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 or email idlab@ua.edu for more information.

STUDIES CURRENTLY NEEDING PARTICIPANTS
Please contact the Registry for information!

Learning and Language Research Study
Dr. Fran Conners and her colleagues are examining how learning and memory work together to determine the development of language. Knowing this will help researchers suggest ways to improve teaching and therapy techniques for individuals with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities. This study is enrolling participants ages 10-21 with Down syndrome or another intellectual disability and participants ages 4-21 who are typically developing. This study is funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Wayfinding Research Study
This study is directed by Dr. Ed Merrill. It focuses on how children with and without Down syndrome learn to find their way through the environment. This skill is called wayfinding. This study is looking for participants ages 10-25 with Down syndrome or another intellectual disability and children ages 4-9 who are typically developing. This study is funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Attention Study
This study is examining how implicit learning and attention interact. Implicit learning is learning by examples instead of rules. Researchers are looking for individuals with intellectual disability who are on kindergarten level or above, regardless of age.

October is National Down Syndrome Awareness Month!

Reading Skills in Down Syndrome Study
This study is being conducted by Susan Loveall for her doctoral dissertation. She is examining reading skills in individuals with Down syndrome through two different studies. The first study is a parent report study in which parents fill out a short survey about their child’s reading skills, even if their child is now grown. The second study tests the reading skills of individuals with Down syndrome through several in-person measures. Susan would be excited to have families of an individual with Down syndrome participate in one or both of these studies!

Registry Survey
It has been almost 3 years since we started the Registry. We decided it would be a good time to find out about the experiences and opinions of the families who are in the Registry. For this reason, we are conducting the Registry Survey. The information we gather from the survey will help us improve the Registry. We will be contacting every family in the Registry to invite you to complete the survey, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts, opinions, and suggestions.
Many of you participated in a research study conducted by one of our former graduate students, Dr. Marie Moore Channell. The study, *Emotion Knowledge in Down Syndrome*, examined how children with Down syndrome develop important emotion skills. Emotion knowledge is a broad term used to describe many skills, including the ability to understand one’s own emotions, verbally label those emotions, appropriately express them, and recognize other people’s emotions. All of these skills are used to succeed in everyday interactions with others, whether it is with peers, teachers, parents, siblings, friends, or co-workers. For this reason, emotion knowledge is considered a crucial social skill.

For typically developing children, aspects of emotion knowledge begin to develop in infancy and early childhood and continue to develop throughout adolescence and into adulthood. One of the most rapid periods of development typically occurs during the preschool-aged years (roughly 3 - 5 years old). During this time, children get much better at interpreting other people’s emotions (often called emotion recognition), especially from their facial expressions.

Another important skill is the knowledge of which emotions one can expect himself or another person to feel in certain situations. For example, if a child opens presents at a birthday party, he or she will probably feel happy, while a child who discovers that a favorite toy is broken will probably feel sad. This situation knowledge, along with emotion recognition from facial expressions, was the focus of Dr. Channell’s study.

The study included 27 children with Down syndrome (ages 6-18) whose mental ability levels (mental ages) were in the 3-6 year range and a comparison group of 42 typically developing children without Down syndrome (ages 3-6) whose mental ages were in the same range.

**Ways to Improve Emotion Recognition:**

1. Encourage your child to express positive and negative feelings.
2. Talk to your child and help him or her identify the causes of those feelings.
3. Teach emotion words just like other vocabulary, pointing out examples of other people showing those emotions. Start with happy and sad, and then move on to afraid, angry, and surprised.
4. When your child is upset, help your child identify the cause and then try to work out an appropriate way to feel better.
5. Don’t forget to be a model for healthy ways to express your feelings!
The participants were shown photographs and videos of other children's facial expressions and were asked to identify how the children were feeling (e.g., happy, sad, or scared). They were also shown videos of a child acting out various scenes (e.g., dropping an ice cream cone on the ground) and were asked to identify how the child was feeling (e.g., sad).

Dr. Channell’s study found that the children with Down syndrome were able to understand basic emotions (happiness, sadness, and fear) from the photographs and the videos the majority of the time. In fact, they performed very similarly to the group without Down syndrome who were of the same mental age. This suggests that the development of emotion knowledge may occur somewhat similarly in Down syndrome as in the general population, although it may take longer to develop in Down syndrome (because they were older in chronological age than the typically developing group).

This study is one of the first to show evidence of emotion skills in children with Down syndrome. The findings are very encouraging for parents, teachers, and other professionals working with these children. However, it is important to remember that the results are generalizations, and any individual could have different skills than those of the group reported here.

Dr. Channell would like to express her gratitude to all the families who participated in this research project. You have not only helped her successfully complete this project to earn her PhD, but more importantly, you have helped us learn more about how children with Down syndrome develop. This information will surely lead to even more important research in the field!
Look Here for Upcoming Buddy Walks in your Area:

**Alabama**
- PADS: October 14, Regions Park Stadium, Hoover, AL
- FRIENDS: October 13, Landmark Park, Dothan, AL
- BUDS: October 6, Jaycee’s Fairgrounds, Huntsville, AL

**Mississippi**
- CNDSS: October 13, MS Forestry & Agriculture Museum, Jackson, MS
- GCDSS: October 20, Gulfport Sportsplex, Gulfport, MS

**Georgia**
- DSAA: October 7, Centennial Olympic Park, Atlanta, GA
- Chattahoochee Valley DS Support Group: October 13, Columbus State University, Columbus, GA

**Florida**
- Tampa Bay Area Buddy Walk: October 13, Largo Central Park, Largo, FL
- DSAJ: November 3, JaxBeach Seawalk Pavilion, Jacksonville Beach, FL

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**PROMOTING RESEARCH ON INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

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**GET INVOLVED!!**

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

*Sincere thanks to everyone who is helping the registry to promote research on intellectual disability!*

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