Greetings from the Child Emotion Project! This newsletter provides information on our progress in our studies of child emotion regulation. We also hope to provide information and resources for our participating families.

**Progress Report**
We now have over 90 families enrolled in our two child emotion studies. We are delighted that so many of you have been willing to give your time and effort to our project, and we know that participating in our study takes time out of your busy schedules. We owe our success to the dedicated families who participate in our research. Thank you again for your support and your efforts!

At the end of August, we will be completing the first stage of the Preschooler Emotions Project and five families have already completed their second laboratory visit. The second visit is critical to understanding children’s emotional responses beyond what we can observe behaviorally. We hope that you will be willing and able to continue participating!

We also recently had our tenth participant in our pilot study of emotion and attention in children and look forward to more participants joining our project!

**Description of the Child Emotion Project**

*The Preschooler Emotions Project*
◊ **First Visit**
  Parent completes questionnaires on Child’s temperament and emotional development. Child is videotaped playing games, performing tasks, and interacting with our research staff.
◊ **Second Visit**
  Child is videotaped while participating in activities and tasks with research staff, and Parent and Child are videotaped together engaging in various activities. Parent also completes additional questionnaires about Child’s social and emotional development.

*The Child Emotion and Attention Project*
Child plays a fun computer game while EEG is recorded through electrodes attached to a special cap placed on Child’s head.

Have a suggestion for a topic in a future newsletter? Let us know! Email us at emotionregulationlab@gmail.com.
**Research in Child Development**

We plan on providing snapshots of recent research in child development in every newsletter. Please contact us if there is a specific issue that you would like to learn more about.

From *Infants to Adolescents: Research Update*, Volume 7, Number 2, April 2006

*I Know What You’re Thinking*

A recent study of preschoolers tells us something about the development of mature thought. Researchers compared 3- to 5-year olds from China and the U.S. on several tasks. Some tasks required impulse control (e.g., waiting their turn when helping someone build a block tower, or saying “day” when they saw a moon and “night” when they saw a sun). Others required that they understand that thinking can be manipulated (e.g., report that a puppet would search for a toy where he left it if he didn’t know it had been moved). These two abilities are thought to be related. For example, to respond “night” when looking at a picture of a sun, one must curb the impulse to say “day.” To imagine someone’s erroneous thought, one must block what is known to be true.

U.S. and Chinese children had a similar understanding of what others were thinking and both groups improved with age. But at every age the Chinese youngsters had better impulse control than their U.S. counterparts. The authors note that Chinese parents expect impulse control by age 2 whereas U.S. parents do not expect it until the preschool years. So the superior impulse control may reflect parenting style. (Genes may play a role, too. A genetic pattern associated with the impulse problems of ADHD is found in 48% of U.S. children. In China, where ADHD is virtually unknown, it occurs in only 2% of children.)

Whatever the reason, superior impulse control doesn’t necessarily translate to better thought interpretation. Even with advanced impulse control, Chinese youngsters were no better at imagining the thoughts of others. But the authors note that U.S. children are more likely to have the advantage of siblings. Children with older siblings are more tuned in to others’ thoughts, probably because they have more chances to discuss others’ mental states. Chinese youngsters, for whom siblings are forbidden, lack this exposure.


From *Infants to Adolescents: Research Update*, Volume 7, Number 3, July 2006

*Tummy Aches*

Children often have tummy aches for unexplained reasons. A recent U.K. study investigated possible precursors of these complaints.

The researchers analyzed data from a large sample of children who had been followed from birth. The parents in the study had reported their own physical and psychological
health 6 and 8 months after their child’s birth. They had also described their child’s temperament at the same times. Six years later, they reported how often in the past year their child had tummy aches. Children with 5 or more tummy aches were classified as having recurrent abdominal pain (RAP). Just under 12% of the children (mostly girls) had RAP.

Moms and dads who were anxious when their children were infants were more likely to have children with tummy aches 6 years later. The same was true for moms who had reported minor physical symptoms such as sweating, dizziness, and sleep disturbances during their child’s infancy. Children’s temperament played a role, too. Very active children and children who had irregular eating and sleeping patterns as infants had an increased risk of tummy aches at age 6.

The authors offer several explanations for their findings. It may be that children copy the behavior of a parent who often appears ill. Or, anxious parents may be especially tuned in to their child’s illness complaints, reinforcing them by their concern. It’s also possible that children inherit a predisposition to anxiety from anxious parents. Whatever the case, addressing parental anxiety while children are still infants might help to prevent RAP as they mature.


Moving? New Phone Number? Questions or Concerns?
We hope to keep in contact with all of the participants in the Child Emotion Study and we hope that you will continue supporting our research for years to come. If you move or change your phone number, or if you have any questions or concerns about our research, we would greatly appreciate it if you would let us know. You can call us at 212-650-3878 or e-mail us at emotionregulationlab@gmail.com.

Thank you again for your support. We look forward to seeing you soon!

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