Hello from the Stony Brook University Temperament Study! We hope this newsletter keeps you up-to-date on progress in our study of children’s temperament, emotions, and their relationship to parents’ personalities. Please let us know what you would like to see in future newsletters. As a reminder, you can find all previous newsletters online at: www.sbutemperamentstudy.org.

**Progress Report & Future Plans**

With summer in full swing, we are pleased to share that we have nearly 350 families with preschool age children enrolled in the study! Of these families, 80% have completed the second lab visit, 91% have completed the phone interviews about themselves and their children, and 73% have completed the family questionnaires. An additional 265 families have participated in a sub-study examining the role of genes in the development of temperament and personality. We know that participation in the study takes a good deal of time and energy, and we appreciate your continued efforts!

We hope to reach our goal of 600 families by June 2007, after which we plan to begin the Age 5/6 Assessment. The Age 5/6 Assessment will be critical to understanding the stability of temperament over time. We hope that your family will continue to participate at that time.

**Description of the Study**

**First Visit**
- Parent completes questionnaires, and Child is videotaped playing with toys & games and interacting with our research staff.

**Second Visit**
1) Parent and Child are videotaped together working on fun activities together.
2) Child takes part in an assessment of brain activity (EEG).

**Phone Interviews**
1) Parent interview about personality, moods, and emotional styles.
2) Co-Parent interview about personality, moods, and emotional styles.
3) Phone interview about Child’s emotional, social, and behavioral development.

**Questionnaires**
1) Parent questionnaires about Child and Parent mood and temperament.
2) Co-Parent questionnaires about Child and Co-Parent mood and temperament.

**Genetics Sub-Study**
- Child provides lab samples to investigate the relationships between genes and temperament.

**A Reminder to Families: Questionnaires**

Please complete and return the parent questionnaire packets in the pre-paid envelope. If you have any questions, or need a new set of questionnaires, please call the Project Coordinator at 631-632-4115.

Thank you!
How Does Temperament Develop Into Personality?

As part of an installment series, we plan to address issues regarding child development and temperament in each newsletter. Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about a particular topic.

Temperament is thought to provide the “building blocks” for later personality. But how can the temperament traits that are apparent in early childhood develop into the more complex patterns of thinking, emotion, and behavior that make up personality?

In a forthcoming chapter in the *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Dr. Avshalom Caspi (University of London) and Dr. Rebecca Shiner (Colgate University) have suggested that there are six sets of processes through which early temperament shapes the development of later personality:

1. First, temperament may influence how children respond to positive and negative reinforcement of behaviors, and punishment for undesired behaviors. For example, extraverted children may be more responsive to rewards, while fearful or inhibited children may be more responsive to punishment. This may influence what, and how quickly, children learn from their environments.

2. Second, temperament shapes how adults and peers respond to the child. For example, difficult, irritable infants tend to bring out more negative responses from their parents, leading mothers to feel less confident and less competent. In contrast, children expressing high levels of positive emotions are seen by teachers and peers as more likeable, friendly, and cooperative.

3. Third, temperament shapes how children interpret their environments and experiences – affecting what they notice around them, which goals are most significant to them, and the types of responses that come to mind. Differences in self-regulation may influence how children choose to respond, and their abilities to implement those responses. For example, children with a high level of irritability/anger may interpret adults’ requests as hostile attempts to control them.

4. Fourth, temperament shapes how children evaluate themselves compared to others and to themselves over time. Differences in temperament may influence the kind of feedback that children seek out about themselves, the standards that they use for comparison, and their response to these comparisons. For example, sad and anxious children tend to have more negative views of themselves and underestimate their competence compared to others.
5. Fifth, temperament shapes children’s choices in their environments, activities, and peer groups. These choices may serve to reinforce and sustain their temperamental dispositions. For example, children with high levels of conscientiousness and persistence may pursue complex, challenging activities that require considerable attention and patience, whereas more active, impulsive children may choose faster-paced, exciting activities that may involve a greater degree of risk.

6. Finally, temperament shapes the ways that children change, manipulate, and create their environments. They learn to anticipate potential opportunities and challenges and choose how to handle those situations according to their goals. For example, extraverted children may persuade other children to choose them as leaders of school groups.

The Stony Brook University Temperament Study hopes to be able to identify and trace the processes through which temperament in early childhood develops into more complex, elaborate patterns of personality found in later childhood, adolescence and young adulthood.

**Moving? New Phone? Questions/Concerns?**

In the years to come, we hope to keep all families as a part of the Stony Brook Temperament Study. If you move or change your phone number, or have a question for our researchers, please call us at (631) 632-4115. You can also contact us via our website, [www.sbutemperamentstudy.org](http://www.sbutemperamentstudy.org).

**Resources for Parents and Children**

Several parents have expressed interest in reading materials and other resources for parents. We would like to recommend some books that address common problems parents and children may encounter. These books are available through Amazon and most major booksellers:

- “Incredible Years: A Troubleshooting Guide for Parents of Children Aged 3 to 8” by Carolyn Stratton.
- “Touchpoints: Your Child’s Emotional and Behavioral Development” by T. Berry Brazelton.
- “Good Friends are Hard to Find: Help Your Child Find, Make, and Keep Friends” by Fred Frankel.
- “How to Behave so Your Children Will, Too!” by Sal Severe.
- “The Emotional Problems of Normal Children” by Stanley Tureki.
Finally, for problems that may require professional attention, please contact your pediatrician or consider the following resources:

- SUNY Stony Brook, Department of Psychiatry 632-8850
- SUNY Stony Brook Psychological Center 632-7830
- Point of Woods Clinic, SUNY Stony Brook 634-7874
- Child & Family Psychological Services, Commack 543-0290
- Brookhaven Youth Bureau, Medford 451-8011
- Pederson Krag MHC, Smithtown 265-3311
- Family and Child Guidance, Deer Park 242-1366
- Family Service League, Huntington 427-3700

**Staff Notes**

Project Coordinator Jaifi Lewis will be leaving this August to pursue her career aspirations. We wish her the best of luck! Our new Project Coordinator is Keri-Ann Tochka. (You can view pictures of all our staff on the website.)

We wish you a wonderful and safe summer! Thanks again!

The Stony Brook Temperament Study