



Why Study Siblings?

In the search to understand autism, many research programs have begun looking at younger siblings of children with autism. While your child most likely does not have a diagnosis of autism, past family studies have found that siblings of a person with autism are at a higher risk for having autistic disorder than members of the general population. Most recently, results from our MRI study of brain development in 2 year olds showed that brain enlargement is already present at a young age in children with autism. The data collected suggest that brain overgrowth may begin as early as 12 months of age, if not earlier. This current project aims to identify very early brain features that may be characteristic of infants at risk for autism.



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

UNC Researchers

Dr. Joseph Piven is a Professor and child psychiatrist at UNC. He serves as the Director of the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities and is the Principal Investigator of the IBIS (Infant Brain Imaging Study) Network. Dr. Piven has over 20 years experience in autism research.

Dr. Heather Cody Hazlett, psychologist, is a co-investigator of the study. She is an assistant professor in the Psychiatry Department at UNC. She is experienced in pediatric neuropsychological assessment and neuroimaging and has worked with the Autism Research Program for the last eight years.

Please visit our website for more information about our study and the individuals who are part of the research team.

www.ibis-network.org

For more information,
call Toll-Free

800-793-5715

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IBIS Network Brain Development in Autism

INFANT SIBLING STUDY

UNC School of Medicine



What Is the Goal of the Study?

The goal of our study of brain development in infants at risk for autism is to increase our understanding of how the brain develops and to look for abnormal patterns of brain growth. There are surprisingly few large-scale studies of brain development in autism over time. There are even fewer that look at brain development in infants and very young children. With your support we will be able to investigate more thoroughly the initial stages of significant brain overgrowth. We will use newly developed assessment tools to help us identify infants at high risk for autism. Through the use of MRI technology we will capture images of the brain and perform sophisticated brain measurements. The data gathered in this study will provide important information regarding early brain development in autism, which may in turn provide clues that will eventually result in early interventions and improve outcomes for children with autism.

What is MRI?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging is a painless technology used to view inside the body without using X-rays. It can produce two or three-dimensional images using a large magnet, radio waves, and a computer. The magnetic fields MRI uses are not known to be harmful and are painless. Dramatic advances in MRI and imaging analysis are opening new windows into the structures and processes of brain disorders, enabling researchers to launch promising studies that may help to better understand typical and atypical brain development.

THIS STUDY of very early brain development in autism has the potential to provide important clues relevant to early detection of autism and to discover the early changes in the brain of young children with autism.

Who Are We Looking For?

Siblings of children with autism: we are currently enrolling newborn to 12 month old children who have at least one sibling who has been diagnosed with autism.

Want to Learn More?

Call the Autism Research Program at 1-800-793-5715.

What Does Participation Involve?

Participants will receive developmental and behavioral assessments, an MRI scan of the brain, screening for Fragile X syndrome, and assistance with referrals for local services. Participants will be reimbursed for travel and related expenses. Assessments and MRI scans associated with the project are provided at no cost to the family, and participants will be given any new information gained upon completion of the study.

