



## What we learn from our "cognitive" assessments

Many of you have been a part of our study(ies) for years. We thought we'd take the next few newsletters to let you know what kind of information we're getting about your child & why we're so curious about their developing brains! Today, we'll explain some "cognitive tasks" we do with children to learn about how their mind works to solve problems and respond to emotional content.

**What are we doing?** Most tasks for children are designed as games. In one game, they sort cards by matching colors and shapes based on game rules that change and become more difficult. This game gives us information about the development of short-term memory during childhood.

Another part of our study focuses on children's understanding of emotions and emotion regulation. In one computer game, children press a button to catch digital sea creatures. First, they try to catch every sea creature, but one special creature earns them coins as a reward! In another round they catch all of the sea creatures **except** for one that they are told **not** to catch. These games give us information about how children respond to rewards and develop self control. More directly, children are shown an emotion word (e.g., "happy") and asked to describe what it means. Then, to understand how children manage their emotions, they are instructed to think about different photos in new ways, while in the MRI scanner. This task provides information about how the brain functions when children attempt to use different emotion regulation strategies.

**So why do we do all of this?** By participating in this study, you're contributing to something much bigger than you. We are working to collect this information from 300 children and at least one caregiver which can tell us about differences across groups of children. For example, we may learn how children with different learning opportunities may play these games differently. Or children who have a harder time describing their emotions (on the task described above) may also have a harder time controlling them. While this data won't tell us about a specific child, these kinds of patterns can help us understand how to create new standardized tasks that could be used for individual assessment or point to which interventions are likely to help design individualized interventions.

(Continued on page 2)

Check out the page below for [community resources!](#)

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Most of the data we collect will be used like this: We'll examine patterns of associations within our study sample, but we can't use it to say how well or poorly any one child is doing because we don't know how kids *in general* perform these tasks. However, there are a few assessments like a very brief assessment of children's vocabulary knowledge and problem-solving skills where we do already know in general how kids perform and we get data from your child. If you have a concern about your child's well-being, you can schedule an individual call with a clinical psychologist on staff to review the results from tests like these. This conversation would need to happen after your family has completed all components of the study and while it wouldn't take the place of a clinical assessment, it is a nice way for us to tell you about how your child is doing.

## RESOURCES

### 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](#)