



How much does genetics influence learning and behavior in children with Down syndrome?

This large scale, multi-site project will have the power to identify factors, both genetic and environmental, that lead to the variation in cognitive functioning seen in individuals with Down syndrome.

The funding for this project has been provided by the Down Syndrome Research and Treatment Foundation. We are grateful for their support.

The Cognition Project

Contact us for more information

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Research Announcement



Exploring cognitive variation
in people with
Down syndrome

A nationwide study to understand the differences and similarities in learning abilities among individuals with Down syndrome.



Unlocking cognitive processes in individuals with Down syndrome.



What is the goal of the study?

The goal of this study is to understand more about how children with Down syndrome learn and problem solve. We are also gathering information about certain medical conditions related to Down syndrome to determine how they may affect learning abilities. Finally, we plan to collect DNA samples to identify genes that play a role in these learning pathways.

Will results be shared with participants?

Results from the tests will not be provided as they are not part of a diagnostic tool. Summary results will be provided to all participants in a newsletter.

Who can participate in the study?

Individuals with Down syndrome who are between the ages of 11 and 18 years. A short eligibility screen will determine participation.

What will participants be asked to do for the study?

- Participants will be asked to complete approximately 2 1/2 hours of testing. Most of the testing is done on the computer and will seem like computer games.
- Parents will be asked to complete short questionnaires on medical history and their child's adaptive (self-help) skills.
- Mothers will be asked to complete a 45-minute phone interview covering medical and family history and environmental exposures.
- Participants will provide a small blood sample which can be coordinated with a medically necessary blood draw, and parents will be asked to give a small saliva sample.

Where will the study be conducted?

Children's National Medical Center
Emory University
Johns Hopkins University
Kennedy Krieger Institute
Oregon Health & Sciences University
University of Arizona—Tucson

