**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.

**Emotion Recognition Study**

Marie Moore, a psychology doctoral student, is leading a study on emotion recognition. She is looking at how well children and adolescents with Down syndrome recognize and understand other people’s emotions. Thanks to an overwhelming response, Marie has collected enough data for this study and will have results for us soon!

**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, age is not a factor.

**MEET YOUR NEW REGISTRY COORDINATOR!!**

Allyson Phillips, Registry Coordinator and Graduate Assistant. Allyson received her B.A. in Psychology from Colorado Christian University and is a graduate student in the Developmental Science Ph.D. program at UA. She has worked with many Registry families as a researcher on the Learning and Language Study and is excited about working with everyone else as well!
Everyone experiences major life changes when transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. Due to the drastic alterations to daily life, young people and their families can experience added stress. Typically developing individuals usually go to college or enter the workforce during this transition, but individuals with intellectual disability sometimes find their post-school options to be more limited. As individuals with intellectual disability leave the school system, parents must look for appropriate programs and services, which can prove to be very challenging and can cause added stress for individuals and families.

Neece, Kraemer, and Blacher (2009) examined transition satisfaction and family well-being for 128 parents of young adults with intellectual disability (ages 19-28 years). Parents were asked to complete a series of questionnaires that measured demographics, transition experience, parental involvement in transition, parental depression, family impact, young adult adaptive behavior, young adult mental health, and young adult quality of life. Further, through field notes from the experimenters, measures of transition satisfaction and family well-being were derived.

These researchers found that higher parental transition satisfaction was related to increased young adult mental health and quality of life and to increased parental involvement in transition planning. Further, they found that lower parental transition satisfaction was related to the family being impacted negatively by the intellectual disability diagnosis, maternal depression, and increased worrying. Finally, the researchers found that parents who were more satisfied with their child’s transition experienced greater well-being than parents who were dissatisfied. These results demonstrate the importance of a successful transition to adulthood on the welfare of the entire family.

Complementing the parental perspective provided by Neece and colleagues, Forte, Jahoda, and Dagnan (2011) explored the worries that 26 young adults with intellectual disability experience as they transition to adulthood compared to 26 typically developing young adults (both groups: ages 17-20 years). All participants completed a semi-structured ‘worry’ interview, a measure of self-efficacy, a measure of anxiety, and a measure of intelligence.

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These researchers found significant qualitative differences in worries between individuals with intellectual disability and typically developing individuals. For example, the young adults with intellectual disability expressed concerns about being bullied, losing someone they are dependent upon, failing in life, and making and keeping friends. In contrast, the typically developing young adults worried most about getting a job, not having enough money, failing at an important task, and making the right decisions about their future choices. Additionally, individuals with intellectual disability ruminated more over their worries and found their worries to be more distressing than the typically developing individuals. By gaining insight into the specific worries of young adults with intellectual disability, this study allows for the improvement of intervention efforts aimed at increasing emotional resilience.

Taken together, these results help us understand the source of some of the added stress individuals and families experience during the transition to adulthood, and several steps were identified to make this period of transition less stressful and more successful. Further, by identifying the key worries for young adults with intellectual disability, better intervention services can be provided to improve coping mechanisms for handling these concerns.

Much more research is needed to better improve the transition planning process as well as the transition period itself. One current study will hopefully provide answers to many unanswered questions. This study is the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (see Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005), which includes over 11,000 transition-age youth with intellectual disabilities. Through this study, researchers are hoping to better understand the factors associated with positive outcomes for youth transitioning out of high school, including academic achievements, postsecondary education participation, student involvement in transition planning, employment after high school, leisure activities, and social involvement. As results of this study become available, we will share the findings with you.

Thanks to Allyson Phillips for reporting on these studies.
Looking for Activities to Stay Busy this Winter and Spring....

**Alabama**
- Exceptional Foundation: Annual Chili Cook-off, Birmingham, March 3, 2012

**Mississippi**
- Bowling with the Gulf Coast Ally Cats (ages 17 & up): Saturday mornings, Gulfport, contact Mrs. Dean Oliver (228) 396-1656 for more information

**Georgia**
- Baby & Child Expo: Atlanta, Fox Theatre, May 12, 2012

**Florida**
- DSACF: Visit [www.dsacf.org](http://www.dsacf.org) for a list of activities including support groups, sign and play, tweens and teens groups, young adults groups, and Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome group

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**PROMOTING RESEARCH ON INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

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