**Information Sheet**

**Temporal discounting and subjective distance judgments in children**

Your child is being asked to take part in a study looking at how children’s ability to imagine future events is related to the decisions that they make. Before you give your child permission to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further details.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The study will examine children’s thinking about the future and how it relates to their decision making. We are interested to see whether children who imagine the future in greater detail make better future decisions. In addition we want to see if imagining the future in greater detail improves future decision making by making the future events feel closer to the present. We are studying this in middle and late childhood (7-11 year old’s) because we know that thinking about the future improves across this age group and we suspect that once children can properly imagine the future they become better at future-oriented decision making.

**What will the study involve?** Children will be asked to complete five short tasks:

1. The first is a delay of gratification task, in which children will be offered the choice between a small immediate reward (e.g. one sticker now) and larger delayed reward (five stickers tomorrow).
2. The next task is also a delay of gratification task. It differs from the first, however, in that it involves imaginary rewards only. Children will play a computer game in which they choose between a small hypothetical sum of money available now and a larger hypothetical sum available later.
3. In the third task, children will complete a computer-based task in which they have to pull a bar across a computer screen to unravel a “length of string” to indicate how far in the future a certain time point feels.
4. Children will also be asked to generate descriptions of possible future events in response to cue words (with their responses recorded on a Dictaphone), as well as rating both the vividness of the event and the ease at which the event came to mind.
5. The final task will be a short test of vocabulary and spatial skills.

**What sort of rewards will children receive?**

Children will receive either one or five ‘jelly snake’ sweets in the course of the Delay of Gratification task. These sweets are produced by the Natural Confectionary Company and contain only natural colours and flavourings. A full list of ingredients is attached. Children will also receive a stationery set, some stickers and some trading cards.

**Where will the study take place?**

The study will take place in your child’s school on a date agreed with their teacher. The study will be conducted by Dr Patrick Burns (Postdoctoral Research Fellow) and Mr Patrick O’Connor (Research Assistant), from Queen’s University Belfast, both of whom have an enhanced Access NI clearance. The study will be completed in two sessions across two consecutive days. Children will complete tasks 1-3 in the first session and tasks 4-5 in the second session. Each of these remaining sessions will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

**Will my child’s data be kept confidential?**

All data gathered will be anonymised. As an assurance of this, each child’s data will be stored under a participant number rather than their own name. Once we have completed our study an anonymised copy of the data will be available to other scientists.

**What if my child decides they do not want to complete the study?**

Your child has the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and we will explain this to your child. All data collected prior to withdrawal will be deleted. You can also decide to withdraw your child’s data from the study, simply by emailing or writing to us, at any point up until two months after the date of testing.

Upon completion of the study we will send a summary of our results to you via your child’s school.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact either of us:

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**Temporal discounting and subjective distance judgments in children**

**Please read the statements below and tick next to each one that applies. Please write your child’s name in the space provided, then sign and date the bottom of the form and return it to the researcher.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Tick where applicable |
|  |  |
| *I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw him/her at any time without giving a reason* |  |
|  |  |
| *I confirm that I have read and understand the letter providing information about the study* |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *I consent to the capture of audio recordings of my child* |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure my child cannot be identified* |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *I agree to my child taking part in this study* |  |

Name of Child (BLOCK LETTERS)………………………………………………

Date of birth of child…………………………………………………………..

Signature of Parent/Guardian………………………………………………...

Date……………………………………………………………………………

**Episodic past and future thinking and its links to delayed gratification**

**Participant name …………………………………………………**

**Date……………………………………………………………….**



I would like to participate



I would not like to participate