Current Research

at Boys Town National Research Hospital

Patients and families often find added personal value in participating in research related to their concerns. Research provides a learning opportunity and puts them in a friendly setting where they feel understood. Most importantly, people like to feel like they can also make a difference in the lives of people like them. We have several active studies that may be relevant for clients in your practice.

If relevant concerns arise during any study, individuals will be guided back to the referring practice.

Ryan McCreery, Ph.D.

Director of Research, Boys Town National Research Hospital
Director, Audibility, Perception and Cognition Laboratory

Dr. McCreery's lab is conducting research into how children understand speech in noisy environments. This study is seeking children ages 6–12 who have typical hearing or who have a hearing loss in both ears. Children may be asked to repeat words or say whether noises are the same or different. Children may also be asked to give the meanings of words and to do some attention or memory games on a computer.

Time commitment: 1–3 visits/year for 1–3 years, 2–4 hours

Contact: Meredith.Spratford@boystown.org

Kristen Janky, Ph.D.

Director, Vestibular and Balance Research Lab

Our current research study focuses on people's susceptibility to motion sickness. We are inviting children (age 7–18 years) and adults (age 19–35 years) with typical hearing, no balance or middle-ear problems and a wide range of motion sickness susceptibility to participate in our study. Participants will wear special goggles that measure eye movement and sit in a slowly rotating chair. They will also fill out questionnaires regarding their degree of motion sickness.

Time Commitment: 1 visit, 1 ½ hours

Contact: Shauntelle.Cannon@boystown.org

Kaylah Lalonde, Ph.D.

Director, Audiovisual Speech Processing Laboratory

We are studying how children use lip-reading and other visual information from a talker's face to help understand speech in noisy backgrounds. Children and adults with typical hearing ages 6–12 years and ages 19–35 years are invited to participate. Participants will listen to and watch speech in noise and respond by pressing a button and/or repeating back what they hear.

Time commitment: 1–2 visits, 1 ½ hours

Contact: BTNRH-AVSpeechLab@boystown.org

Katherine R. Gordon, Ph.D.

Director, Language Learning and Memory Laboratory

We focus on understanding learning and memory in preschool-age children (4–6 years old). Some children learn words rapidly while other children struggle with learning new words. For these children, early support for word learning can lead to better language development. We are interested in supporting word learning in children with and without language concerns. Through a series of visits to be completed within a month, children will be taught names for new objects and be tested on their word learning skills. Much of our interaction is designed to feel like play with the children.

Time commitment: visits last 1 hour

Contact: Stephanie.Uglow@boystown.org

Karla McGregor, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Childhood Deafness, Language and Learning
Director, Word Learning Laboratory

Dr. McGregor's team is conducting research in areas of language development. The Children's Vocabulary Project is a study of vocabulary development from first to fourth grade. Children who have just finished first grade and whose language or reading development is behind grade level, despite typical hearing, will complete tasks on the computer and do some language testing.

Time commitment: 3–4 visits, 1–2 hours

Contact: Nancy.Ohlmann@boystown.org

Adam Bosen, Ph.D.

Director,Auditory Perceptual Encoding Laboratory

Dr. Bosen's lab is investigating interactions between memory and hearing. The lab has research opportunities for adults who have lost hearing and received cochlear implants at 19 years or older. Research participants will perform tests of memory, vocabulary, and speech understanding.

Time commitment: 1 visit, 2–3 hours

Contact: Shauntelle.Cannon@boystown.org

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Gabrielle Merchant, Au.D., Ph.D.

Director, Translational Auditory Physiology and Perception Laboratory

Our study is trying to develop better ways to diagnose, monitor and treat ear infections and fluid in the ears. To do this, we also need to assess healthy ears for comparison. We are looking for children from primarily English-speaking homes who are 6 months to 3 years of age with typical hearing, no ear infections or fluid in the last 12 months, and no history of ear surgery or ear tubes who will play listening games or sit quietly while watching videos.

Time commitment: 1 visit, 1–2 hours

Contact: Sarah.Al-Salim@boystown.org

Lori Leibold, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Hearing Research
Director, Human Auditory Development Laboratory

The Human Auditory Development Lab is inviting families to participate in a study to understand how typically hearing children and children who wear two hearing aids hear in background noise. We will be asking infants (6 to 13 months), toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children to sit inside of a sound treated room and turn their heads, play a game, or point to a picture in response to the sounds they hear.

Time commitment: 1 visit, 1 hour

Contact: HADL@boystown.org

¡Hacer clic aquí para aprender más!
El "Human Auditory Development Lab" en Boys Town National Research Hospital está buscando familias para poder entender cómo los bebés (6 a 13 meses de edad), niños pequeños, niños en preescolar y niños de edad escolar escuchan con ruido de fondo. Para hacer esto, les pedimos a los participantes que se sienten dentro de un salón tratado para sonido y giren la cabeza, jueguen un juego o señalen una imagen como respuesta a los sonidos que escuchan.

Compromiso de tiempo: 1 visita, 1 hora

Contacto: HADL@boystown.org

Daniel M. Rasetshwane, Ph.D.

Director, Auditory Signal Processing Laboratory

Our current study is focused on developing a test to identify people who have damage to their ears that is not revealed by a clinical hearing evaluation. We are looking for adults ages 19–69 years with good hearing and tinnitus (ringing, buzzing or noises in their ears) and/or for adults who have been around loud impact noise (gunshots, nail guns, etc.). Participants will identify certain sounds under headphones, repeat words/sentences, wear several stick-on electrodes to measure the response of their hearing nerve and do some attention, memory and problem-solving tasks. (www.boystownhospital.org/Noisestudy)

Time commitment: 3–4 hours in 1 or 2 visits

Contact: Auditory.Processing@boystown.org

Angela Aubuchon, Ph.D.

Director, Working Memory and Language Research Lab

Our lab is currently investigating details of how we use language to remember lists of items. We are currently inviting adults ages 19–49 years to participate in this study. Participants will be asked to wear stickers around their mouth. These stickers measure muscle activity related to speech production.

Time commitment: 1 visit, 2–3 hours

contact: btnrh-wmll@boystown.org

In another study, we want to understand which part of our brain pays attention to background noise and how this differs across children ages 4 and 9 years and adults ages 19–49 years. Volunteers for this study will be asked to wear a cap with sensors while they watch a movie in the presence of background noise. The non-invasive sensors measure blood flow in the brain. Participants will also be asked to listen to words in noise and repeat back what they hear.

Time commitment: 1 visit, 1 hour

Contact: btnrh-wmll@boystown.org

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