

We would like to invite you and your child to participate in a new study about social cognitive development in children with normal hearing and in those who are deaf and hard of hearing. Social cognitive development refers to a child's growing ability to understand that what others think, feel, and believe about a particular situation and will determine how they behave. Children and adults use this social knowledge every day to effectively interact and communicate with friends, family, teachers and strangers. We know some children with hearing loss have difficulties interacting easily in social situations and we think that differences in social 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 delayed in various areas of social cognitive development, identify the specific areas of difficulty, and determine the reason(s) for the difficulty.

If you 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 picture description task with your child and complete two short questionnaires about your child's vocabulary knowledge and behavior at home.

In order to participate, your child should be between the ages of 3 and 6 years of age, have bilateral hearing loss in the moderate to profound range, and use primarily speech to communicate (although children who use some sign language are also welcome to participate). We are recruiting children who use hearing aids and/or cochlear implants. We are also hoping to test children with normal hearing in the same age range, so siblings with normal hearing are welcome to participate.

We hope that you and your child will participate in this study. After you and your child complete the study, the language testing results will be shared with you as well as some suggestions for ways of facilitating social cognition during day-to-day interactions with your child. You can contact Kimberly Peters, Ph.D. at (360) 650-3206 or Kimberly.peters@wwu.edu in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Western Washington University if you are interested in finding out more about the study. 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,

Margaret Savage
Graduate Student
Western Washington University

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Associate Professor, Department Chair
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