

Developing Minds

Exploring Cognitive Diversity



Newsletter

July 2023

**Kingston
University**
London

Foreword

Welcome to our summer 2023 newsletter!

First of all, we would like to thank all the parents and children who attended our Young Scientist Event in June. We all enjoyed having you to visit the Department of Psychology at Kingston University. You can read about the event and the studies that the children took part in on pages 3-8.

We also held the Autism Peer Network Event where our student interns disseminated the findings of their research projects (see page 9) and we recently contributed to the autism transition day for students starting Kingston University in September.

Our feature article is by Dr Dina Spano about sleep and cognition in children which is a topic that I'm sure we are all interested in (see pages 11-16). You will also be able to read about an interview with one of our new lecturer's Dr Katharine Clifford on pages 17-20.

Some ideas of activities for entertaining children in the local area are provided on page 21. You can view our recently published papers and conference presentations on pages 23-25.

If you haven't yet done so, please 'like' our [Facebook page](#) so we can keep you informed about our research and future events.

With very best wishes,

Dr Elisa Back
Director of the Developing Minds Lab
e.back@kingston.ac.uk

Recent Events



Young Scientist Event 1st – 2nd June 2023

Thank you to those who attended our Young Scientist Event! Please view the video here:



Approximately 90 children (aged 4-11) participated in a range of research tasks that were approximately 20 minutes each and investigated how children develop. This included carefully created tasks with researchers. These tasks have summaries on the following pages so please read on to find out more about the tasks that your child may have participated in.

One of these tasks still require more participants, so if your children are interested in taking part, please see details on page 22.





Alien Object Task



Dr Dina Spano

This study is conducted in collaboration with Professor Jamie Edgin from the University of Arizona, who has developed a tablet-based battery of tests to assess learning and cognition in preschool children. From this battery of tests, we have selected two tasks: the Alien Object Placement task and the Object Measures task. These tasks respectively assess spatial memory and object memory. Spatial memory refers to remembering the spatial relationships between objects and the environment, while object memory involves remembering specific objects and their attributes. Spatial memory plays a vital role in supporting more sophisticated forms of memory, such as episodic memory. Episodic memory refers to the ability to form and retain memories of events that happen in a particular place at a particular time. This ability is foundational for cognitive development, as everything we learn happens as part of an episode. While we all experience things, we might eventually forget where and when we learned them. Nevertheless, episodes serve as gateways to accessing prior knowledge and building our skill sets. Memory acts as the gatekeeper for cognition.



In the Alien Object Placement task, participants are required to memorize the positions of objects in a naturalistic scene and subsequently re-place them on an iPad display after a short delay. The Object Measures task consists of three phases: Object Viewing, Temporal Order, and Recognition. During this task, participants view 12 two-dimensional object pictures, briefly touch them with their finger, and are then tested on their ability to recall the temporal order and identify them from a selection of black and white pictures.

Additionally, we have assessed sleep quality in children. Because spatial memory is linked to sleep, we expect to see correlations between the quality of sleep and performance on the Alien task.



By collecting data from these tasks and examining the performance of typically developing children, our study aims to gain valuable insights into memory development. Specifically, we aim to compare the performance of typically developing children to those with neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism and ADHD. Understanding the cognitive processes underlying memory in different populations will enable us to optimize interventions aimed at improving cognition.





School Transition Focus Group



Dr Katharine Clifford

The qualitative focus group research was aimed at developing further understanding about children's preparation for educational transitions, specifically for children starting secondary school. It explores the process of resilience in preparation for the school transition for children in Year 5 and Year 6. Understanding more about the preparation phase for educational transitions will support the development of early interventions and resilience processes that children may access as they move from their known setting (primary school) to an unknown one (secondary school).



Over the course of the two days at the Young Scientist event, five focus groups were conducted with a total of 18 participants (children), with most children in years 5 and 6.

Here are some of the *key discussion points* from the focus groups:

- There was a manifold of emotions expressed about the anticipation of starting secondary school- these included feelings of excitement and nervousness.
- For some of the children, the subject's maths and science were considered the most relevant to their success at secondary school.
- Lunchtime and PE in primary school were important to most of the children.
- Some of the children discussed the academic pressures they felt in preparation for secondary school.
- Friends were viewed as the most important element in primary school. Teachers were accessed if the friend/peer could not help. Some children preferred to solve concerns on their own.
- The year 5 children were less aware of the transition than children in year 6 but were looking forward to secondary school.





Virtual Reality Intervention for Children



Muthanna Samara, Meggi Bacikova, & Elisa Back (Kingston University)

Vedad Hulusic & Michael Smith (Bournemouth University)

Basel El-Khodary (Islamic University, Gaza Palestine).

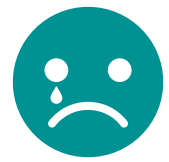
In an additional demonstration of technological innovation, the Young Scientist Event showcased a virtual reality (VR) experience that allowed children to transport into different immersive environments. Guided by an animated panda character, the young participants had the opportunity to embark on exciting adventures through a variety of stimulating games, art and play therapies, breathing, and muscle relaxation exercises, and psychoeducation sessions.



The integration of education, psychological knowledge, and entertainment was specifically designed to engage children's minds to improve their well-being, enhance their emotional recognition and regulation, and provide skills to overcome difficult situations. The overall experience of the project was rated as positive; 93% of the children that tried the VR at the event reported having enjoyed the experience, 89% felt comfortable using the VR, 80% reported learning something new or interesting, and 96.5% would like to try similar VR activities in the future.



Parent-Child Emotion Understanding and Talk Task



Dr Elisa Back (Kingston University) and Dr Harriet Tenenbaum (University of Surrey)



This study investigated emotion understanding in children aged 4-8. There is little research investigating how accurate parents are at predicting their child's emotional abilities and whether this is related to their own traits. Parents were asked to complete an emotion comprehension task and to predict how their child will respond on the task. Parents also completed the Autism Quotient questionnaire for themselves and their child/children. This is a checklist of autism traits found in the typically developing population.



Then the child was interviewed using the same emotion comprehension task that parents completed in advance of the session. A parent-child talk task was also undertaken where everyday events were discussed. Factors influencing emotion understanding are currently being analysed such as the autistic traits of the child and parents as well as the age of the child and the emotion talk by the parent and child.



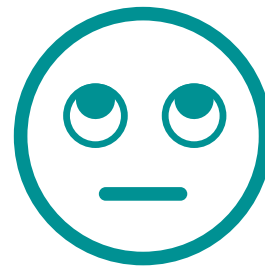


Emotion Recognition and Understanding: Immersive Social Videos in Autistic and Non-autistic Children



Dr Elisa Back and postgraduate students (Kingston University)

The purpose of the study was to investigate how the recognition of emotions and behavioural responses from social scenes may differ between autistic children and neurotypical children. This involved parents completing a background questionnaire (demographic information) and the Autism Spectrum Quotient questionnaire on behalf of their child. Then, the study involved an emotion task and IQ test performed by the child. The child viewed interactive videos of different scenarios about basic and complex emotions.



After each video was shown, children were asked to recognise the emotion and to choose how they would respond to the situation. Preliminary findings show that children were more accurate at recognising emotions compared to responding appropriately to them. We will also be comparing these findings to a sample of autistic children (please see study advert on page 22 as we are still recruiting for this part of the study).

Autism Peer Network Event 28th June 2023



Thank you to those who attended our Autism Peer Network Event!

This event involved discussing the Autism Peer Network that the Developing Minds Lab set up this academic year for students at Kingston University. There was also networking opportunities with other organisations.



We provided an overview of our research to support students in higher education. This included a project related to assessing the effectiveness of the peer network via student interviews and a project related to investigating the sensory needs of autistic students at university.



FBSS Conference

30th June 2023



Dr Elisa Back and Dr Dina Spano presented their research at the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences Research conference at Kingston University.

Dr Back presented her research on the use of fidget toys in children with and without autism. She also gave a talk about intervention use in autism.

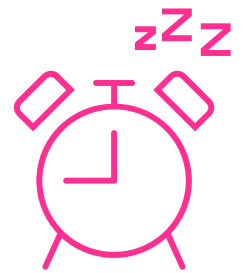
Dr Spano presented her autism research about memory in and out of context.



EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN SLEEP, COGNITION, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Written by: Dr Dina Spano

Sleep, far from being a passive state, plays an active role in the delicate balance of development from infancy to adulthood, influencing critical aspects of growth and learning (Chaput et al., 2016). This article will explore the intricate connection between sleep, cognition, and academic success in children and adolescents. As parents, educators, and caregivers, it is crucial to understand how these elements intertwine to support the overall development and educational journey of our children and what actions we can take to foster healthy sleep habits, which will lead to better cognition and promote academic success.



In today's highly digital era, children are facing a concerning decline in sleep duration (Iglowstein, Jenni, Molinari, & Largo, 2011). The recommended sleep duration for children aged 6-13 years is 9-11 hours, while adolescents are advised to have 8-10 hours of sleep per night (Hirshkowitz et al., 2015). Despite the evidence highlighting the importance of obtaining sufficient sleep for optimal daytime cognitive, mental health, and physical functioning, children and adolescents often fail to meet the recommended sleep amount (Crabtree & Witcher, 2008). For instance, some studies have reported sleep durations ranging from 8 to 8.5 hours in children aged 4 to 10 years (Spruyt, Molfese, & Gozal, 2011), while adolescents are found to sleep less than 8 hours per night (Mercer et al., 1998). Consequently, excessive daytime sleepiness is prevalent among children and adolescents (Liu et al., 2019).

Multiple factors contribute to sleepiness and can significantly affect the sleep quality of children and adolescents, including sleep disorders such as snoring, obstructive sleep apnoea, night-time fears and insomnia (DelRosso et al., 2021). However, it's important to note that inadequate sleep in this age group is influenced by various factors beyond sleep disorders. Behavioural sleep disorders, including bedtime resistance, behavioural insomnia of childhood and delayed sleep phase syndrome, also contribute to the issue (Meltzer and Mindell, 2008).



For instance, delayed sleep phase syndrome in adolescence refers to a natural shift in their internal body clock, causing many teenagers to prefer staying up late at night and sleeping in later in the morning (Crowley, Acebo, & Carskadon, 2007). Moreover, the widespread use of digital devices like smartphones, tablets, and computers disrupts sleep patterns. Exposure to stimulating content, the blue light emitted by screens, and constant online activities can delay sleep onset and reduce overall sleep duration (LeBourgeois et al., 2017). Additionally, academic and extracurricular demands, social pressures, and lifestyle choices also play a role in the challenge of obtaining sufficient sleep during critical developmental stages (Gaarde et al., 2020).

Extensive research has demonstrated the detrimental effects of sleepiness and inadequate sleep on cognitive functions, including memory, executive function, and attention. Optimal sleep is critical for the proper functioning of executive functions, including decision-making, problem-solving, impulsivity, and emotional regulation (Anderson et al., 2009). Additionally, sleep plays a crucial role in memory consolidation, enabling effective storage and retrieval of information acquired during the day (Kopasz et al., 2010).



Moreover, research conducted by Touchette et al. (2009) has revealed that sleep deprivation impairs attention, leading to behavioural changes similar to those associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Considering the importance of these cognitive functions for academic performance and success (Ahmed, Tang, Waters, & Davis-Kean, 2019; Peng & Kievit, 2020), it is not surprising that insufficient or poor-quality sleep is considered a critical predictor of academic achievement in children and adolescents (Wolfson & Carskadon, 2003).



Taken together, these studies highlight the crucial role of optimal sleep in children's and adolescents' cognitive functioning and the development of their academic skills. By ensuring adequate sleep duration, promoting good sleep quality, and addressing sleep-related issues, we can optimize cognitive functioning and support academic success during this critical stage of development. For instance, experimental studies consistently reveal that increasing sleep duration by 30 minutes to 1 hour significantly enhances cognitive performance in school-aged children (Sadeh, Gruber, & Raviv, 2003; Vriend et al., 2013).

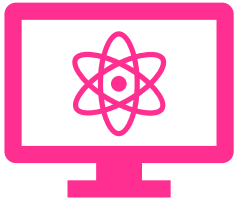


These implications extend not only to typical development but also to atypical development, as the association between sleep, cognition, and academic performance has been found in neurodevelopmental disorders such as ADHD (Ruiz-Herrera, Guillén-Riquelme, Díaz-Román, Buela-Casal, 2021).

But what can we do to address these sleep-related issues and promote better sleep among children and adolescents?



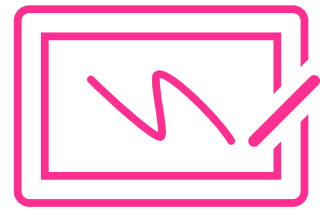
Short, Bartel and Carskadon (2019) adopted the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) to provide a valuable framework for understanding the multiple levels at which interventions for improving sleep among children and adolescents can be implemented. According to Bronfenbrenner, individuals are influenced by a series of nested systems, ranging from the immediate microsystem (such as family and school) to the broader macrosystem (including cultural values and societal norms). In this context, the sleep of children and adolescents is impacted by these various ecological systems, and interventions can be implemented across four levels: families, schools, clinicians, and public policy makers. Families play a crucial role in promoting healthy sleep habits by implementing practices like limiting technology use, reducing evening light exposure, eliminating caffeine, and encouraging daytime exercise (Bartel, Gradisar, & Williamson, 2015; Gradisar et al., 2013).



Interventions at the school level, such as adjusting start times, can establish more supportive environments for healthy sleep behaviours (Owens, Belon, & Moss, 2010). Addressing high academic workloads and pressures that disrupt sleep is also essential in educational settings (Adam, Snell, & Pendry, 2007). Clinicians can work with children and families to improve sleep through psychoeducation, sleep hygiene practices, and tailored therapies for specific sleep disorders (Vriend, Corkum, 2011; Blake, Sheeber, Youssef, Raniti, & Allen, 2017). Public policy can support guidelines such as later school start times (at least 8:30 a.m.), lighter extra-curricular homework, and health education (Owens, Belon, & Moss, 2010). Additionally, raising awareness about child and adolescent sleep and addressing safety concerns within communities contribute to fostering an environment that supports improved sleep outcomes (Bagley, Tu, Buckhalt, & El-Sheikh, 2016). Implementing interventions at these various levels offers a comprehensive approach to promote healthy sleep habits and enhance the overall well-being of children and adolescents. By recognizing the influence of ecological systems and leveraging the roles of families, schools, clinicians, and public policy makers, we can make significant strides in improving sleep health for young individuals.



Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory aligns with a study by Gruber et al. (2016) where a school-based sleep education program was implemented in three elementary schools. The program included modules for children, families, school staff, and decision makers, with six interactive sessions led by sleep experts over six weeks. The program had significant positive effects on sleep quality, duration, and academic performance. However, the reliance on sleep experts for program implementation or training teachers and parents may hinder widespread use and dissemination of such programs. To address this, Rey et al. (2020) developed the ENSOM program, an integrated sleep education program for primary schools. Teachers can independently implement it, eliminating the need for sleep experts. ENSOM resulted in increased total sleep time, improved sleep quality, and sustained improvements at one-year follow-up. It also resulted in improvements in attention, executive functioning, academic performance, and parents' understanding of sleep.



These positive outcomes further emphasize the importance of early intervention in addressing sleep-related issues among young children (Bonuck, Blank, True-Felt, & Chervin, 2016). By starting interventions early and promoting good sleep hygiene habits, we can establish a solid foundation for healthy sleep patterns and behaviours, leading to improved overall well-being and development. Prioritizing sleep health literacy in early childhood programs has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of numerous children.

In summary, by prioritizing healthy sleep habits and recognizing the importance of adequate sleep, we can support optimal cognitive development and empower our children to reach their full academic potential and flourish in their educational endeavours.

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Meet the Researcher

As you may now know, Developing Minds is a research group consisting of academics, PhD students and researchers with a broad range of interests and expertise in how children learn and develop.

We are very happy to tell you more about Dr Katharine Clifford in this interview.

Katharine, your recent research has looked at the process of resilience and educational transitions. Can you tell us more about this and how/why you got interested in it?

My career started in primary education, as a Year 6 teacher. Prior to my work in this field, I had acquired a degree in Psychology and was always interested in human behaviour, with a particular focus on how children engage and interact with their peers and in different settings. The developmental changes in children and how they learn was intriguing to me. As a teacher, the term *resilience* became a 'catch-phrase' and was often used in the staff room when talking about a child.

For me, I wanted to understand a little more about this term, resilience, and why certain children were only seen as resilient. I was also interested in learning more about the transition from primary to secondary school, as a year 6 teacher. I continued my studies into masters and then decided to research these areas of interest in my PhD: resilience and educational transitions.



One of your research interests is how children experience school transitions from an ecological approach. Can you tell us a bit more about this and why it is essential to conduct this research?

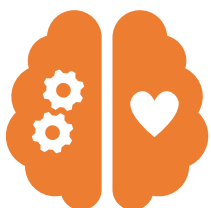


Taking an ecological approach to research means that we consider and explore an occurrence or experience in its own naturalistic setting. It is a useful approach because it gives the researcher an in-depth, type of magnifying look at the research. As a qualitative researcher, it enabled me to think about the developing child during the school transition, exploring the connections the child engages with in their environment. It supports the qualitative narrative as it provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand how the child engages with the different facets of their lives and how the child experiences those unseen moments as they happen.



Can you explain what a qualitative researcher does and what about this form of research you enjoy?

In qualitative research, we aim to investigate and explore research questions that look at an individual or group's perspective and meaning related to experiences and understanding. It can be used in a variety of different methods, for example, interviewing, focus groups, case studies. I enjoy the process of qualitative methods, even though it can be time-consuming when analysing the data. However, the questioning and reflective skills applied are invaluable and the process of this type of research is extremely rewarding. I think it is also about the research area you decide to focus on and ensure that you are passionate about it.



What research project are you working on currently?



Currently, I am looking into the research around educational transitions for neurodiverse learners moving from secondary school to college. From my resilience research I would like to focus a little more on how the resilience process operates at different educational phases for all children. I am still very interested in peer groups and the resilience process during adolescence.



Have you faced any challenges researching in this field and what are these challenges?



One of the initial challenges was recruitment. I worked very closely with CLAPA (Cleft lip and palate association), who supported the research. The parents and children who took part in the research were amazing as they afforded the research project time and were committed to participate. But, yes, participation is sometimes difficult in research and requires creative thinking and useful contacts.



What is the thing you love the most about being a scientist/researcher?



The process of research. From the start of the project when you have those initial inklings of what you would like to explore further, to the collection of data and consulting with other researchers in your field. Yes, I really enjoy the process! It can be timely, but it is a wonderful learning experience. I also enjoy learning about other researchers' fields of interest and the meaning they give to their work. It is great being able to share common research interests with students you teach and colleagues you work with.

What do you like to do when you are not working on research?

Spending time with my family, reading and being outdoors. I really enjoy walking and exploring new routes of nature. More recently, I have developed a keen interest in gardening, but it is only just the beginning!



Have you had any other jobs besides being an academic?

I have worked in academia for a few years, but prior to this I was mostly working in schools and colleges. I've worked with young infants to toddlers, primary and secondary school children and young adults, as a teacher, mentor, tutor and consultant.

Finally, what advice would you give to aspiring researchers, researchers early in their career and mature student researchers?

There are times as a researcher where you feel overwhelmed by the development of a research project. It can seem daunting and endless, but I think that you have to stay with it for the right reasons. Having a good support network is very important and communicating with your research supervisory team about the ups and the downs is helpful. Remember to take regular breaks, be consistent and be kind to yourself. Little and often is best!



Activities for Families in Kingston

- Go Ape London
- Rose Theatre
- Sea Life London Aquarium
- The Coronation Stone
- Shrek's Adventure
- Explore the Riverside
- Madame Tussauds
- Kid Clubs
- Treasure Trails
- The London Dungeon
- Public Art
- Immersive Gamebox London
- The Kingston Museum
- Odds Farm Park
- Stanley Picker Gallery
- Visit Kingston Market
- Escape Hunt Kingston

Links:

- Kingston University STEM outreach activities: <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/faculties/science-engineering-and-computing/our-services/for-schools-and-community/stem-outreach-activities/>
- Day out with the Kids: <https://www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk/things-to-do/south-east-and-london/greater-london/kingston-upon-thames>
- Mummy travels: <https://www.mummytravels.com/discovering-kingston-upon-thames/>
- Trip Advisor: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attractions-g504175-Activities-zft11306-Kingston_upon_Thames_Greater_London_England.html
- Families online: <https://www.familiesonline.co.uk/local/kingston-upon-thames/places-to-go>
- Whats on in Kingston Upon Thames: <https://www.whatsoninkingstonuponthames.com/activities/>
- Let's Go: <https://letsgowiththechildren.co.uk/places-to-go/kingston-upon-thames/>
- Kingston Online: <https://www.kingstononline.co.uk/kingston/children-family-events-kingston-on-thames/>
- Club Hub: <https://clubhubuk.co.uk/city/kingston-upon-thames/>
- Groupon: <https://www.groupon.co.uk/vouchers/kingston/kids-activities>
- Visit Kingston: <https://www.visitkingston.ca/see-do/for-families/>

Emotional Understanding and Interpretation of Social Scenarios in Children

Kingston
University
London

Who can take part?

Autistic children aged 6-11
(with an ASD diagnosis)



What's involved?

Children will watch videos of different social scenarios and then answer some questions. They will also complete an IQ test. This will take approximately 45 minutes in total. Parents will also complete two questionnaires (approximately 15 minutes).

How to get involved?

If this sounds interesting and you would like to participate please click the following link which will take you to more information about the study. If this does not work, please copy and paste into your web browser.

https://kingston.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_79bSmQF9zkXANSe

Details and Contacts

If you would like to participate in this research or have any questions please email the following:

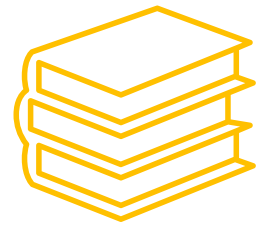
k1836576@kingston.ac.uk - Liberty
k0626079@kingston.ac.uk - Eunika
k2267966@kingston.ac.uk - Connie
k2140459@kingston.ac.uk - Mannat
k2242072@kingston.ac.uk - Tatiana
k2259575@kingston.ac.uk – Ines

Supervisor:

e.back@kingston.ac.uk – Dr. Elisa Back

Recent Publications

- Jonkman, K. M., Livanou, M., Alma, M. A., Benard, L., Begeer, S. and **Back, E.** (2023). Exploring experiences of vaccine-related and alternative treatments for individuals with autism: A qualitative study. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2023.102204>.
- Manitsa, I.**, Barlow-Brown, F., & Livanou, M. (accepted). Evaluating the role of social inclusion in the self-esteem and academic inclusion of adolescents with vision impairment.
- Livanou, M., Bull, M.*, **Manitsa, I.***, Hunt, J., Lane, R., & Heneghan, A. (accepted). Coproducing a complex psychosocial intervention during Covid-19 with young people transitioning from adolescent secure hospitals to adult services in England: moving Forward intervention (MFi). *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. *Second authorship authors contributed equally.
- Al-Sharshani, D., Velayutham, D. **Samara, M.**, Gazal, R., Al Haj Zen, A., Ismail, M.A., Ahmed, M., Nasrallah, G., Younes, S., Rizk, N., Hammuda, S., Qoronfleh, M. W., Farrell, T. Z., Hatem, A., Palli V., AlDweik, M., Silang, J.P.B, Rahhal, A., Al-Jurf, R., Mahfouz, A., Salam, A., Al Rifai, H. and Al-Dewik, N. I. (2023). [Association of single nucleotide polymorphisms with dyslipidemia and risk of metabolic disorders in the State of Qatar](#). *Molecular Genetics & Genomic Medicine*, e2178. 2324-9269.
- Al-Dewik, N., **Samara, M.**, Younes, S., Al-jurf, R., Nasrallah, G., Al-Obaidly, S., Salama, H., Olukade, T., Hammuda, S., Marlow, N., Ismail, M., Abu Nada, T., Qoronfleh, M.W., Thomas, B., Abdoh, G., Abdulrouf, P.V., Farrell, T., Al Qubaisi, M., and Al Rifai, H. (2023). [Prevalence, predictors, and outcomes of major congenital anomalies : a population-based register study](#). *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 2045-2322.



Invited Talks & Media Engagement

Back, E., Autism Masterclass for REC Parenting:

<https://www.recparenting.com/masterclasses/understanding-autism/>

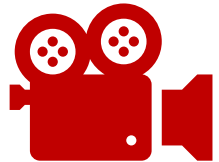
Manitsa, I. (6 April 2023). *Vision impairment, educational inclusion, and socio-emotional development*. Oral presentation at Children and Families Directorate, Birmingham City Council, Birmingham, UK.

Manitsa, I. (7 March 2023). *Social inclusion*. Oral presentation at the Inset Day of Bristol Sensory Support Service [Sensory support service \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/sensory-support-service). (Online presentation).

Manitsa, I. (21 February 2023). *Exploring the inclusion and socio-emotional development of people with vision impairment*. Oral presentation at the Richard's lab (<https://carolinerichards.net>), School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK.

Manitsa, I. (1 February 2023). *The socio-emotional development and educational inclusion of students with vision impairment*. Oral presentation at the IMH showcase session at Psyched@UoB, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK.

Manitsa, I. (27 January 2023). *Socio-emotional development of atypical populations with an emphasis on Vision Impairment*. Oral presentation at the Centre for Developmental Science (CDS) Neurodiversity Workshop, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK.



Funding



Thomas Pocklington Trust Research Grant, United Kingdom – FR-00495

Grant amount: £47,599.00

Project title: Developing university guidance for the socio-emotional needs of students with Vision Impairment

Period: Sep 2023 – Aug 2024

Principal Investigator (PI): **Dr Ifigeneia Manitsa**

Co-investigators: **Dr Fiona Barlow-Brown**

Autism and social attention- LSBS Research Funds

Grant Amount: £1812

Dr Hayley Spurin and Dr Elisa Back

Conferences

Back, E., Roche, M., and Van Herwegen, J. (May 2023). Fidget toys and sensory seeking profiles in autistic children. International Society for Autism Research, Stockholm, Sweden.

Manitsa, I. (12 July 2023). *The relationship between the development of social relationships at school and academic inclusion in adolescents with and without vision impairment.* Oral presentation at The Child Vision Society's 2023 Biennial Meeting (CVRS): Child Vision and Visual Impairment – Advances in Science and Related Practice; 12-14 July 2023, UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, London, UK.

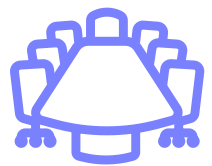
Manitsa, I. (12 July 2023). *The relationship between school engagement and social competence in adolescents with and without vision impairment and ways forward.* Poster presentation at The Child Vision Society's 2023 Biennial Meeting (CVRS): Child Vision and Visual Impairment – Advances in Science and Related Practice; 12-14 July 2023, UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, London, UK

Manitsa, I. (4 July 2023). *Providing updates on a research project on the inclusion of students with vision impairment in Higher Education.* Oral presentation at the Research and Impact Event; 3-4 July, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK.

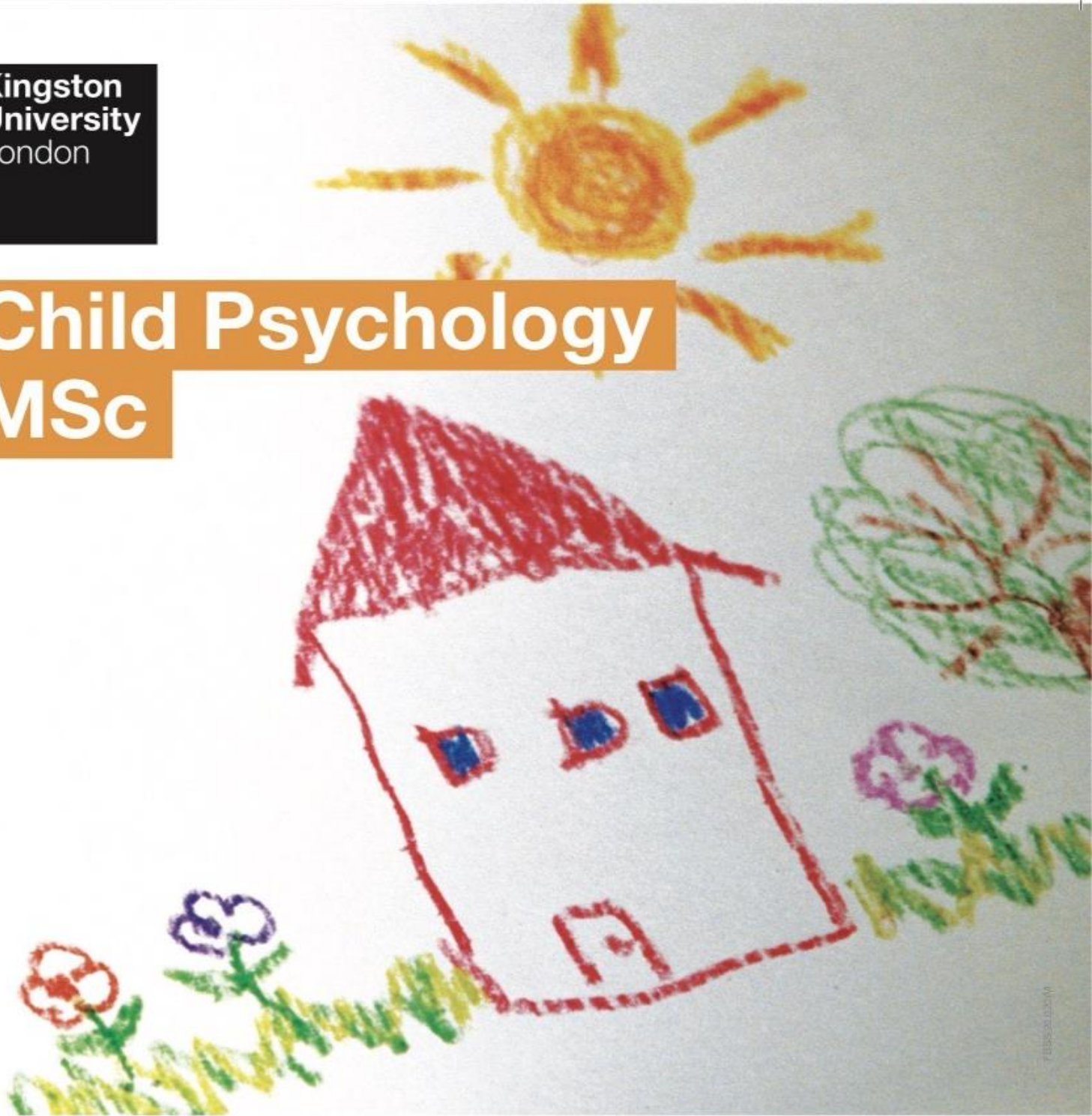
Manitsa, I. (4 July 2023). *Promoting the social inclusion of adolescents with vision impairment: The development of a serious game.* Oral presentation at the Research and Impact Event; 3-4 July, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK.

Heneghan (presenting author), A., **Manitsa, I.**, Livanou, M. (2 June 2023). *Individuals' experiences of having a sibling with an eating disorder: a systematic review.* Oral presentation at the International Conference of Eating Disorders; 31 May – 3 June 2023, Washington DC, USA.

Heneghan, A., **Manitsa, I.**, Livanou, M. (16-17 March 2023). *"How do siblings' experience their brother's or sister's eating disorder?: a systematic review"*. Poster presentation at the London Eating Disorder Conference, London, UK.



Child Psychology MSc



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Dr Elisa Back

Dr Fiona Barlow-Brown

Prof. Muthanna Samara

Dr Dina Spano

Dr Katharine Clifford

Dr Stone Hsieh

Researchers

Dr Hayley Hunt

Dr Ifigeneia Manitsa

PhD Students

Rashma Hirani

Milani Pathmanathan

Norlina Sexton

Research

Assistants

Swane Parchment

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