

# Liverpool Language Lab

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Liverpool Language Lab newsletter!

We want to say a big thank you to all of the families who have previously taken part in our studies and for everyone's continued support of the lab.

We're pleased to announce that we are now back in the lab and are looking forward to running our new projects very soon.

Read on for more information about what we've been up to over the past year and what to expect when we have our new projects up and running.

## Take part in our studies!



We're looking for some more local families to sign up to our database so that we can contact you when a study comes up that is suitable for your child's age.

If you've had a recent addition to the family or know anyone with a child aged 0-5, you can sign up to hear about our studies online or by emailing us:

- <http://www.language05.co.uk/take-part.html>
- [childlng@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:childlng@liverpool.ac.uk)

Have your details changed since you signed up? If so please email us on [childlng@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:childlng@liverpool.ac.uk) so that we can update them!

## BBC Tiny Happy People

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that the BBC launched their website Tiny Happy People which features lots of great resources for parents to support early language development.

Professor Ben Ambridge who works at the Language Lab has filmed some short videos which focus on baby development and language milestones. These videos explore a range of topics including how to get your baby to babble more, and whether speaking in baby talk is good for language learning. You can watch these videos here—<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/baby-development>

For more useful resources including fun activities to do with your child and advice on language learning, head to the Tiny Happy People website here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>



# Studies at the Language Lab this year

## Language 0-6

In our last newsletter, we announced that our Language 0-5 project will become the Language 0-6 project. The Language 0-5 project involved working with over 80 children, following their language development from 6 months old up to 4 years and 6 months. We are now following the same children to investigate how all of these early language development skills relate to learning to read. The sessions are currently running online and involve the children playing lots of fun language games and doing some reading activities with our researchers. We can't wait to see how they all get on and are looking forward to analysing the findings from the project!



## Words and object learning study



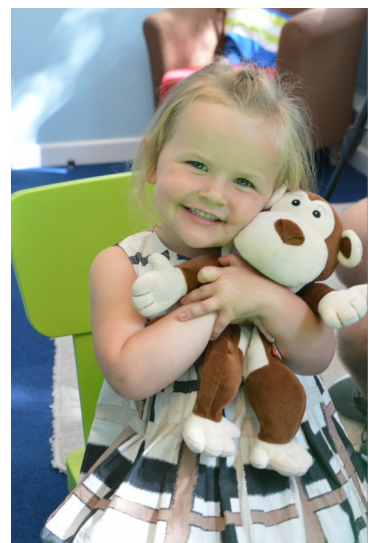
We're excited to announce that we are now recruiting again for our word and object study which is run by Anna, one of our PhD students at the Language Lab. Anna's PhD is interested in how learning words helps infants remember and recognise objects and the world around them. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, she has been looking at this in adults. Although this is a really important skill for infants to develop, even when we are adults learning labels helps us to recognise objects. Anna will now be running an infant eye tracking study where your child will watch some objects on the screen to understand how children remember different objects.

If you have a child under 9 months and would like more information or to register your interest, please email us at [childlng@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:childlng@liverpool.ac.uk).

## Learning through imitation study

Hannah's PhD is investigating how children learn to use verb inflection correctly and whether there are any differences between typically developing children and children with language disorders. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, her experimental studies have been cancelled, so she has been conducting a corpus analysis to look at this question. This involved going through lots of transcriptions of children's speech to see whether the errors they make can be predicted by adult's speech and it looks like the input they hear from adults does play a role.

Hannah's next step is to do another corpus study to expand on this idea and then hopefully she will even do some experimental testing in America!



## Follow us!



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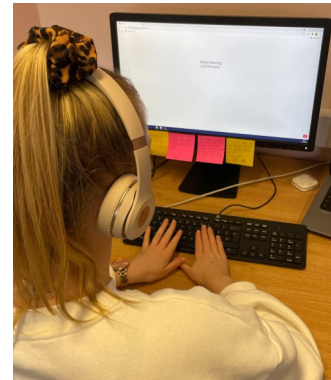


@lang05project

# Looking to the year ahead

## Learning words in speech study

In our last newsletter, we introduced Heather who is currently working on a project looking at how adults learn words from an unfamiliar language. The adults listened to fluent Italian speech, then heard pairs of words. We tested their learning by asking them to choose which one they thought they had just heard in the Italian speech. It looks like adults learn unfamiliar words by tracking which sounds appear together most often in speech. During her PhD, Heather hopes to run an infant eye tracking study to see if infants learn in the same way. Keep an eye out for any updates on this study on our social media pages!



## UK-CDI survey



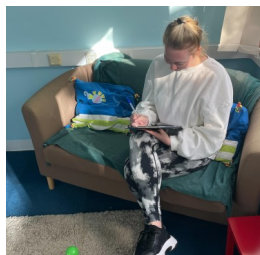
You may have seen on our social media that we have teamed up with universities across the country to run a project called the UK-CDI. The UK-CDI is a nationwide project which helps us to understand what words and phrases children know. This will have a big impact on our understanding of how children learn language here in the UK, and help early years professionals to pick up potential language problems more easily in the future. We have nearly finished collecting data for the pilot stage of this project and over the next year we'll be recruiting more parents to take part!

## What to expect when visiting the lab

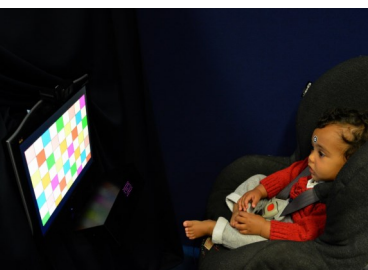
As some parents may have not had the opportunity to visit us in person at the lab before, we wanted to give you an idea of what you can expect from your visit. The Liverpool Language Lab is based at the University of Liverpool in the Eleanor Rathbone Building and is easy to get to by car or public transport. When you are booked in to take part in one of our studies, we will also send you some detailed information on how to find us.



1. The researcher will greet you at the entrance of the building and show you to one of our labs.



2. Inside the lab, there will be lots of toys and books for your child to play with. The researcher will then take you through the consent form and answer any questions you may have.



3. Once you and your child are happy, the study will begin. This usually involves your child playing some games or watching short videos from our eye tracker.



4. Once the study has finished, your child will be given a certificate as they are now officially a baby scientist!

## COVID-19 Safety

Here at the lab, the safety of you and your child is most important and we have redesigned our lab with this in mind. Social distancing will be maintained throughout your visit, and where this is not possible (during the set up of the eye tracker) full PPE will be worn. Researchers will be regularly testing themselves, and wearing a face covering throughout. All equipment and toys will be fully sanitised in-between visits.

