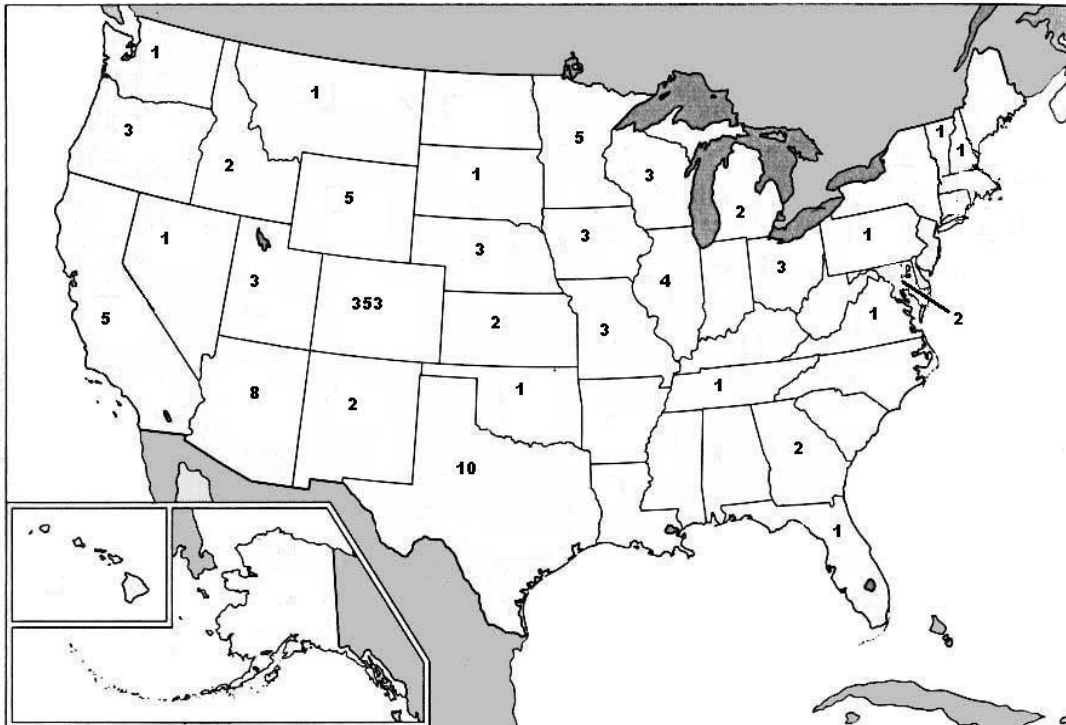




Longitudinal Twin Study



Institute for Behavioral Genetics

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Interview Schedule

<i>INTERVIEW</i>	<i>TIME</i>
11 year phone interview	1 1/2 hrs
12 year visit	5 hrs
13-15 year phone interview	1 1/2 hrs
16 year visit	4 hrs
17 year visit	5 hrs

LTS families are on the move! Above is the distribution of LTS families in the United States. In addition, there are families located in several foreign countries, including Canada, Germany, and Japan. If you have moved, please let us know so that we can keep our records current.



New Measure



Distractions are everywhere. In this fast paced lifestyle we have a word for doing several things at the same time, "multitasking", and we often multitask without even knowing it! There has been increasing interest among psychologists to find out what parts of our minds are responsible for regulating and directing attention. How come some people are easily distracted, have trouble planning, and are not very flexible when taking on new tasks, whereas others can focus attention and take on all sorts of new tasks with apparent ease?

At IBG we have added a group of new measures to study these phenomena, which we call "Executive Function". These tests take about 3 hours and participants are asked to complete a series of tasks on a computer. Some of these tasks involve sorting objects by color and shape, whereas others are puzzles that require multiple steps. We have already conducted pilots on older siblings this summer, and plan to begin testing "Executive Function" during the 17 year visit to our lab.

Facts & Figures

- © 80 journal articles, abstracts, and a book have been published using data from the LTS project
- © 414 families are still participating in the LTS project, 84% of families originally enrolled.
- © The oldest twin participants in the project are now 17 years old. The youngest are 11.
- © Funding is currently in place to continue this research until 2003, with renewal funds likely thereafter.

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The stories children tell



Kid's stories can be fascinating. Their imaginations often run wild with descriptions of magical places and fantastic events. Stories can also inform us more deeply about a child's personality. Feelings that are hard to express come out in the stories that children tell. In this study, researchers looked at the connections between themes in children's stories and parental ratings of their behavior, as well as the differences between boys and girls stories.

During the home visits at 5 years of age, twins were asked to complete stories based on certain topics. Some of these included: **Spilled Juice** - *While the family is drinking juice, the child spills juice all over the floor,* and **Cookie Stealing** - *In front of the child, the younger sibling steals a forbidden cookie. Then Mom and Dad enter the room.* The subsequent stories the children told were then rated

for certain themes including aggression, cohesion of the story, and affection.

Researchers found that boys generally told stories with more aggressive themes than girls, and that girls told stories that were more coherent (made more sense and followed a direct train of thought) than boys. Aggressive themes in boys stories did not strongly correlate to behavioral problems. However, girls who told stories with aggressive themes did have significantly more behavioral problems than girls who did not. As the project continues, researchers will look at current data to see if these trends continue through time.

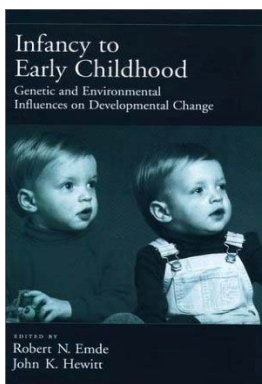
[Klitzing, K.V., Kelsay, K., Emde, R.N., Robinson, J., Schmitz, S. (2000) Gender-Specific Characteristics of 5-Year-Olds' Play Narratives and Associations With Behavior Ratings. *J. AM. ACAD. CHILD ADOLESC. PSYCHIATRY*. 39:8, 1017-1023.]

Longitudinal Twin Study book published

The long awaited book entitled *Infancy to Early Childhood: Genetic and Environmental Influences on Developmental Change* has been published and is now available. The book is divided into 6 sections which focus on different aspects of development in young children.

The introduction section describes the methods used and the makeup of the sample for the various studies that are conducted. The next 4 sections are devoted to different aspects of development including temperament, emotion, cognition, and environmental contributions to development. The final section includes major themes and conclusions from the research. The book is presented as a scientific volume with 25 separate studies that look at a wide range of behaviors and developmental milestones. The following is an excerpt from the liner notes. "*Infancy to Early Childhood* focuses upon a major transformation: the

transition from infancy to early childhood that takes place toward the end of the second postnatal year. An array of developmental acquisitions is initiated during this transition, e.g., acquisitions in speech and empathy as well as new aspects of emotion regulation, temperament, cognition and self-awareness."



This book is a result of your efforts and participation in this project. We continue to learn many new things about development and human behavior thanks to your ongoing contributions to our research. If you would like to order a copy of *Infancy to Early Childhood* it is available at on-line book stores such as Amazon.com. We also have several copies that we can loan out if you are interested in borrowing them. Please contact us at the addresses above to arrange this, or let us know the next time you visit!