

UOFSC AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTER

WINTER NEWSLETTER



The UofSC Autism and Neurodevelopment Research Center (USCAND) is an exciting, new initiative focused on advancing and promoting excellence in research on autism spectrum disorders and neurodevelopment at UofSC. Led by Drs. Jane Roberts and Jeff Twiss, this initiative brings together researchers across the university who are dedicated to understanding neurodevelopmental disorders by studying anything from neurons to neighborhoods. This center consists of graduate students, researchers, and faculty who are committed to understanding the biological basis of autism, enhancing early intervention strategies, and supporting the local community.

Current research studies aim to advance early detection of autism in infancy, understand the genetic basis of communication and language, and develop behavioral interventions for parents and children. Researchers are also addressing new ways to support children with Fragile X, Down Syndrome, and infants born preterm.

Families may sign up to receive updates on new study opportunities, financial incentives, and how to self-refer by scanning the QR code below.

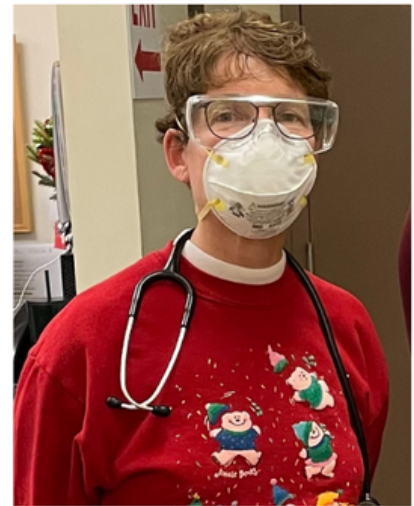
Or text "sign up" to
803-923-0060



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT

Dr. Deborah Greenhouse, MD

Dr. Deborah Greenhouse is a primary care pediatrician at Palmetto Pediatric and Adolescent Clinic in Columbia, South Carolina, and a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). She is a strong advocate for children and families in the community and has been supportive of our research from the beginning. On behalf of the entire team of USCAND, we are so thankful, Dr. Greenhouse, for your support and all you do!



Visiting Scientist Seminar Series

Join us for our Visiting Scientist Series where autism researchers share educational webinars with the community. Earlier this month, Dr. Lawrence Scahill spoke on "Measuring Anxiety in Youth with ASD." Stay tuned for more!

Study Finds Infants Later Diagnosed with Autism Show Reduced Social Communication Before their First Birthday

Researchers at University of South Carolina, Emory University School of Medicine, and Florida State University recently published a study in *Child Development* focused on observable social communication differences seen at 9 months old in infants that are later diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Early social communication was assessed by measuring social skills, speech skills, and symbolic skills. Social skills include emotion and eye gaze, communication, and gestures, speech skills include sounds, and symbolic skills include understanding and object use. The study found that infants who were diagnosed with ASD at 24 months exhibited significantly fewer social and speech skills at 9 months old than infants who were determined to be typically developing at 24 months. This research reveals an earlier window of time when diagnosis and intervention may be possible!



Current Study Openings

Live outside of Columbia?
Ask about virtual or home visit options!

Training for Parents of Children with Autism

Researchers are conducting a study to teach parents how to help their child communicate more effectively. Parents will also receive training on strategies to manage their own stress.

Sessions occur in the home, 2-3 times per week for about an hour. The study will last 2-4 months, and families receive \$50 per month of participation.

Families must live in Columbia or Charleston and have a child with ASD between 2-6 years old

Contact Katie Wolfe, PhD BCBA-D at katiewolf@sc.edu or (803) 777 8260

Recruiting ASD Children 7-10

This study is focused on understanding language and developmental profiles in children with ASD and how these profiles relate to the physiology of parents and their children. This study involves parents completing questionnaires about their family experiences, engaging in play-based interactions, and receiving an assessment of the child's language and social skills. This study takes about 3 hours, and families are compensated \$55.

Contact the SC Family Study Lab at SCFamilyStudy@gmail.com

Study Promoting Earlier Diagnosis for Autism

The Early Social Development Lab is promoting earlier diagnosis for autism within the first year of life. Researchers are recruiting newborns with an older sibling with autism. Participating families receive close monitoring through the first 2-3 years, feedback on their child's development, and up to \$250 for participation.

Contact Elizabeth at 803-923-0060 or elizabethdixon@sc.edu

Peer-to-Peer Support Research Study

Researchers are studying different ways that parent peer support can help parents navigate new changes, home life, and accessing treatments and services for their child with Autism. In this study, parents and their co-caregiver will receive information, support, and guidance about parenting a child with Autism and navigating services from a parent who has experience themselves. Families may be eligible if they have a child diagnosed with autism within the last 9 months and share co-caregiving roles

Contact Farren Allen at fallen@familyconnectionsc.org or 803-451-6280

Seeking Mothers of Children with ASD

The Family Experiences Lab at the University of South Carolina is currently recruiting 35-75 year-old mothers with autistic children to participate in a study with virtual and in-person participation options. This study focuses on the experiences, language, and cognitive skills of mothers of children with autism. Participation involves completing questionnaires, interviews, and language and cognitive tasks. Participation takes about 4 hours and the compensation is \$80.

Contact the SC Family Study Lab at SCFamilyStudy@gmail.com or 803-576-7359