



College of Staten  
Island of the City of  
New York

*Dr. Lana Karasik  
&  
Dr. Sarah Berger*



Winter 2022

## Child Development Lab

### Inside

Excited to Meet  
You!

2

Sleep, Decision  
Making, and  
Learning

3

Sleep Helps Babies  
Learn

4

Solving Problems  
&  
Exploring

5

Learning Through  
Play

6

Dear Parents,

Thank you for participating with your child in the research conducted by the Child Development Lab at the College of Staten Island. Your support and participation is what makes it possible for us to learn about early development and to train the next generation of developmental scientists.

In addition, we would like to update you on the progress of our studies over the past year and to let you know what we've been able to find out with the help of your children!



## Where Will We Be This Winter?

**-BPL Dekalb Branch**  
790 Bushwick Ave

**-BPL Crown Heights Branch** 560 New York Ave

**-BPL Macon Branch** 361 Lewis Ave. at, Macon St

**-BPL Adams Branch** 9 Adams St

**-BPL Clinton Hill** 380 Washington Ave. at, Lafayette Ave

**-Fort Greene Farmer's Market**

**-CSI Daycare Center**

Email:  
[childlab@csi.cuny.edu](mailto:childlab@csi.cuny.edu)

## Who Are We?

We are The Child Development Lab at the College of Staten Island! We conduct research that focuses on child development and learning.

We are looking for parent AND child participants from all boroughs of New York.

## Where Are We?

We are located at the College of Staten Island in the Psychology Department, but we also come to you!

We visit Brooklyn Public Library Babies & Books events, and we can visit parent groups. Let us know if you'd like us to visit!



Two of our research assistants at our booth at the Atlantic Antic

## Attention New Sitters!

When learning how to sit, playing with toys can be overwhelming for babies, as they need to pay attention to both posture and the toy. In this study, babies played with toys in two conditions: while sitting independently on the floor and in a highchair.

We learned that the more sitting experience infants had, the faster they were able to explore the toy and gather the information they needed about that toy. This helps us understand what impacts the decisions babies make when solving problems.



## Calling Walking Babies!

Participate in a brand-new study for newly walking infants. Infants who have just given up crawling as their primary mode of locomotion have trouble switching between crawling and walking, like fitting themselves under a chair to retrieve a toy.

Little is known about what information infants pay attention to when deciding whether to switch from walking to crawling. In this study we ask infants to wear a special camera that tracks where they look as they approach a nylon tunnel so we can see what information they think is important. Participants earn a small thank-you gift.



## Sleep and Motor Skills

When babies learn a new skill like crawling, their sleep temporarily gets worse. We are studying why infants wake more when they achieve new motor skills by recording video of their sleep.

Preliminary examination of the data shows that infants prop themselves up on hands and knees and move around the crib for extended periods during the night.

## Sleep and Learning

Sleep affects decision-making of infants who are learning to sit independently. We want to know whether infants who have better sleep show greater improvements in a motor problem solving task, explore whether naps contribute to learning, and ask whether the relation between learning and sleep is affected in infants who are at a higher risk for sleep disorders.

To ask these questions, babies born prematurely and at term play a hide-and-seek reaching game where they search for hidden toys.

We expect that the better infants' sleep quality, the better their problem solving and infants who nap will learn more easily than infants who don't.





## Children Solving Problems!

Most parents want their babies to back down the stairs, but this is difficult to do, requiring babies to move all limbs and face away from the goal. We asked parents to teach their babies how to walk down the stairs and categorized parent teaching and baby learning strategies.

We discovered that parents and babies both exhibit a diverse range of strategies. Additionally, infants with parents who moved their baby's body, spoke encouraging/instructive words, and spotted their baby were more likely to back.

## Problem Solving with Parents

Differences in childrearing practices across cultures impact child development and learning. Our main study takes place in Central Asia.

The study looks at infant-parent interactions. During a shape sorter task, we study how infants interact with toys and what role their parents play. We found that infants get better and faster as they get older and incorporate their parents in play more over time.

We want to understand how infants explore objects and in what ways parents play a role in exploration. To do this, our study observes how infants behave while learning to complete the shape sorter task.



 **College of  
Staten Island**  
The City University of New York



## Learning Through Play

The PLAY project is a collaborative initiative by 70 researchers from 50 universities across the US and Canada. Natural free play represents the foundation of infant learning, yet we know little about how infants play and how it unfolds in real time and across development.



The Karasik Lab is eager to learn about babies' everyday experiences on Staten Island!

## Birth and Motor Development

We are currently analyzing archival data to examine trends in the onsets of crawling, cruising, and walking over the past 30 years. Preliminary analysis shows that motor milestone acquisition changed over time, suggesting that societal factors shape when infants learn new skills.

## From Us to You

On behalf of the Child Development Lab, we would like to say thank you for participating in our studies and hope you will keep us in mind for future studies and continue to spread word of the research we do so that we can better understand of how children sleep, acquire motor skills, solve problems, and play!



All of these studies (and more!) are made possible because of you!

Thanks from  
Dr. Lana Karasik  
& Dr. Sarah Berger  
and the rest of the  
CSI Child  
Development Lab.



2800 Victory Boulevard  
Staten Island, New York  
10314

Email:  
[childlab@csi.cuny.edu](mailto:childlab@csi.cuny.edu)