

## Invitation letter to parents/guardians

Annanda Sousa  
College of Engineering and Informatics  
Data Science Institute/Insight Centre for Data Analytics  
National University of Ireland, Galway – NUI Galway

DATE: 23/03/2020

Dear parent/guardian,

My name is Annanda Sousa and I am a researcher PhD student in the College of Engineering and Informatics, Data Science Institute - NUI Galway. I am under the supervision of Prof. Mathieu d'Aquin, Dr Manel Zarrouk and Dr Jennifer Holloway.

I would like to invite you and your child to take part in my research. My research aims to create a computer system to automatically recognise emotions in children with high-functioning ASD to be used in future to support interventions for autism spectrum disorder treatment. This research was approved by both the NUI Galway's Data Protection Officer and the NUI Galway's Ethics Committee (an ethics committee that helps protect people involved in research).

Participation would involve attending 3 sessions in which your child will engage in some computer-based activities with the intent to evoke different emotional zones in them. Your child will be audio/video/heart rate recorded. Also, you will be asked to attend 3 sessions to watch the recorded video of your child and identify which emotions they are engaged with. Each session will take around 30 minutes. We will schedule the sessions to best suit your available time.

Since the study involves evoking emotions from your child, we foresee possible risk of your child to become emotionally agitated or feel emotional stress. So, we have put in place several measures to minimise this risk and to help your child to regulate their emotions during the study. One example is the presence of a therapist specialised in ASD during the whole time to provide any needed support.

The information gathered will be treated with privacy and anonymity. No information regarding your child will be revealed in this research. Information will be stored safely with access only available to the research team listed above and it will be destroyed after 3 years. The anonymised results from the study will be included in a thesis and may be published and discussed at academic conferences or in journals.

Yours and your child's participation will be invaluable in this research in creating a system that automatically identifies emotions from children with high-functioning autism. If you have any questions or if anything is unclear just ask me, I am happy to discuss the study with you. If you would like your child to take part please see the attached **information sheet**, the **information sheet summary** and **consent form**, for your competition in your own time.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

Annanda Sousa  
Email: [annanda.sousa@insight-centre.org](mailto:annanda.sousa@insight-centre.org) or [a.defreitassousa1@nuigalway.ie](mailto:a.defreitassousa1@nuigalway.ie)