

Title of the Project: The Social Skills Peer Observation Tool (SPOT): A New Method of Assessing Social Skills

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (Project ID Number): 11837/001

We would like to invite your child to take part in a research study. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not your child can take part. Talk to others about the study if you wish or ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of this study?

We all have different ways of expressing ourselves in social situations, and often our expressive style contributes to how others perceive us. Social skills are therefore important for helping us form friendships, relationships and to communicate with each other. Some people may find social situations difficult, and may need some help to improve their social skills.

There are various ways to measure someone's social skills, but many of these are completed by adults (such as clinicians, parents or teachers). This study aims to develop a new way of evaluating people's social skills, using peers of a similar age who will evaluate someone after observing them take part in a social task. It is important to be able to assess people's social skills accurately, so that we can explore whether treatments and trainings are effective in helping people develop better social competence.

Do I have to take part?

Your child's participation in the study is entirely voluntary. It is up to both of you to decide whether or not your child will take part; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you/your child in any way. If you do decide that your child can take part, your child is still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree that your child can take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form and we will also ask your child to sign one too. You will both also be asked to provide your contact details and to complete two short questionnaires about your child's strengths and difficulties, and social competence. Then, your child will be invited to take part in a task that involves a mock audition for a new reality TV show for young people their age. They will have to speak for 45 seconds to show the TV judges why they should select them for the show. This will be filmed with a video camera, and they will be given a T-shirt to wear.

What will happen next?

Once your child has completed the questionnaires and the video task, the researcher will edit the videos to make sure they have the correct length and format. The researcher will send a copy of the video to you/your child via email, so that you can both have a look first and let us know if you consent for us to share it with other participants as part of our questionnaire. If you/your child change your mind and would like to withdraw from the study, you can let the researcher know and the video will not be shared.

Once you/your child agree for the video to be shared, all videos will be entered in an online survey, which will be completed by peers of a similar age to your child. These peers will not be given copies of the videos and they will not be given any other information about your child. once they complete the survey they will not be able to access it again. The information your child provides us with as part of the study will be held on a secure computer at UCL.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

Some people may find it difficult or distressing to be contacted to take part in the study or to complete some of the tasks we ask for. Some people may find being filmed uncomfortable or may find it distressing for the videos to be shared. Our research team will be available to talk to you/your child either over the phone or via email and to advise where to get further help if needed. Please do not hesitate to contact us or arrange to see your local GP or health care team if you have found being approached to take part in the study upsetting.

What are the benefits of joining the study?

Taking part in this study means that your child will be contributing to our understanding of social skills difficulties, and to the development of new ways to assess them. This will be helpful for evaluating treatments and trainings, to make sure they are effective.

Everyone taking part will be entered into a prize draw, to win an Amazon voucher of £50. Your child will also be able to keep the T-shirt we give them as part of the filming.

Will my involvement in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. We will follow best ethical and legal practice and all information about you/your child will be handled in confidence. All information will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Only authorised members of the research team will have access to your personal details. The information you/your child provide us with will not be used or made available for any purpose other than for research and improvements in health care. Any personal identifiers will not be in any report or publication. Any research data generated and made available to others for further research will have your child's personal identity removed.

For the purpose of this study, the software and online platforms that are used for sharing the online survey and for handling the video recordings have appropriate security policies and have been approved by the UCL Data Protection office.

Can I know the results obtained from the study?

A summary of the study's findings can be emailed to those who are interested. Please let the researcher know if you would like that.

What will happen if I want to withdraw from the study?

Your child can withdraw from the study at any point, without having to give a reason. If your child decides to withdraw, we will stop collecting data from them. However, data that has already been collected up to the point of withdrawal will remain in the study.

Further information

If you would like any further information about this study, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers directly:

Email: kalia.cleridou.10@ucl.ac.uk
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Thank you for your interest in this study!