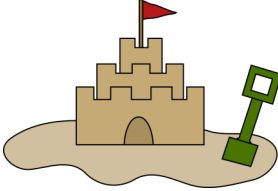





Play Study Newsletter



Summer 2020



Lisabeth DiLalla, Ph.D. Family and Community Medicine
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901
(618) 453-5206 Email: sitss.siu@gmail.com
Website: www.siumed.edu/playlab



A Big Thank You...

As always, we send a huge thank-you to all families who have participated and continue to participate in the Southern Illinois Twins/Triplets and Siblings Study (SITSS)! None of this would be possible without your participation!

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to our COVID19 research by completing the online survey! Your help in this is invaluable and VERY appreciated!



Congratulations!!!



Congratulations to **Kaylee Fafoglia**, **Riley Warren**, **Natalie Sterling**, and **Itzy Mendoza**, four of our undergraduate research assistants who graduated from SIU in May! Also, congratulations to **Emily Pali**, who completed her Master's thesis and earned her M.A.! Finally, congratulations to **Emma Diaz**, who completed her dissertation and earned her Ph.D! Great job, everyone!


Congratulations to **Dr. DiLalla** for becoming the new President-Elect of the Behavior Genetics Association! This is a well-deserved honor, and we are very proud of her!

Congratulations to **Emily Pali** and **Matthew Jannik** for winning the award for Best Graduate Student Oral Presentation at the Sigma Xi National Science Honor Society Virtual Symposium in June!


Congratulations to **Kelly McKiness** for winning the Best Undergraduate Poster award at the Midwestern Psychological Association Conference!

A Poem about Twins

Twins
By: Cheryl Weaver



Some days seem endless!
My patience grows thin.
Why was I chosen
To be a mother of twins?
The answers come
At the end of the day!



As I tuck them in bed
To myself I say,
"There are two to kiss,
And two to hug,
But best of all,
There are two to love."



Facebook Page!



If you are on Facebook, please "like" our page and feel free to invite others that you may know with multiples ages 1-5!

<http://www.facebook.com/SITSS.SIU>

New Presentations

Presented to the Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA) Virtual Conference and the Sigma Xi National Honor Society Virtual Symposium

Graduate Project

Worried about your Children? Parent-Rater Bias on Children's Internalizing Behaviors

Emily C. Pali, M.A., Matthew R. Jamnik, M.A., & Lisabeth F. DiLalla, Ph.D.

Our study investigated differences in parent-reported versus child-reported internalizing problems, such as depression and anxiety. We found that parent personality predicted parents over-rating their children on these problems, but that this effect was mediated, and therefore better explained, by high socioeconomic status (SES) and high life stressors. This may indicate that parents may overrate their children's internalizing problems when they have a higher SES and more stressors in their lives.



Undergraduate Projects

Birth Complications are Linked to Preschooler Externalizing Behaviors

Elena Cornelius & Emily C. Pali, M.A.

Advisor: Lisabeth F. DiLalla, Ph.D.

We examined the impact of birth complications on externalizing behaviors in preschool-age children. We found that severe birth complications, like seizures and preeclampsia, could significantly and reliably predict externalizing problems. Mild and moderate birth complications did not predict externalizing behaviors. We also found that problem behaviors like rule breaking and temper tantrums tended to persist throughout childhood.

Twin-Status, Siblings, and Peers: Differences between Parent-Reported and Observed Behavioral Inhibition

Kelly McKiness & Matthew R. Jamnik, M.A.

Advisor: Lisabeth F. DiLalla, Ph.D.

We examined the influence of certain experiential factors (twin status, time spent in daycare, and number of siblings) on preschoolers' shyness, using observed and parent reported measures from the SITSS lab. Experiential factors (twin-status, time spent in daycare, and number of siblings) did not significantly influence preschoolers' observed shyness; however, twin-status did influence parent-reported withdrawn problems on the Child Behavior Checklist. Singleton parents may notice more withdrawn problematic behaviors in their non-twin children who lack that 'built-in' playmate, whereas twins may be viewed as a unit. If parents view their twins as a unit, they may not notice withdrawn problematic behaviors during twin interactions. If this is the case, the Child Behavior Checklist may be an inadequate way to measure withdrawn problematic behavior in twin children.



The Effect of Adaptability and Family Conflict on Child Externalizing Behavior

Margaret Schlotter & Riley L. Marshall, M.S.

Advisor: Lisabeth F. DiLalla, Ph.D.

We examined the ways that children's adaptability and family conflict relate to externalizing (acting out) problems in 5-year-olds. In boys low on adaptability, more family conflict predicted more externalizing problems. In boys high on adaptability, family conflict did not predict externalizing problems. This interaction between adaptability and family conflict was not observed for girls. These results highlight the importance of reducing family conflict, especially for boys who are not adaptable. The results also suggest that predictors of externalizing are different for boys and girls.



New Presentations Continued...

Presented to the Behavioral Genetics Association (BGA) Virtual Meeting, June 2020

Preschool Pretend Play and Memory Development: Twins versus Singletons

Lisabeth F. DiLalla, Ph.D. & Matthew R. Jamnik, M.A.

We examined whether twins differ from singletons (non-twins) in terms of play behaviors and memory, and we also examined whether a chaotic home environment had an effect on memory differently for children with more versus less ability to engage in fantasy play. We found that twins did score higher on fantasy play at age 3 years, possibly because they have a same-age peer (their co-twin) to play with all the time. We also found that singletons scored higher on memory, which was not surprising given that children born prematurely are slower to catch up on such skills, too. Finally, we found that children with high fantasy play skills also tended to have good memory skills. Children with lower fantasy play skills had higher memory scores in less chaotic homes and lower memory scores in more chaotic homes.

Effects of Genetic Likelihood for Extraversion/Surgency on Preschoolers' Prosocial Behaviors in Ambiguous Situations

Riley L. Marshall, M.S. & Lisabeth F. DiLalla, Ph.D.

Sensitive parenting is related to the development of prosocial behavior in children, and this is particularly true for shy children. We were interested in whether children who were genetically likely to be less extraverted would be more impacted by parental agreeableness. We found that, in children not genetically likely to be extraverted, maternal agreeableness was related to prosocial behavior in ambiguous situations. Maternal agreeableness was not related to prosocial behavior in children who were genetically likely to be extraverted. Paternal agreeableness was not related to prosocial behavior in either group. These results suggest that children at genetic risk for low extraversion are particularly susceptible to levels of maternal agreeableness. The results also suggest that mothers and fathers play different roles in the development of prosocial behavior in children.



Completed Thesis

Parenting as a Moderator in the Relationship between Reactive Temperament and Internalizing Problems

Emily Pali, M.A.

In this project, Emily examined parenting within the context of temperament and genes predicting to internalizing problems. She found that parenting by itself did not influence internalizing problems, such as depression and anxiety; however, a child's reactive temperament did predict these symptoms. Further, a parenting variable of non-positivity interacted with genes such that those with the lowest genetic risk were the most responsive to negative parenting.

New Publication

Evidence for Reliability and Validity of Parent Reports of Children's Birth Complications

By Lisabeth F. DiLalla, Ph.D., Megan M. Trask, Ph.D., Gabe A. Casher, Ph.D., & Sarah S. Long, Ph.D.
Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 2020

In this paper we were interested in whether parent reports of children's birth events/complications (including such things as birth weight, gestational age, days in hospital, complications that occurred during delivery) were reliable enough to use for scientific research. We had parents report birth events/complications for their twins, and a number of parents completed the same form again 1 to 12 years later. For a subset of parents, we also obtained hospital records as a comparison to see if parents' reports were accurate. We found that parents are both reliable and valid reporters of their twins' birth events/complications. This is important for research because it is much easier to obtain parent ratings than to have to access hospital records, especially for large studies.

Meet the Play Lab!



Top Row: Riley Warren, Maggie Schlotter, Kaylee Fafoglia, Megan Myers, Tori McNary

Middle Row: Kieleha Pinkston, Maria Garcia-Yanez, Dr. Lisabeth DiLalla, Natalie Sterling, Itzy Mendoza

Bottom Row: Kelly McKiness, Emily Pali, Matt Jamnik, Riley Marshall, Elena Cornelius



Call for Updates

We have recently received updates from some of the families that we tested long ago. Thank you to the families who have sent us updates. We love hearing what is going on in your lives! We would love to hear from the rest of you, particularly those who have not been to the lab in a while. Please e-mail us at sitss.siu@gmail.com to let us know about graduations, jobs, and any other news about your twins that you would like to share with us or on facebook!

Connect with SITSS!



SITSS Art Show

Please submit your twins' artwork to the SITSS Art Show!

We will display the art projects on the SITSS Facebook page for everyone to enjoy.

Submit photos of paintings, drawings, and sculptures. Submissions can be emailed to sitss.siu@gmail.com. In the e-mail, please indicate whether you would like us to feature the art on our Facebook page.

We can't wait to see what our twins have created!