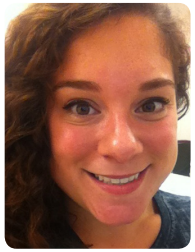
Our Staff

Amy Learmonth earned a PhD in developmental psychology from Temple University and has spent much of her time since then working with infants and preschool children to find out how their thinking is different from adults.



Nicole Caltabellotta has her BA in psychology and plans to pursue her master's degree in occupational therapy. She has been working in the lab for two years.

Jessica Napolitano has a BA in psychology and is currently pursuing a master's in clinical and counseling psychology at William Paterson University. She hopes to work with children with autism spectrum disorder and other pervasive developmental disorders.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or you would like to participate in our study, please feel free to contact us. We would love to hear from you.

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Can Videos Speak the Language of Autism?

Cognition, Memory, and Development Lab

Volunteers Needed for Autism Study: Children 36–48 Months

Can Videos Speak the Language of Autism?

Our study has two important purposes: the first is to determine whether children with autism have a different mode of imitating than typically developing children; the second is to determine whether or not video offers children with autism an advantage over live instruction.

We are testing both typically developing children and children with autism between the ages of 36 and 48 months. For this first pilot study, we will focus on a narrow subgroup of the population of children with autism spectrum disorder—those with scores on the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) that reflect moderate to high functioning.

We anticipate that this pilot study will lead to a larger study that would allow for both a closer examination of the skills of this population and a greater understanding of the mechanisms of imitation. Understanding the mechanisms of imitation could lead to the development of more effective interventions for children who have difficulty learning through imitation.

During our study the children will be shown how to complete a puzzle by either a live demonstrator on the magnet board (fig. 1) or a video demonstration (fig. 2). After three demonstrations the child will then be given the opportunity to complete the puzzle themselves.

Figure 1

About the Research Study

Learning Through Imitation

Typically developing children learn a great deal about how to behave and how to do things by imitating the people around them.

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Children with autism spectrum disorder have been shown to have difficulty imitating, possibly limiting their ability to engage in social learning.

Possible Solution: Video Interventions

Videos take away much of the social stimuli that children with autism spectrum disorder have difficulty processing. By removing the distracting stimuli of a social interaction, we hypothesize that children with autism spectrum disorder will be able to focus on learning the task.

Figure 2