



## What is the Intellectual Disabilities Participant Registry?

The University of Alabama's IDPR (AKA "The Registry") is a database of families and individuals with intellectual disability who are interested in participating in behavioral research studies. We match families and individuals to appropriate studies to facilitate research on intellectual disability. The Registry currently covers Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida. Call us at [205-348-4253](tel:205-348-4253) or email [idlab@ua.edu](mailto:idlab@ua.edu) for more information.

Current Studies

### Exercise and executive function in Down syndrome

This study is being conducted by Andrew Tungate for his master's thesis, under the supervision of Dr. Fran Conners at UA. Andrew is examining the relationship between exercise and cognition in Down syndrome. Findings will help us understand if increased exercise could potentially improve cognitive functioning. This study is enrolling participants with Down syndrome aged 5-18.

Introduction from the new Registry Coordinator

Dear Registry Families,

Greetings! I would like to formally introduce myself. My name is Eric Cooks and I have joined the UAIDPR team as the new Registry Coordinator. I am a 2005 graduate of UA with a bachelor's degree in Psychology, and in 2013 I earned my Master's in Communication Studies. Before joining the Registry I was Project Coordinator for a grant-funded study with the Institute for Rural Health Research here on campus. I look forward to working with all of you to serve as a catalyst for research on intellectual disabilities.

My wife and I have a 5 year-old daughter named Isabella with Down Syndrome. She is the light of our life. I understand the issues that individuals with ID and their families face. I am here to be of service to all of you, and if there is anything that I can do to assist please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,  
Eric Cooks

Summer  
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**Send us your pictures! We would love to feature you in the next newsletter!!**



*Katy Ann Killingsworth is 16 years old and lives in Sharpsburg, GA. She loves to sing, dance, draw, and is very active in her church. She is going on her very first mission trip this summer with her Sr. High Choir at her church.*



## Upcoming Studies

### **Modeling the relationships among sustained attention, short-term memory, and language in Down syndrome**

This study is being conducted by Gayle Graham Faught for her dissertation work at UA. In this study she is trying to understand and model the relationships among sustained attention, short-term memory, and language in Down syndrome. Sustained attention is the ability to maintain attention to information in your environment, while short-term memory is the ability to remember small amounts of information for a brief time. Youth with Down syndrome will be recruited for this study, and if your family decides to participate your children will complete a variety of cognitive tasks or games including computer, blocks, number, and picture games. You will also have the option to complete a few forms. The testing can take place either at the UA campus, your home, or another location of your choosing. As a thank you, you will be given a \$10 gift card and your children will be given a prize.

### **Wayfinding study**

Dr. Ed Merrill is continuing his research examining how children and young adults with intellectual disability in general and Down syndrome in particular learn about their environment and use that knowledge to travel through their environment without getting lost. This project is the next step in efforts to develop procedures that can promote environmental learning and promote a small degree of independence associated with getting around the neighborhood for persons with intellectual disability and Down syndrome. Earlier research has shown environmental learning to be a big problem for these individuals. Dr. Merrill hopes to learn if the difficulties exhibited by children and young adults with intellectual disability are different for different kinds of environmental learning. Second, he hopes to learn which basic learning abilities are related to environmental learning for these individuals. If he can identify which basic abilities promote good environmental learning, training efforts can be focused on improving performance on those abilities.

The study will involve two days of testing, 60-90 minutes each. One session will be at the University of Alabama and the other can be at a location of the participants choosing. Participant families will receive \$25 for participating in each session.

## Research Review

Many of you participated in Gayle Graham Faught's study on sustained attention in Down syndrome. Specifically, sustained attention is the ability to maintain attention to information in your environment. In this study, Gayle compared youth with Down syndrome to typically developing children of a similar "mental age" or ability level on visual and auditory sustained attention tasks. She found youth with Down syndrome performed similarly to these typically developing children, suggesting youth with Down syndrome have relatively good sustained attention for both visual and auditory information. Ultimately, Gayle concluded sustained attention may be a relative strength in Down syndrome and should be considered when teaching youth with Down syndrome in either ways that require vision (e.g., teaching through drawing information on a marker board) or audition (e.g., teaching through saying information aloud).

### Upcoming Events:

**Stone Mountain Pumpkin Festival:** Stone Mountain Park, HWY 78 East, Stone Mountain, GA. 9/25- 10/25. (700) 498-5690. Enjoy the beautiful fall colors and cooler weather at Atlanta's favorite place to celebrate the fall season. Stone Mountain Park's annual Pumpkin Festival has become a family favorite with kids and parents alike.

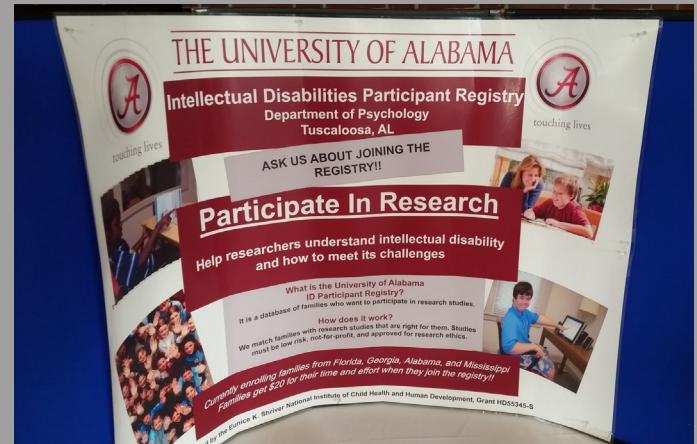
**Sounds of Summer:** Columbus, MS. July 2nd and 16th from 7-9pm at the Columbus Riverwalk. Bring lawn chairs and relax to music from local musicians. Free and open to the public. For more information call: (662) 328-6305.

**Thunder on the Mountain Fireworks Show:** Birmingham, AL. July 4th, 9 pm. Birmingham's traditional fireworks demonstration will once again illuminate the skies above Birmingham's beloved iron man, Vulcan.

**Family Day - Celebrating National Growth Awareness Week:** Sea World Orlando, 7007 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL. Bring your family and join the Human Growth Foundation (HGF), HGF Family Day will include morning workshops, lunch buffet and family fun. Only \$50 for family of 5! Sign up online at [www.hgffamilyday.net](http://www.hgffamilyday.net).



The DSA Learning Program Educators Conference took place June 11th and 12th in Homewood, Alabama. For more information on this organization visit [www.downsyndromealabama.org](http://www.downsyndromealabama.org)



The Registry took part in this year's Alabama-Association for Persons Supporting Employment/Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities conference held June 17th and 18th in Mobile, Alabama. It was a blast! [www.al-apse.org](http://www.al-apse.org)

### Things to Note:

- Visit our website at [www.uaidpr.ua.edu](http://www.uaidpr.ua.edu). Let us know what you think! Also, an updated website is currently under development and should be rolled out in the near future.
- We would really like to expand the Registry to include more families. If you know someone who would like to join the Registry, please ask them to email or call us.
- We need your pictures!! If you have any family pictures you would like to share with the Registry, or if your children would like to draw us a picture we would love to have them! Any pictures sent in will be used either on our website, newsletter, or to decorate our offices!!
- **The UA Intellectual Disabilities Participant Registry can now be found on Facebook and Twitter (@UAIDPR)!! Please like or follow us! Keep in mind that after liking or following the Registry, other users may be able to see your name associated with the Registry.**

Check here for upcoming Buddy Walk events in your area!!

Alabama

Buds Buddy Walk  
October 17, 2015  
Huntsville, Alabama

Wiregrass Area Buddy Walk  
October 31, 2015  
Dothan, Alabama

Montgomery Buddy Walk  
October 17, 2015  
Montgomery, Alabama

DSA's 16th Annual Buddy Walk  
October 4, 2015  
Birmingham, Alabama

Buddy Walk 2015- Mobile, AL  
October 17, 2015  
Mobile, Alabama

Florida

Fcdsa 10th Annual Buddy Walk  
October 10, 2015  
Palm Coast, Florida

Treasure Coast Down Syndrome  
Awareness Group  
October 10, 2015  
Port St. Lucie, Florida

Manasota Buds Buddy Walk 2015  
October 17, 2015  
Bradenton, Florida

21st Annual Gold Coast Down  
Syndrome Organization Buddy Walk  
October 18, 2015  
Lake Worth, Florida

14th Annual Arc Volusia Buddy  
Walk and Block Party  
October 24, 2015  
Deland, Florida

Down Syndrome Association of  
Tallahassee Buddy Walk  
October 24, 2015  
Tallahassee, Florida

Panama City Buddy Walk  
November 7, 2015  
Panama City, Florida

Feds of Brevard Buddy Walk  
November 7, 2015  
Cocoa, Florida

13th Annual Dsaj Buddy Walk  
November 7, 2015  
Jacksonville Beach, Florida

Georgia

Southwest GA Buddy Walk  
October 10, 2015  
Albany, Georgia

Down Syndrome West Georgia  
Buddy Walk  
October 17, 2015  
Carrollton, Georgia

Atlanta Buddy Walk  
October 18, 2015  
Atlanta, Georgia

**GET INVOLVED!!**

If you would like your group's event  
to be listed in our future newsletter,  
please let us know.



**For more information on this  
year's Buddy Walk events visit  
[www.ndss.org](http://www.ndss.org) or contact your  
local organization.**

Mississippi

2nd Annual 21 United Buddy Walk  
October 18, 2015  
Oxford, Mississippi

GCDSS 13th Annual Buddy Walk  
October 19, 2015  
Gulfport, Mississippi