

### **Explaining individual differences in 5-10 year old children's learning**

Dear Parents,

Your child's school has kindly given us permission to approach you regarding a study that our research team at Nottingham Trent University and Cardiff University are investigating. We hope you find the project interesting and are happy to allow your child to participate.

The amount of information a child can store and use at any one time has long been known to increase with age. This well-established finding is used to help explain differences in children's learning both within and across age groups. However, we have recently shown that the way in which these things have been assessed actually seems to indicate that they are reflections of the child's exposure to the types of information used in the measures, and if this is the case then it has huge implications for the way we think about how children develop.

We have one short task that will enable us to assess whether or not storage increases with age, which will take a maximum of 10 minutes. The task involves recalling 8 series of items (e.g., a sequence of digits) and has been used widely with school-aged children. In the very unlikely event of your child becoming distressed (e.g., showing signs of frustration), the session will be terminated immediately and we will take great care in returning children to their normal emotional state (e.g., by comforting them or playing a fun game). We will share our findings with you via a short report that would be sent to the school.

We will ask your child to participate only if s/he gives a verbal voluntary consent. If s/he becomes tired or uninterested, we will also stop the session or take a break. Participation is entirely voluntary, your child is free to terminate her/his participation and you are free to withdraw your child from the project at any time until 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018 without prejudice to you and your child. Your child will receive a sticker for completing each session. They are a form of encouragement and acknowledgement and will not be retracted if you and/or your child decide(s) to withdraw.

All data will be anonymised and confidential with all children being given a unique identifier (e.g., P26) rather than any names being used. Your child will therefore *not* be able to be identified by name in any of the data we will hold<sup>1</sup>. All data will be stored securely in locked cabinet and password protected computers and only the research team will have access to them. All data will be destroyed within 5 years after research publication.

If you wish to help us with this study, please return the 'I wish my child to participate' form below. This study is undertaken by Beth Lee (Nottingham Trent University) under the supervision of Dr. Gary Jones (Nottingham Trent University) and Prof. Bill Macken (Cardiff University). If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact us at 0115 8482422 or [gary.jones@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:gary.jones@ntu.ac.uk).

Thank you very much for your support for this study.

Sincerely yours,

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Department of Psychology  
Nottingham Trent University

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<sup>1</sup> Until 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, we will keep a separate list of child names alongside their identifiers in case you may wish to withdraw your child's data. This list will be kept in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed after 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.

**Department of Psychology**  
**School of Social Sciences**

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**I wish my child to participate**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Sex: M / F \_\_\_\_\_

Child's date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

1. I consent to have my child participate in the above project, the particulars of which have been explained to me.
2. I acknowledge that:
  - (a) the possible effects of the tasks or procedures have been explained to me to my satisfaction;
  - (b) The project is for the purpose of research and not for treatment;
  - (c) I have been informed that all child data will be treated confidentially and that any information that participating children provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;

Unique identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: Bloo \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 14/06/18 \_\_\_\_\_