Parent Information

Thank you for your interest in taking part in the University of Reading's "Uncertain World" Project. This project focuses on how children respond to the unknown and is being led by Zoe Ryan as part of her PhD research under the supervision of Prof. Helen Dodd. After this initial information and FAQs, there is a short questionnaire for you to complete.

Project Information

We are looking for 170 children between the ages of 8 and 12 to take part in this exciting project about how children respond to the unknown. We aim to discover why children explore things that are unknown or uncertain; because of curiosity or because they are uncomfortable with not knowing.

In total the project will take approximately 10 minutes of your time and 10 minutes of your child's time. In the first part we will ask you to complete some short questionnaires about your child, which should take about 5-10 minutes. In the second part, your child will play a game on a computer at home. To play the game your child will need to have access to a computer that can play sounds, has a webcam, and access to Google Chrome.

The questionnaires for you to complete are available after you have read this information and agreed to take part. Once you have completed them we will send you a link by email that you can use to get the game set-up for your child. The game is designed for 8 - 12 year old children and should only take about 10 minutes. It will involve your child pressing buttons that make sounds while their face is being recorded by your computer's webcam. Due to the nature of the game, your child will need to have normal or corrected hearing and vision.

Families will be given a £5 voucher as a contribution to your reasonable expenses incurred in taking part in the research.

Unfortunately, at this stage we're not able to include children who have significant Special Educational Needs (SEN) because their reactions to uncertainty are likely to be different to that of other children. In the future we may look to carry out a similar study with children who have SEN.

On the next few pages, we answer some frequently asked questions about the project. Please get in touch if you have any other questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the project. If you are happy to take part in the research, please continue through to provide your consent and complete the questionnaires.

This application has been reviewed by the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Thank you for your time and interest in our project!

Zoe Ryan

(University of Reading Doctoral Researcher)

Contact info:
z.j.ryan@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Mobile: 07816 590138

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the point of the project?

We seek out information in our daily lives, and this can be driven by a range of factors. We can be curious, and our thirst for information can lead us to try to find out more. We can also be driven to seek information because we don't like uncertainty and want to decrease it. At the moment we know very little about what drives children's reactions to uncertainty so that is what we are investigating in this project.

The information from the project could be helpful in thinking about how to treat anxiety around uncertainty and for understanding how to stimulate curiosity in education.

We are interested in what drives the behaviour of the whole group of children and will only be looking at overall patterns for the group, not individuals in detail.

What exactly will happen when we take part?

Once you have finished reading this information sheet, we will ask for you to complete some questionnaires about you and your child which should take 5 – 10 minutes. Once we have confirmed your child's eligibility to take part, we will send you a link to the computer game.

We would appreciate it if you could assist your child with the setup of the game. You will be asked to allow the web browser to start recording on the webcam and then check that the sound is working and at an appropriate level on the computer. Your child will be shown a brief instruction video which explains what they have to do. Your child will then be shown a number of buttons on the screen which are linked to different sounds. Your child's reaction to the buttons will be video recorded via the webcam in anticipation of the game and during the game. They will be asked to rate how they feel, and then will be given the opportunity to press as many or as few buttons as they like. Each round lasts around a minute. They will be given the opportunity to play the game with different sounds several times.

After your child completes the game, you will be asked if you are happy to upload the video to our secure servers by pressing a button – you will be able to choose who is allowed to view the videos at this point. You will then be provided with some further information about the project.

You will be sent a £5 voucher once you have completed the session as a contribution to your reasonable expenses incurred in taking part in the research.

What will happen to the information about me and my child?

We are committed to keeping your information safe. All the information we collect and that you share with us will be kept confidential, unless something we observe makes us concerned for your safety, your child's safety or someone else's safety. We may then need to share information to make sure you are kept safe. We will use a unique code known only to the project team to identify any information relating to you and your child. That way, all of the information is anonymous. Electronic data including any videos will be stored on secure servers and password protected. Only the researchers working on this project will have access to these stored files. De-identified electronic data for the whole group will be deposited to the University of Reading data archive; no videos, personal or identifiable information will be included.

Frequently Asked Questions continued

What if my child gets upset or doesn't want to do some of the game?

We of course hope that the game is not upsetting and that your child enjoys taking part. We have designed the game so that it is suitable for children and we have done lots of work with young children in the past. However, if your child does show any signs of getting upset, says that they don't want to take part, or if you don't feel comfortable at any stage, please tell them that they can stop the game. Taking part is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research at any point. Withdrawing won't affect the contribution to your reasonable expenses incurred in taking part in the research.

Who is doing the research?

The project is managed by Zoe Ryan, Doctoral Researcher from the University of Reading, under the supervision of Prof. Helen Dodd, Dr Lily Fitzgibbon and Dr Jayne Morriss. All researchers working on the project have enhanced DBS checks.

If you have read this information and are happy to take part in the project, please feel free to continue on to the consent form and questionnaires.

If you have any questions you can contact Zoe on:

z.j.ryan@pgr.reading.ac.uk
mobile: 07816 590138

or Helen on:

h.f.dodd@reading.ac.uk
Phone: 0118 378 6331

Many thanks for your time and interest in our project!

Zoe

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Consent

* Thank you for supporting our project. On the next few pages you will be asked to answer a series of questions about you and your child. In total it should take about 5-10 minutes to complete the questions. When you have submitted the questionnaire responses, you will be sent an email with details of how to access the online game that your child will play.

You can save your questionnaire and come back to it later if you wish.

Many thanks,

Zoe
(z.j.ryan@pgr.reading.ac.uk)

- [ ] I agree to participating in this questionnaire portion of the project and to my child taking part in the webcam-recorded computer game, being conducted by Professor Helen Dodd, Dr Lily Fitzgibbon and Zoe Ryan at The University of Reading.
- [ ] I have seen and read a copy of the Parent Information and have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and these have been answered to my satisfaction.
- [ ] I understand that all personal information will remain confidential to the project team and arrangements for the storage of any identifiable material have been made clear to me.
- [ ] I understand that this data will be stored against a number identifier on secure servers and password protected.
- [ ] I understand that de-identified data will be shared using a secure data repository service.
- [ ] I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that my child and I can withdraw at any time without having to give an explanation.

As part of the game, your child's facial expressions will be recorded by your computer's webcam. You will be instructed how to get this set up when you decide to start the computer game with your child By giving consent for your child to participate, you are allowing us to view the video-recordings of the study. The video will remain on your computer until the end of the game and we won't be able to see anything via your webcam until you upload the video. If at this point, you decide that you no longer want to share the video with us, then you can simply decline to upload the video file.

* I am happy to proceed with my participation and for the video to be viewed and stored by the research team as detailed above.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* I confirm that my child is between the ages of 8 and 12

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

In addition, you can also authorize us to use the video for educational purposes, for example, to show to other scientists and students or for public sharing, for example, for the purpose of further scientific research or to go on our website. These additional levels of consent help us teach students and communicate our research to others, but they are optional. You will be asked if you wish to consent to these when you upload the video file after the game but there is absolutely no requirement to do so. Please let us know if you need further explanation about these levels or if you have any other questions.

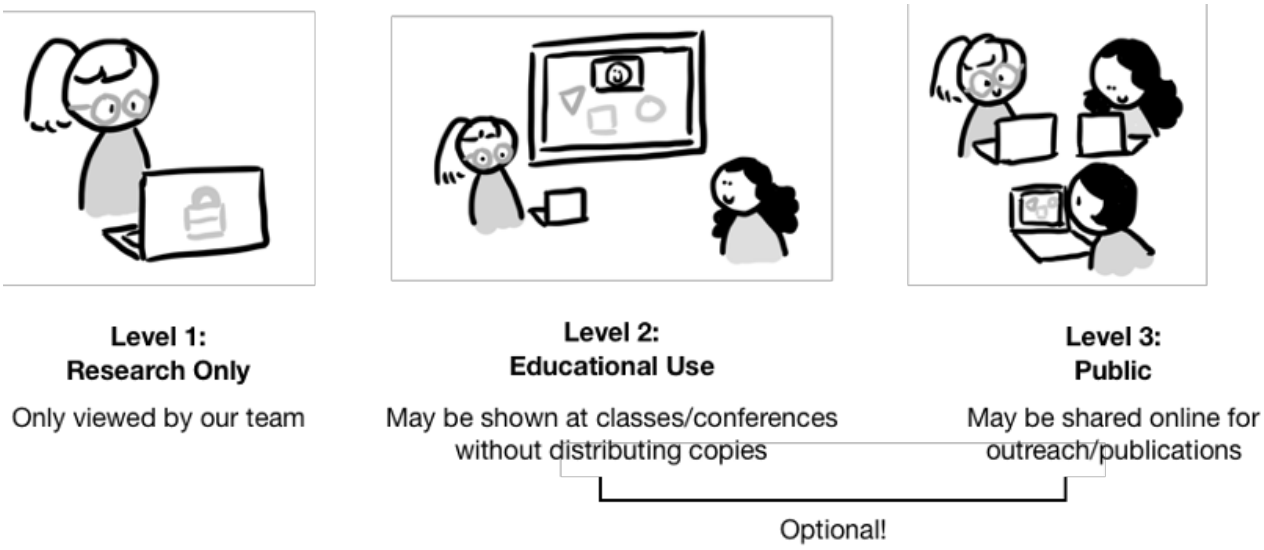

Image above courtesy of Social Learning Lab

This application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

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* Contact Details (a response is required in all fields below)

Full name	
Address	
City/Town	
County	
Post Code	
Email address	

* What is your child's name

* What is your child's date of birth?

Date

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

* Is your child:

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Describe their gender differently
- ◯ Prefer not to say

* Which of the following best characterises your child's ethnic group?

- ◯ White British
- ◯ White Irish
- ◯ White European
- ◯ White Other
- ◯ Asian or Asian British (Indian origin)
- ◯ Asian or Asian British (Pakistani origin)
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi origin)
- ◯ Asian or Asian British (Chinese origin)
- ◯ Asian or Asian British (Other Asian origin)
- ◯ Black or Black British
- ◯ Mixed Race
- ◯ Prefer not to say

* Does your child have any diagnosed learning difficulty, mental health problem or atypical development? Please select yes or no and provide details if yes

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes (if so, please give brief details):

* Is your child...

- ◯ Left-handed
- ◯ Right-handed

* Does your child have normal or corrected hearing and vision?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* Is your child colourblind or do you suspect they might be?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* What is your relationship to the child?

- ◯ Mother
- ◯ Father
- ◯ Grandmother
- ◯ Grandfather
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* Are you the child's primary caregiver?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Shared

* How many children do you have?

* What is the birth order of the child you are completing the questionnaire about?

- ◯ First born
- ◯ Second born
- ◯ Third born
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* What is your age?

* Marital status

- ◯ Single
- ◯ Married
- ◯ Separated
- ◯ Divorced
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* Your employment status

- ◯ Employed full-time
- ◯ Employed part-time
- ◯ Full-time home-maker
- ◯ Unemployed
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* Your highest level of education completed

- ◯ Primary School
- ◯ GCSEs
- ◯ A' Levels
- ◯ College Course Certificate
- ◯ Bachelors Degree
- ◯ Masters Degree
- ◯ Postgraduate Degree
- ◯ Prefer not to say

* Do you have a computer that can play sounds, access Google Chrome and has a webcam?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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RULES

* For each of the following statements, please rate how well the statement describes your child

	Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1. My child gets tense when unexpected events or transitions occur in his/her environment.	○	○	○	○	○
2. My child has a hard time coping with even minor changes.	○	○	○	○	○
3. My child says, “It is unfair” when he/she cannot to know what will happen next.	○	○	○	○	○
4. My child always wants to know ahead of the time what the plan is.	○	○	○	○	○
5. My child becomes upset if he/she has to enter a new situation.	○	○	○	○	○
6. My child seeks reassurance prior to entering an unfamiliar situation.	○	○	○	○	○
7. My child cries when he/she finds him/herself in an unfamiliar situation.	○	○	○	○	○
8. My child gets down on himself if he does not know what will happen next.	○	○	○	○	○
9. My child performs best in highly structured environments.	○	○	○	○	○
10. My child tantrums when an unexpected event occurs.	○	○	○	○	○
11. My child avoids unstructured situations	○	○	○	○	○

	Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
12. My child cannot relax if he/she does not know what will happen next.	○	○	○	○	○
13. My child cannot sleep if he anticipates an upcoming change	○	○	○	○	○
14. My child becomes fidgety during transitions.	○	○	○	○	○
15. My child freezes up in the face of unexpected events.	○	○	○	○	○
16. Transitions are difficult for my child.	○	○	○	○	○
17. My child complains of physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, stomachaches) when he/she is about to enter a new situation.	○	○	○	○	○

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ID-YC

* Please indicate how frequently your child expresses the characteristics or behaviours described below.

	Almost never	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
My child has fun learning about new topics or subjects.	○	○	○	○
My child is attracted to new things in his/her environment.	○	○	○	○
My child enjoys talking about topics that are new to him/her.	○	○	○	○
My child devotes considerable effort trying to figure out things that are confusing or unclear.	○	○	○	○
My child is bothered when he/she does not understand something and tries to make sense of it.	○	○	○	○
My child shows visible enjoyment when discovering something new.	○	○	○	○
When my child is learning something new, he/she asks many questions about it.	○	○	○	○
When presented with a tough problem, my child focuses all of his/her attention on how to solve it.	○	○	○	○
My child will work for a long time to solve a problem because he/she wants to know the answer.	○	○	○	○
My child examines things by turning them around and looking at them from all sides.	○	○	○	○

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Thank you so much! You have now completed all of the questions. We will be in contact shortly with a link to the game.
If you'd like any more information or have any questions please contact me at z.j.ryan@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Many thanks,
Zoe