[**SibSpeak**](http://www.sibspeak.co.uk/) 

**Assessment of Early Communication in Very Young Children**

**Information Sheet**

Dear Parent,

My name is Helen Cain and I am a research student at City University London. As part of my research, I would like to invite you and your child to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you and your child. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of the study is to find out about early communication skills in younger brothers and sisters of children who have communication impairments, and compare them to the communication skills of a large sample of babies, who are either first children, or who have older brothers or sisters who are developing normally.

**Why have my child and I been invited to take part?**

You have been invited to take part because:

* Your child is aged between 9 and 15 months, and
* You have expressed an interest in participating in this project.

**Do my child and I have to take part?**

Participation in the project is voluntary, so it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You can choose to withdraw your child from the project at any time, even if you have signed a consent form, and you do not have to give a reason for withdrawing. Withdrawing from the project, or choosing not to participate, will not affect any of your children in any way.

**What will happen if my child and I take part?**

If you decide to take part in the project, I will visit you and your child at home for a session of around one hour. I will then visit you again for one or two one-hour sessions about a year later.

During the sessions, I will observe your child’s communication skills. I will be looking at how your child uses eye contact, facial expressions, gesture, babble, and their first words. You will be video- and audio-recorded playing with your child, and then I will do some simple games with your child, such as asking them to imitate gestures or sounds. This will also be video- and audio-recorded. I will use the recordings to help me analyse the data.

I will also ask you to fill in some questionnaires about your children’s language development.

**What do my child and I have to do?**

You will be asked to play with your child in the way you normally would if I was not present. You will also be asked to fill in some questionnaires about your children. I will play some simple games and do some other communication-based activities with your child. You will be present for all of the time that I am with your child. You and your child will be video- and audio-recorded playing together, and then I will video-and audio-record myself playing with your child. The recording is a crucial aspect of this project, to allow me to analyse the data after the sessions with your child, so unfortunately if you are not happy for you and your child to be recorded, you will not be able to take part.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

You will have to give up some of your time. It is possible that your child may be distressed by having a stranger interacting with them. If this is the case, then the activities will be stopped.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There will be no benefit to you, but this project will help us learn about the communication skills of younger brothers and sisters of children with language impairments, as compared to other babies of the same age.

**What will happen when the research study stops?**

All research data in our department is kept for ten years after the end of the study. After this time, all paper records will be shredded, and all digital files will be deleted.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Your personal details will be kept confidential and will be visible only to me and the two supervisors on my project. Your personal details will be stored separately from assessment data, in which your child will be referred to using a number instead of their name, to keep the information confidential. All records on paper will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at City University, and all computer files will be password protected.

If your child is referred to specifically in any written work or presentation, we will use a made-up name rather than their real name.

The videos of the assessment sessions will be seen by me, my two supervisors, and one other person, who will see the videos in order to analyse your child’s communication skills without knowing any details about your child. This will give us more accurate data. The second rater will not be given any personal information about you or your child and will keep all observations from the videos confidential.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of the research study will form part of my PhD project. They will also be included in articles published in journals, and presentations given at conferences. At no time will your child be referred to using their real name.

If you would like to receive a summary of the results of the project, I will be happy to provide one.

**What will happen if I don’t want to carry on with the study?**

If you no longer wish your child to be involved in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time, even if you have already signed a consent form. You do not have to tell us why you do not want to carry on, and it will not affect any of your children in any way.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have any concerns about the project you can feel free to discuss them with me at any time.

You could also contact one of my supervisors:

* Nicola Botting [nicola.botting.1@city.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.botting.1@city.ac.uk)
* Natalie Hasson [n.k.hasson@city.ac.uk](mailto:n.k.hasson@city.ac.uk)

If you would like to complain about any aspect of the study, City University London has established a complaints procedure via the Secretary to the University’s Senate Research Ethics Committee. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to the Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is: Assessment of Early Communication in Very Young Children

You could also write to the Secretary at:

Anna Ramberg  
Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee   
Research Office, E214  
City University London  
Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0HB

Email: [Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk](mailto:Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk)

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has received ethical approval from the City University London Division of Language and Communication Science Proportionate Review Committee.

**Further information and contact details**

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, you can contact me using the details given below..

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.**

Helen M. Cain MSc

Research Student, Division of Language and Communication Sciences

City University London

[helen.cain.1@city.ac.uk](mailto:helen.cain.1@city.ac.uk)

020 7040 5813

07729 908322



**Assessment of Early Communication in Very Young Children**

**Consent Form**

I agree for my child ............................................................................... (please state child’s full name) to take part in the above City University London research project.

Please tick the box to indicate that you agree with each of the following statements.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I have had the project explained to me and I have read the information sheet, which I may keep for my own records. |  |
| I understand that participation will involve:   * Completing questionnaires about my children. |  |
| * A researcher visiting my home to observe and play games with my child. |  |
| * Allowing sessions with my child to be video- and audio-recorded. The recordings will be stored separately from all identifying information about my child. |  |
| I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that my child will not be identifiable in any research papers, reports or conference presentations arising from the study. |  |
| I consent to video- or audio- recordings of my child being shown to students, researchers or other professionals in presentations or for teaching purposes.  (You can choose not to agree to this without affecting your participation in the project). | YES / NO  (please circle) |
| I understand that our participation is voluntary, that I can choose for my child not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw my child at any stage of the project without me or any of my children being penalized or disadvantaged in any way. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I agree to City University London recording and processing this information about me and my child. I understand that this information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and my consent is conditional on the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. |  |
| I agree to take part in the above study. |  |

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**Name of Parent Signature Date**

Additionally, my university department is creating a register of 'Research Families' who may be willing to volunteer for research in the future. You would be sent information about new research projects but would always have the option of saying no or to come off the register at any time and without giving a reason. Your details would be held securely at City University London and no-one outside of the Division of Language and Communication Science would have access to them.

If you agree to being included on this register, please sign below. Participation is voluntary and you can choose not to agree to this without affecting your participation in the project described above.

I agree / do not agree (please delete as necessary)

to being included on a register of “Research Families” held by City University London Division of Language and Communication Science and sent information on future research projects.

Parent’s signature: