



## **PARENT INFORMATION SHEET**

### **PRETERM'S NUMBER PROCESSING RESEARCH**

Researchers: Merari Ferreira, Dr Michelle de Haan, Dr Iroise Dumontheil and Professor Neil Marlow

We would like to invite your child and yourself to take part in the Preterm's Number Processing Research study. This letter tells you about the study and what will happen if you agree for your child to take part. Before you decide to give your permission or not, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve.

#### **What is the Preterm's Number Processing Research Study?**

In England each year, around 10,000 babies are born very premature (before 32 weeks of gestation). Being born very premature can have long lasting effects on a child's development, particularly with regard to their learning and their achievement in school. One area of schooling that many premature children find especially difficult is maths. To help us find new ways to help provide appropriate support for premature children in this area we need to understand the kinds of difficulties they may have in more detail. This is what this research aims to do.

We are interested in finding out more about the specific kinds of difficulties premature children have with maths and identifying the underlying causes of these difficulties. We suspect that these difficulties might be related to the way premature children learn rather than the specific maths problems usually found in babies born at full term, but we are as yet unsure. We are therefore carrying out this study to find out about the causes of maths difficulties in premature children so we can develop ways to help them improve their achievement at school.

#### **Why has my child been invited to take part in the study?**

To work this out we need to compare the results of a group of children born very preterm and a group of children born at full term, who are between 8 and 10 years of age. We would be grateful if you would consider taking part in this study.



## **Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you and your child to decide if you want to take part. If you both choose to take part we will ask you to sign a consent form to say you and your child have agreed to participate. You can withdraw at any stage without giving a reason.

## **What will happen if my child takes part in the study?**

If you decide to join the study, you would need to bring your child to a 1-day assessment meeting at our office, which is located in the Wolfson Centre in Mecklenburg Square, Bloomsbury, part of the Institute of Child Health.

During the day your child will be asked to take part in a number of different activities that are a mixture of tests to assess his/her maths skills, memory, attention. All the tests are like games and quick puzzles and are similar to the kinds of activities your child usually does at school.

Your child will also watch some pictures with dots and numbers on a computer screen while we record his/her brain wave activity using an electroencephalogram or EEG. This involves your child wearing a stretchy cap with wires or electrodes attached. The electrode cap is quick and easy to fit and comfortable; these electrodes simply record the brain activity from the scalp surface.

With your permission, we will video some of the assessments for scoring purposes and so that we can check that the researchers carry out the tests in exactly the same way with all the other children. The videos will be treated in the strictest confidence and only the study researchers will be able to look at them. They will also be destroyed at the end of the study.

We estimate that the whole session will last about 4 hours, including breaks. We will try to do some activities in the morning and some in the afternoon. If your child becomes tired breaks will be given whenever necessary. You do not need to be present at the assessment, but you are very welcome to come and watch if you would like to. Participants will receive £10 voucher and travel expenses.

## **Will I be given the results of my child's tests?**

Yes, we will send you a letter detailing your child's test results around 2-3 weeks after your visit.

## **Will I need to do anything?**

We will ask you to complete a questionnaire to tell us about information relating to your child's performance at school, such as his/her strengths and difficulties, behaviour and attention. We will also ask you some questions about your home and family that are relevant to your child's education.

## **What will you do with all the information?**

The information we collect about you and your child will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will be seen only by our study team and we will remove all personal information so that you or your child will not be able to be identified. When the study is finished, we will destroy the original paperwork and any videos we have made. When we publish the results we will not mention children by name and no child will be able to be identified from these reports.

## **Is there any benefit to taking part in this study?**



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There is no direct benefit to you or your child for taking part in this study. However, we hope that the results of the study will help us identify ways of supporting premature children in school in the future. Your child will receive a detailed assessment of his/her maths skills and other abilities related to learning. You may find this information useful for your child's education.

### **Has anyone approved this study?**

This study has been reviewed by experts in the field and has been approved by the NHS Research Ethics Committee (REC 15/LO/1687).

### **What do I need to do now?**

Please take some time to decide whether you would like your child to take part in the study. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. When you have decided, please complete the attached form and return it in the freepost envelope provided to tell us whether or not you would like your child to take part.

### **Useful Contacts**

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