

CHILD DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH REPORT



Fall 2010

Welcome!

This report aims to inform parents, teachers, and cooperating institutions about the ongoing research in child development at Grand Valley State University. In this first edition, two different research teams present their current projects with children and parents.

The lab is located in the Behavioral Research Facility on 632 Fulton Street W, in Grand Rapids. Our research is primarily funded by internal grants from Grand Valley.

Our primary interest is to gain and spread the knowledge we acquire about the way children think and feel, what they know about the world and themselves, and how this develops over time.

In order for us to fulfill this mission, we cooperate with schools and daycares of the Grand Rapids region and we also host parents and their children in our Behavioral Research Facility.

Emotion Lab (EmoLab)

We are interested in studying the development of emotion and emotion regulation in different cultures and ethnic groups.



CURRENT PROJECTS:

SOCIALIZATION OF EMOTIONS: A COMPARISON BETWEEN CAUCASIAN AND HISPANIC FAMILIES.

Ages 20 to 28 months

Our current project focuses on a comparison of Caucasian and Hispanic 2-year-old children and their mothers. We examine 2-year olds because it seems that 3-year-olds' emotions are already culturally shaped and we want to see whether such differences already occur at younger ages.

We observe children and their mothers in the lab. We invite the child to play different games and tasks, e.g., making a puzzle, chasing bubbles, coloring a picture, while the mother is present.

Many studies only analyzed one negative emotion, e.g. sadness or disappointment. We aim to take a broader perspective and look at positive as well as negative emotions.

The mothers are also interviewed to get better insight into their ideas of appropriate expression and regulation of emotions. A home observation serves as an additional feature to get insight into occurring emotion episodes in the daily context of the child.

EMOTION REPRESENTATION IN CAUCASIAN AND HISPANIC CHILDREN'S BOOK.

Ages 2 to 3 years

Children's knowledge about emotion may be affected by media. Children's books in different ethnic groups and cultures may reflect different ideals about emotion and their expression. The goal of this project is to analyze children's books of these two ethnic groups. We aim to select the most relevant 10 books for each group and analyze the type of emotions, the strength of the expression, and the specific person who shows this expression.



Emotion Lab Adviser:

Wolfgang Friedlmeier

Specialization:

Cross-Cultural and Developmental Psychology



Pictured above the current member of the lab from left to right: Edwin Ortiz, Stefan Goetz, Shana Lucas, Jenna Zimmerman, Estrella Trejo Payan, Katherine Maiuri, Alyssa Alferi. (absent: Katie Aasland and Michelle Peterson).

Language Lab (Lal)

Started in 2009, the Language Lab (Lal) is the latest addition of the Behavioral Research Facility.

How children learn verb meaning is at the heart of our research program. We wish to help children who encounter difficulties in the domain of language acquisition.

EARLY-LEARNED VERBS AND BASIC EMOTIONS

Ages 2 to 3 years

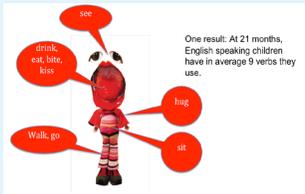
This current project focuses on looking at 100 English early known verbs to see whether they have a particular basic emotional meaning (happy verbs, sad verbs, angry verbs, etc.) attached to them.

In this study, children are shown 5 pictures of children's faces that display 5 basic emotions. They are asked to point at the face they think is the best fit for the orally presented verb.

The study takes place in the daycares of the Grand Rapids and Allendale regions. It takes 10 minutes. It is presented as a game and children truly enjoy the experience.

EARLY-LEARNED VERBS AND BODY PARTS

Ages 4 to 5 years and Adults



Children and adults are asked to give one body part per one of the 100 early-learned English verbs they heard. Our results indicate that adults and children (4 to 5 year-olds) attach body parts - such as arms, hands, feet, mouth, etc. to verbs, such that go, walk, kick are leg-verbs, and speak, sing, drink are mouth verbs, for example.

Both these results will have important consequences on how we teach verbs to children either normally developing or with special needs.



Language Lab Adviser:

Josita Maouene

Specialization:

Developmental Psychology



Pictured above the current member of the lab from left to right: Kali Tate, Joel Mounts, Katie Hammond.

Other members of the psychology department who are conducting experimental research in child development are:

Gwenden Dueker (Object Perception)

Bradley Morris (Logical Reasoning)

Penney Nichols - Whitehead (Objects in Space, Context)

Selected Publications

Friedlmeier, W., Schäfermeier, E., Vasconcellos, V., & Trommsdorff, G. (2008). Self-construal and cultural orientation as predictors for developmental goals: A comparison between Brazilian and German caregivers. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5, 39-67.

Holodynski, M. & Friedlmeier, W. (2006). *Development of emotions and emotion regulation*. New York: Springer.

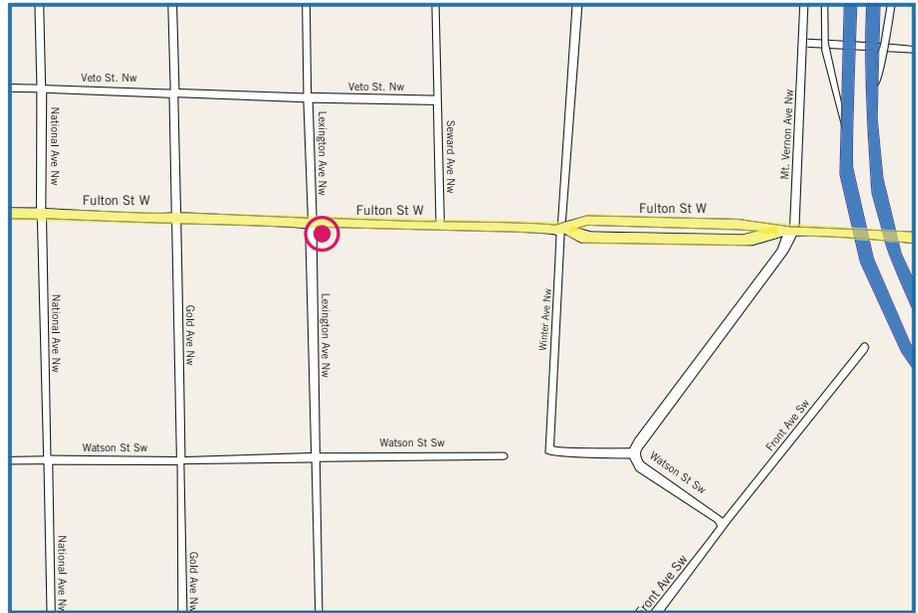
Harman James, K., Maouene, J. (2009). Auditory verb perception recruits motor systems in the developing brain: an fMRI investigation. *Developmental Science* 12:6, F26-F34

Maouene, J. Hidaka, S. & Smith B. L. (2008) Body parts and early-learned verbs. *Cognitive Science*, 32:7, pp.1200-1216.

Trommsdorff, G. & Friedlmeier, W. (2010). Mothers' sensitivity and preschool daughters' emotional reactions in Japan and Germany. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 7, 350-370.

HOW TO GET TO THE BEHAVIORAL CENTER:

- Cross Fulton and Lexington.
- The lab is located in the SW corner of Fulton/Lexington.
- The entrance to the parking lot is a small driveway before crossing Lexington (if driving to downtown/ coming from the Ball Park).
- We have free parking spots reserved at the rear of the building for the parents who participate in our studies.



Thank You!

Thank you parents and teachers for your ongoing support and dedication to our research! By agreeing to participate in studies, our understanding of child development continues to grow. We are very grateful.

We kindly thank the following daycares, preschools, schools, and other institutions for allowing us to visit and conduct our research:

Alphabet Soup Daycare Center, Apple Tree Christian Learning, Georgetown Christian Preschool, Cesar Chavez Elementary School, Cook Library Center (special thanks to the director Sue Garza), Hispanic Center, Oakdale Community Childcare Center, Orchard Hill Christian Learning Center, Remembrance Reformed Child Care, Room to Bloom-Byron Center, River Sprouts-Byron Center, Rugrat's Hideout United Church Outreach Ministry

Behavioral Research Form

If you are interested in participating with your child/children in one of our studies, please fill out the form below, or contact the Psychology Office for more information about currently ongoing projects: 616-331-2195.

Fill out the form below, and return it to 632 Fulton Street SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504-6386.

Last Name

First Name

DOB

Gender

Number and Street

Phone Number

City

State

Zip

Email