Candy Game Debriefing

In this study we are interested in how children make choices and learn from rewards. In particular we are interested in how children explore their environments. Every choice a person makes is influenced by many different factors, but two major ones are: 1) the amount of reward (in this case candy) that is expected from choosing each option, and 2) the potential information gained by exploring. These two factors are often in competition. For example, at a restaurant you can choose something you’ve had many times before that you know is good (rewarding), or you can explore by trying something new to find out how good it is. The balance between these two things seems to be shifted heavily toward greater levels of exploration in young children—they need to explore more to figure out how the world works compared to adults who already have a lot of experience and knowledge. In this study we are trying to understand how different factors (such as novelty, salience, or potential information gain) influence how much and what children choose to explore.