently completed her MD from Harvard Medical School. She is currently pursuing a PhD in the field of Neuroimaging through the Medical Engineering/Medical Physics program at MIT. She is currently studying face and language processing using Near Infrared Spectroscopy (NIRS).

Adrienne Tierney received her Masters in Neuroscience and Education. She is currently a doctoral student in human development at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where she studies how the development of brain dynamics differs in infants at a higher risk for autism.

Post-doctoral Fellows

Rhiannon Luyster received her PhD in Developmental Psychology from the University of Michigan. She is currently examining the relationship between visual attention and face processing using ERP and eye tracking data.

Jen Wagner received her PhD in Developmental Psychology from Stanford University and is a postdoctoral researcher on the Infant Sibling Project. Her work on the Infant Sibling Project examines face processing in the first year of life using eye-tracking, ERP, and NIRS.

Questions, comments, concerns?

Call Kerri Downing at 617-455-7238 or e-mail at project.infantsibling@gmail.com
The Infant Sibling Project is excited to announce that we are currently enrolling infants who are 3 months old. At this visit we are completing an audio ERP or event related potential as well as a NIRS paradigm. If you have friends who are expecting and already have a child, please have them call 617-455-7238 for more information on how to get involved!

Genetics

We have begun the genetics portion of the study. For those families interested, we will be collecting a genetic sample from each member of the family at the beginning of the study and once again from the infants when they turn 36 months.

For more information: e-mail us at project.infantsibling@gmail.com or call us at 617-455-7238.

What is NIRS?

NIRS or Near Infrared Spectroscopy is cutting edge non-invasive technology that very few labs in the country are currently using. NIRS uses a hat similar to the ERP portion that your children are currently wearing during their regular visits. This technology uses light technology to study brain activity. It involves a separate visit at 6, and 12 months and a simultaneous visit at 9 months. This visit will take around 30 minutes to complete.

Want to get involved in NIRS?
Call Kerri at 617-455-7238

Project Updates: 3 month visits

The Infant Sibling Project is excited to announce that we are currently enrolling infants who are 3 months old. At this visit we are completing an audio ERP or event related potential as well as a NIRS paradigm. If you have friends who are expecting and already have a child, please have them call 617-455-7238 for more information on how to get involved!

Questions, comments, concerns?

Call Kerri Downing at 617-455-7238 or e-mail at project.infantsibling@gmail.com
Many of our staff members and students presented posters at the International Meeting for Autism Research in May of 2010 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Some topics that were presented include:

**High-Risk Infants' Behavioral and Neural Responses to Faces: An Eye-Tracking and Visual ERP Study**

By: Rhiannon Luyster, Jen Wagner, Tara Augenstein, Laura Kasparian, Dr. Helen Tager-Flusberg, and Dr. Charles Nelson.

**Atypical Electrophysiological Response and Lateralization to Speech Stimuli in Infants at Risk for Autism Spectrum Disorder**

By: Annie Seery, Vanessa Vogel-Farley, Tara Augenstein, Leah Casner, Laura Kasparian, Dr. Helen Tager-Flusberg, and Dr. Charles Nelson.

**High Risk Infants' Visual Scanning and Attention Disengagement in Response to Emotional Faces**

By: Jen Wagner, Rhiannon Luyster, Dr. Helen Tager-Flusberg, and Dr. Charles Nelson.

**Developmental Pathways in EEG Activity in Infants at High Risk for Autism**

By: Adrienne Tierney, Laurel Gabard-Durnam, Dr. Helen Tager-Flusberg, and Dr. Charles Nelson.