

# Summer 2014 Newsletter

## Temple University Infant & Child Lab

Haines House 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
580 Meetinghouse Road,  
Ambler, PA 19002

Interested in  
scheduling or know  
someone who is?  
We currently have  
studies for children 10  
months to 12 years old.

Give us a call at:  
**267-468-8610**

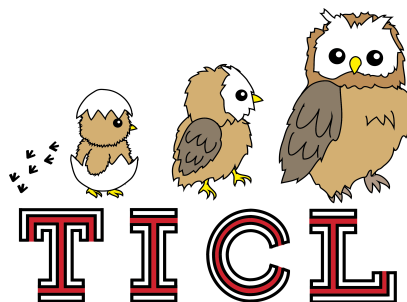
Or, send us email:  
***infantlab@temple.edu***

We would love to  
speak with you!

### We're on the Web

[www.temple.edu/infantlab](http://www.temple.edu/infantlab)

 Like us on Facebook:  
[Temple Infant and Child Lab](#)



## Congratulations!

**Dr. Nora Newcombe**, Principal Investigator, received the 2014 APA William James Fellow Award for her achievements in advancing the field of cognitive science.

**Dr. Nathan George**, Graduate Student, earned his doctorate degree and will be a Post-doctoral Scholar at Pennsylvania State University in the Fall.

**Dr. Jamie Jirout**, Post-doctoral Fellow, will be starting as an Assistant Professor at Rhodes College in Memphis, TN in the Fall.

**Shana Ramsook**, Lab Coordinator, will be starting as a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University in the Fall.

## We welcome several new members to the TICL family:

**Dr. Tamara Spiewak Toub**, Post-doctoral Fellow for Read, Play, Learn Project

**Dr. Amy Pace**, Post-doctoral Fellow for Computerized Assessment

**Kate Margulis**, Lab Coordinator

**Paul Immanuel Paschke**, son of Dr. Wenke Mohring, born 09/13/2013

**Avik Das**, son of Dr. Brenna Hassinger-Das, born 12/18/2013

**Dexter James Waer**, son of Dr. Amy Pace, born 6/17/2014

# Studies in the Spotlight

## Baby Physics

Did you ever wonder how babies and young children make sense of the complex world we live in? The world flows by at a quick pace as baseball players throw and batters swing, as children climb up sliding boards and glide down to the ground. Events contain no periods or commas. They don't stop so that we can find the actions or distil the patterns.

At the Temple Infant and Child Lab, we have been asking how babies find the beginnings and ends of events. Grad student Dani Levine and postdoc Dr. Amy Pace find that babies (and adults) pay particular attention to the goals of the action, using them to parse streams of action. We even found neurological markers that respond to the climax of an action! Amazingly, we are not as good at finding the beginnings of those same actions.

And once we have carved out the pieces, we learn to reassemble them like Lego blocks into towers of experiences. When a soccer player kicks the ball towards the goal and the goalie deflects the ball from the net, we hitch the two actions together and create the idea of *blocking* the goal. When the soccer player kicks a ball that goes towards the net and a second player then redirects it past the goalie into the net, we talk about an *assist* and again link the actions together. Newly minted Ph.D. Nate George looked at these really complex events and wondered if language might help children glue those actions together. His research, building off of Professor Phil Wolff's from Emory University, suggests that concepts like prevent (block), help (assist), cause, and despite might be key ways in which we turn simple chains of action into meaningful units of experience.

Together, this research begins to explain how we decode the flux and flow of events. Finding order in the everyday moments is a powerful psychological ability that allows us to predict what will happen next and to remember what happened just an hour before.



# Skype Me!

## Learning Verbs Through Video Chats

Young children learn new words by talking with parents, grandparents and childcare providers. Can they also learn from TV and video? The answer to that hotly debated question is “It depends” with most scientists suggesting that kids younger than three don’t get much out of words spoken on a screen.

Why? We decided to find out!

We taught toddlers new words in three different contexts: LIVE with an adult, on video chat, and on TV. In LIVE conversations, kids and adults have a “back and forth” that is responsive to the child. In the video chat, they get the same back and forth, but it all takes place on a 2-D screen. And on TV the responsiveness is gone.

Where do kids learn the most? It turns out they learn words when an adult is around and... surprisingly, learn just as well in the video chat. Kids were **not** learning at all, however, when they just watched the same friendly person on a video.

What is the key to success? It seems that it is the “back and forth” that is responsive to the child and follows on her interest. When we respond in kind to our children, they hear us and we help them build their language skills.



Riley and Scarlett video chat together on the iPad!

## Contact Us:

Check out our website:  
<http://www.temple.edu/infantlab>  
<http://facebook.com/infantlab>

Questions?  
Call us: 267-468-8610  
Email us: [infantlab@temple.edu](mailto:infantlab@temple.edu)

The Temple Infant and Child Lab is co-directed by  
Nora Newcombe, Ph.D. &  
Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology,  
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### Directors:

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek,  
Ph.D.  
Nora Newcombe, Ph.D.

### Post-doctoral

### Researchers:

Brenna Hassinger-Das,  
Ph.D.  
Amy Pace, Ph.D.  
Tamara Spiewak Toub,  
Ph.D.

### Lab Coordinators:

Paula Yust  
Kate Margulis  
Jelani Medford

### Graduate Students:

Nathan George  
Corinne Holmes  
Junko Kanero  
Dani Levine  
Jessa Reed  
Leah Sheline  
Steve Weisberg

### Honors Students:

Lindsey Hildebrand

### Undergraduate Summer

### Interns:

Allison McLaughlin  
Janelle Gagnon  
Stephany Wilson

## Meet the Co-Directors



**Nora Newcombe** is Professor of Psychology and James H. Glackin Distinguished Faculty Fellow at Temple University. Her Ph.D. is from Harvard University. Her research focuses on spatial cognition and development, including the nature of gender differences in spatial ability. She is also interested in the development of autobiographical and episodic memory. Dr. Newcombe is the author of numerous scholarly chapters, articles, and books on aspects of cognitive development, including *Making Space* with Janellen Huttenlocher (published by the MIT Press, 2000). Her work has been recognized by several awards, including the George A. Miller Award and the G. Stanley Hall Award from the APA. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the Society of Experimental Psychologists. She has served as Editor of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* and Associate Editor of *Psychological Bulletin*, as well as on many grant panels and advisory boards. She is currently Principal Investigator of the NSF-funded Spatial Intelligence and Learning Center, whose mission is to understand human spatial cognition, with an emphasis on the idea that spatial knowledge and skills can be improved, and to apply the resulting knowledge to foster spatial learning, especially in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines.



**Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek** is the Stanley and Debra Lefkowitz Distinguished Faculty Fellow in the Department of Psychology at Temple University, where she serves as co-director of the Infant and Child Lab and Co-Founder of the Center for Re-Imagining Children's Learning and Education (CiRCLE). Kathy received her Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research in the areas of early language development, literacy and infant cognition has been funded by the NSF, NICHD, and IES, resulting in 11 books and over 150 publications. With her long time collaborator, Roberta Golinkoff, she is a recipient of The APA Bronfenbrenner Award for lifetime contribution to the science of developmental psychology and the APA Award for Distinguished Service to Psychological Science, as well as the 2015 recipient of the APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award for a lifetime of outstanding contributions to applied psychological research. She recently received the APA Distinguished Scientific Lecturer Award given by the Science Directorate. She also received Temple University's Great Teacher Award and Paul Eberman Research Award. She is a Fellow of the APA and the APS, served as the Associate Editor of *Child Development* and treasurer of the International Association for Infant Studies. Her book, *Einstein Never used Flashcards: How children really learn and why they need to play more and memorize less* won the prestigious *Books for Better Life Award* in 2003. Kathy is deeply invested in bridging the gap between research and practice. Follow Kathy on twitter @KathyandRol.