



The WHALE Study Family Newsletter December | 17th | 2021

End of Year Wrap-Up

What's happened since last year? In the WHALE study, we resumed in-person visits including both MRIs, lab visits, and eventually home visits. We are so grateful to our staff and families for following safety precautions to prevent the spread of illnesses.

The WHALE team recently celebrated that we are officially halfway done with data collection! In 2021, we met with over 55 new families across 114 visits! We so appreciate our families and would appreciate it if you spread the word to other families with youth ages 4-6, as we are still looking for more participants!

We consistently sent out newsletters almost every other week. That means twice monthly parent-friendly content in your inbox! (Can you believe this is our 23rd newsletter this year?!) You can read [all our past newsletters on our website](#). Meanwhile, here's a review of what we covered in 2021:

In January, we provided a guide to [consider if therapy is right for you](#) and [tips on how to get started with therapy](#). We also came back to this topic in May with guidance on [identifying a therapist for your child](#), including questions to ask a potential provider. We also addressed some routine parenting challenges, which may have felt harder in the midst of a pandemic: for example, [managing screen time](#). We also covered a "hot topic" related to discipline. We posed the question of "Helping or hurting?" when regard to using physical discipline, explored what science has to say, and shared some [healthy alternatives to spanking](#).

This year felt like a whirlwind of lifestyle adjustments related to developments with COVID-19. February's newsletters focused on children's anxieties and worries, including [suggestions for how you can help, as a parent](#) and specifically related to [returning to in-person care or school!](#) Returning to school came back again in September with the [new school year](#) and importance of structured socialization and learning opportunities. March seemed to be a tough time; we covered [continual pandemic challenges affecting families](#), and [how to survive Spring break!](#) When the CDC released new guidelines about fully vaccinated adults being able to un-mask, we explored the psychological impact of yet another COVID adjustment ([May](#)), especially since our 4-7 year olds were still not eligible. In November, we did address some tips on helping your children [prepare for their first and second COVID shots!](#)

In terms of keeping your kids healthy, we discussed cognitive health and academics by addressing [the concern of "summer slide"](#) reminding you that during long breaks from school it's important for children to both have a break from work but still keep their minds active.

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Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!



Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding The WHALE Study or the COVID-19 situation. Staff can be reached by call, text, or email: whalestudy@unc.edu | 919-914-0588

Find us on Twitter: [@circlelab_unc](#), Instagram: [circlelab_unc](#), and [Facebook!](#)

Newsletter written by Dr. Ilana S. Berman and formatted by Dominique N. Martinez

(This is also true again now, for the few weeks they may have off from school!) We encouraged sharing family and cultural traditions and history with your children around [Juneteenth](#) because there is always an age-appropriate way to help children understand their world. In August, we shared the psychologist-recommended ways to [encourage healthy eating](#) and [how to help your picky eater](#). The topic of food came back to us following Halloween, as we reviewed the [risks of restricting access to candy](#)! We also covered how to [maintain healthy sleep schedules with the changes in daylight hours](#) (October).

Support is important, yet family dynamics can be complicated. This year, we covered how to [navigate challenges with co-parents](#) (whomever those folks may be in your family) in a June newsletter, [tips for families experiencing parental separation or addition of new dating partners](#) (October), [keeping yourself and your children safe within your family](#) (July), especially in the context of aggression or violence, and most recently (December), guidance on [taking care of your family during holiday](#) breaks and celebrations.

We hope you've enjoyed the content this year. We'd love to hear from you with any feedback on past newsletters and especially any topics you want to hear about in the new year. Please submit any comments or suggestions [here](#). Best wishes for a warm and bright winter season!

REMINDERS

***Reminder:** Please refer your friends if they have a 4-6-year-old and you think they would be interested in participating in the WHALE study. For every eligible family that you refer to us, you will receive \$10! Email us at whalestudy@unc.edu or call/text us at 919-914-0588 with their information.*

HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
- Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
 - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- [Durham County Social Services](#)
- [Orange County Social Services](#)
- [Wake County Social Services](#)

FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Wake County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Durham County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Orange County Food Resources](#)
- [Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools](#)
- [TABLE](#)
- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [Wake County Food Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you

HEALTH & SAFETY

- [Compass Center for Women and Families](#)
 - 919-929-7122
- [Durham Crisis Response Center](#)
 - 919-403-9425
- [InterAct Family Safety and Empowerment Center](#)
 - 919-828-7501
- [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#)
 - 866-935-4783 (call) , 919-504-5211 (text)
- [Freedom House](#)
 - 919-967-8844 (Crisis Unit, Chapel Hill)
 - 1-877-967-8844 (Mobile Service)
- [Suicide prevention lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741 741

CHILDCARE

- [NC Hotline for Critical Workers Seeking Child Care Options](#)
- [Covid Childcare Co-op Creator](#)
- [Covid Urgent Childcare](#)
- [Child Care Services Association](#)

LEARNING

- [Scholastics Learn at Home](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [PBS Kids](#)
- [CDC Tips for Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)