

October 13, 2011

Dear Parent,

We would like to invite you and your child to participate in a study about socio-cognitive development in children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Socio-cognitive development refers to a child's growing ability to understand that what others think, feel, and believe about a particular situation will determine how they behave. This social knowledge is used by children and adults every day in order to effectively interact and communicate with friends, family, teachers and strangers. We know some children with hearing loss have difficulties making and maintaining friendships and we think that differences in socio-cognitive development may help explain why. The information we obtain from this study will help us determine if children with different degrees of hearing loss are indeed delayed in various areas of socio-cognitive development, identify the specific areas of difficulty, and determine reason for the difficulty.

If you and your child choose to participate in this study you have the option of either coming to Western Washington University, or having a research associate come to your home for approximately 2 hours. Children will be asked to participate in a variety of tasks that measure their understanding of how they and other people think and feel depending on the situation. They will also be asked to complete tasks that measure thinking, memory, learning and language. You will be asked to complete a few questionnaires about your child's behavior and family environment. With your permission, your child's teacher or therapist will also be asked to complete a questionnaire about your child's social skills in an educational setting.

If your child is between the ages of 3 years, 6 months and 6 years, 11 months of age; wears a cochlear implant; uses spoken language to communicate; and has worn amplification for at least one year, he or she can participate in the study. We are also testing children with normal hearing in this same age range if you have other children who might be interested in participating.

We hope that you will be interested in participating in this study. If you would like to set up a time to meet, or if you have any questions about this research, you may call or email Kimberly Peters, Ph.D. (360-319-6777) Kimberly.peters@wwu.edu in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Western Washington University. Your interest does not obligate you to participate.

We thank you in advance for your interest, and hope you will help with this important project.

Sincerely,

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