



## ALVA PRESCHOOL TEMPERAMENT STUDY

Even at young ages, children show certain stable behaviour characteristics that contribute to form their personalities later on. These characteristics are commonly referred to as temperament. Temperament is a child's individual behavioural style and includes such qualities as their typical activity level, sociability and emotional responses. The Alva Preschool Temperament Study is a research project being conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health/University of Toronto to explore how temperament may connect to other aspects of development. We are looking for children ages 3-4 years and one of their parents/guardians to participate in a one-time assessment that looks at cognitive, language, social and biological factors involved in temperament. We are inviting families from licensed child care centres across the Greater Toronto Area to join the study.

In particular, we are interested in learning about genetic factors that may contribute to temperament style. Research currently suggests the different temperamental characteristics may have underlying genetic components. Genetic information can be gathered very easily from children by collecting some cheek cells. These cells contain DNA, which is the building block of children's unique genetic makeup.

### **Who can participate in the study?**

Boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 4 years, who speak primarily English at home. Children without known neurological disorders and/or developmental and physical disabilities are eligible to participate.

### **What's involved in participation?**

Parents/guardians will be asked to complete several questionnaires that ask about the participating child, family background and demographics. In order to get a full picture about the child's temperament, some questionnaires will also be given to the child care teacher who is most familiar with the child at the centre. Additionally, parent/guardian and child will visit one of two sites conveniently located in downtown Toronto for an assessment that includes:

- Children having their cognitive, language and social skills tested
- Parents performing some quick cheek swabs on their child to obtain cheek cells for subsequent DNA analysis

### **What happens after the assessment?**

The information collected from you and your child is completely confidential and will be compiled with other participants. We are looking at trends seen among the total number of participants. No individual names will ever show up in published results. DNA samples will be analyzed for genetic information and then stored for future testing. Since we are studying a limited number of particular genetic factors in relation to temperament, we will not have and can not provide parents/guardians with information concerning other conditions identified by DNA. However, parent/guardians will be provided with feedback regarding their child's cognitive, language and social development.

### **What are the benefits of participation?**

To show our appreciation for you and your child taking the time to participate and to offset costs of transportation, participants will receive compensation. Research findings can also give parents/guardians a sense of their child's developmental progress. Results from this study could play an important role in helping children with temperamental and behaviour difficulties access appropriate interventions. Such assistance could translate into greater success for such children and their families.

### **How can I find out more information?**

If you'd like more details about the study and/or would like to participate, please call Jennie Kellerstein at (416) 535-8501, ext. 4594.

For more information about programs & Services at CAMH, visit [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net) or call CAMH at 416-535-8501

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