

# FACEBLIND KIDS NEWSLETTER

Members of the Faceblind Kids  
Research List:  
We have made a lot of progress  
this year and we can't wait to tell  
you all about it!

Summer 2015



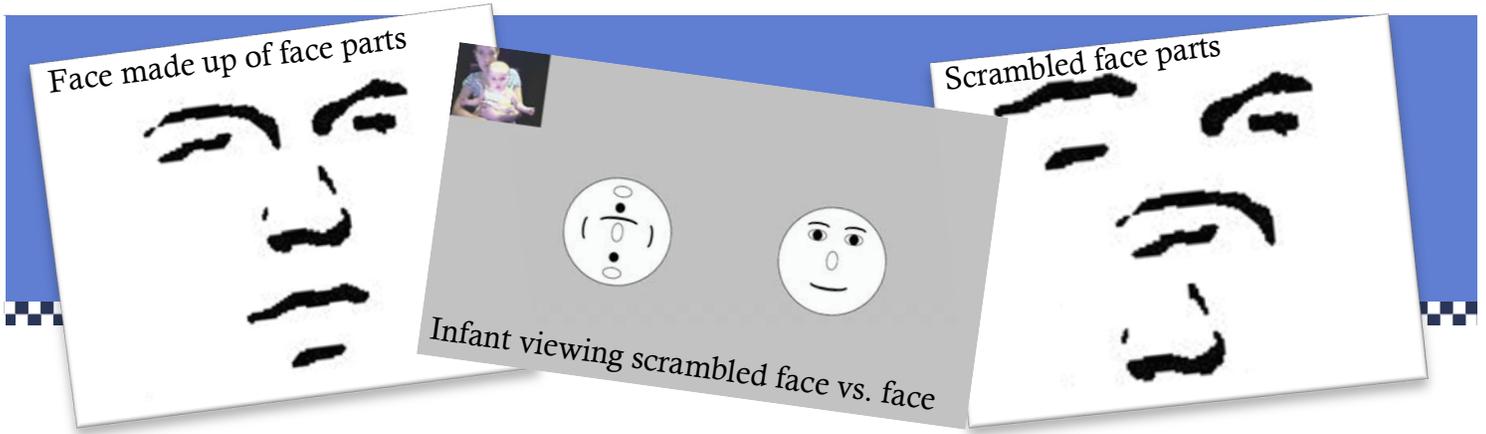
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## Recent Updates

Recently prosopagnosia has been attracting a lot of interest! From television to academia, people are curious about faceblindness. In an episode of the popular American TV show *Rizzoli and Isles*, the main witness had facial recognition difficulties. We have received many requests from various media platforms asking for information about prosopagnosia and wanting to learn more about it. Esteemed institutions, such as Princeton University, have also expressed interest in hearing more about prosopagnosia and our research. This is all very exciting because it means the work we are doing is getting noticed and people care about this topic. In this newsletter we will talk about the recent work we published and some of our current projects, as well as the attention faceblindness has been gaining across the globe!





## Recently Published

### How does prosopagnosia come about?

We recently published a study about the link between face detection and face recognition. One theory suggested that a failure to detect faces normally (i.e. find face among objects quickly and efficiently) could lead to a deficit with identity recognition. We tested 7 children with face blindness on two face detection tasks. One task involved finding faces among non-face objects and another involved finding faces among face parts (see face made up of parts, above). Three of the 7 kids with face blindness were impaired on these tasks and 3 performed normally. The remaining child was borderline. This study shows that some cases of developmental prosopagnosia could be explained by a failure to detect faces while some cases may be explained by higher-level failures in the face processing system. Face

blindness is a complicated condition that may have different causes for different kids. More research is needed to determine if face detection problems affect other face processing abilities.

### Do 5-6-month-olds prefer to look at faces over scrambled faces?

We studied 5-6-month-old infants as a first step towards investigating the systems involved in infant face processing. Our

results showed that infants look at and track faces for a longer proportion of time than non-face stimuli. This supports the idea that there is an early, or possibly inborn system that attracts us to faces over non-face objects. Interestingly, we did not find evidence for an automatic face orienting system, but this may be because 5-6-month-olds' drive to orient to faces is balanced by an equal interest in exploring unusual stimuli.

### Getting the word out!

I have been invited by Princeton University and North Dakota State University to visit and present my research on prosopagnosia in children. I have also received emails and phone calls from various news and entertainment sources that are interested in learning

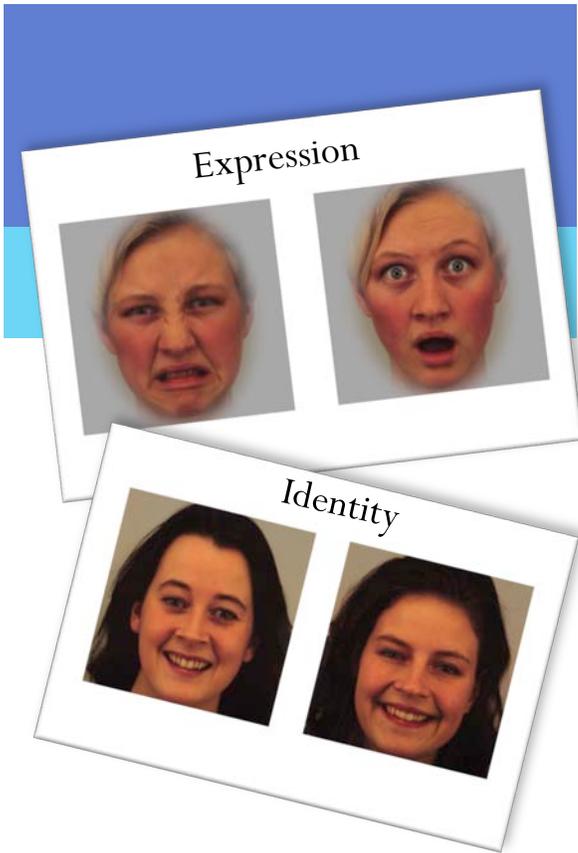


more about prosopagnosia and producing media that will help raise awareness of the disorder in the general public. Stay tuned for more updates and keep your eyes peeled for prosopagnosia in the news!

# Works in Progress

We are currently collaborating on a new study with Dr. Ida Gobbin, an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Dartmouth College. This study is designed to see how well kids can identify a face based on identity or emotional expression. Participants see a face appear briefly on the screen and then two choice faces appear.

The participants (aged 5-13) are asked to identify which face is most similar to the one they saw before. Sometimes the task shows different identities and sometimes it shows different emotional expressions. We are using this task to map the developmental trajectory of identity and expression processing to determine whether they develop at the same rate or at different rates.



## Our tests are online!

We have been working with a new website called Testable to put our assessments online, allowing us to assess children for faceblindness from their own homes. If you are interested in having your child take these tests please contact us to see if they are eligible. The tasks are best suited for children over the age of 7. Email [kad@umn.edu](mailto:kad@umn.edu).



## Other news

In November of 2014, The Guardian published an excellent article by Kate Szell about faceblindness titled: “Prosopagnosia- a common problem, commonly overlooked.” The article points out the importance of raising awareness about prosopagnosia, especially in children. We hope that our research can help influence more media attention like this.

Check out the article here:

<http://gu.com/p/43cta/sbl>



More recently, NYMag.com published a story on prosopagnosia, and interviewed a 47-year-old consultant, writer, and part time EMT from New England who has developmental prosopagnosia, for their feature *Science of Us*. It's interesting to read this individual's accounts of her experiences growing up with faceblindness. <http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2015/07/what-its-like-to-be-profoundly-face-blind.html>

## Thank you!

I hope that you have enjoyed reading about faceblindness and about the progress we are making in our research. Again, a big thank you is owed to all of you who have supported our work and helped raise awareness in your own communities. Special thanks as always to the families who have participated in our research. I hope you're pleased with the outcome of our work. We couldn't do it without you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kirsten Dalrymple'.

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