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**APOLOGY, EMOTION, TRAIT & TRUST:
Understanding of apology, emotions, moral character and trust in young children**

PARENTAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

Your child is invited to take part in a research study about how children understand other people as moral agents. Specifically, we are interested in how children judge the moral behaviour of others (e.g. do they do good/bad things?) and their subsequent responses (e.g. apologising). We are also interested in how children draw this information together to decide how a person is feeling and a person's moral character. This study will help us to better understand the ways in which children make decisions about whether other people are trustworthy or kind, and the ages at which children start to understand these aspects of personality. Gaining important information about children's understanding of apologies in social interactions will help guide parenting and educational practices in areas such as behavior management.

Your child has been invited to participate in this study because you have responded to our advertisement, or your child's psychiatrist/paediatrician has informed you about this study, or you have agreed in the past to be contacted for future research.

This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to let your child take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving consent for your child's participation, you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree for your child to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your child's personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Parental Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- A/Prof Pauline Howie, University of Sydney
- Dr Helen Paterson, University of Sydney
- Annabel Marsh, University of Sydney

Ms Annabel Marsh is conducting this study as part of her PhD at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Dr Pauline Howie, Associate Professor, and Dr Helen Paterson, Senior Lecturer.

(3) What will the study involve?

This study will be conducted at the Social & Developmental Observational Lab in the School of Psychology at the University of Sydney. If you decide/choose to participate we will make an appointment for you at a time that is convenient to you , and we will send you some questionnaires about your child's social functioning to complete before your arrival.

When you come to the Lab we will make some brief assessments of your child in two areas: (1) social functioning and awareness; and (2) emotion understanding.

Specifically, your child will complete some tasks and view short video clips with a researcher (Ms. Annabel Marsh). This will involve answering some questions related to understanding of the stories and videos. The stories describe other children doing things that are nice (e.g., helping or sharing), nasty (e.g., ignoring someone else in need or not sharing) or neutral. After hearing each story, your child will be asked what they think about the personalities (e.g., nice/nasty, honest/dishonest) and feelings of the story characters.

The researcher, Annabel Marsh, a Registered Psychologist, will also complete a behavioural assessment of your child. We will be video-recording the behavioural assessment. This assessment for older children will involve tasks such as having a conversation with the researcher about friendship and plans for the future or telling a story from a picture book. For younger children, the researcher will be playing with different toys provided by us, for example preparing a pretend birthday party for puppet and playing with bubbles. For younger children you will be asked to be present during the behavioural assessment of your child, but we just ask that you allow your child to do the tasks without prompting. If you are present with your child during the video-recording, you will be filmed as well, but it is only what your child is doing that will be assessed.

Finally, we will ask you for consent to allow us to approach your child's teacher so that he/she may fill out some questionnaires regarding your child's behaviour.

(4) How much time will the study take?

The study will take about 2 hours (including breaks). In addition, we would like to ask you to fill out two short surveys, which will take less than half an hour to complete. Finally, we are also seeking consent to contact your child's teacher to fill out some short questionnaires, which will take about 20 minutes.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

Children between the ages of 5 and 11 years who have a diagnosis or suspected diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and who have the written consent of their parent guardian to participate in the study.

(6) Does my child have to be in the study? Can they withdraw from the study once they've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and your child does not have to take part. Your decision whether to let them participate will not affect your/their relationship with your child's treating Psychiatrist/Paediatrician or the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney now or in the future.

If you decide to let your child take part in the study and then change your mind later (or your child no longer wishes to take part), they are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You can do this by contacting Annabel Marsh at annabelm@uni.sydney.edu.au.

Your child will be free to stop the lab assessment at any time during the session. Further, because of your child's age, the researcher and/or school staff will terminate any aspect of the study if they have any concern about a child's welfare, although this is not at all expected to occur. If your child's participation is terminated, any recordings will be erased, unless you say that you want us to keep them, and the information your child has provided will not be included in the study results. Your child will also be free to refuse to answer any questions that they do not wish to answer during the lab assessment session.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

We do not expect that there will be any risks associated with taking part in this study. The main inconvenience is the visit to the Lab, which will last around 2 hours. We will organise the visit for a time that is convenient for you and your child. At the end of the visit, we will give you a reasonable reimbursement for your travel costs in the form of a voucher.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

At present, there are no immediate benefits of taking part in this research.

We will give you a summary of your child's behavioural assessment results. Depending on the results of these assessments we will be able to talk to you about potential referral for specific intervention programs in the future, if needed. Summary reports are provided at no cost to you.

(9) What will happen to information that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about your child for the purposes of this research study. Your child's personal information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your child's information will be stored securely and their identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but your child will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

(10) Can I or my child tell other people about the study?

You are more than welcome to tell other people about the study as it will not affect the outcomes of the research.

(11) What if we would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Ms Annabel Marsh at (02) 9351 4026 or annabelm@uni.sydney.edu.au is available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you or your child would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to

contact A/Prof Pauline Howie at pauline.howie@sydney.edu.au or Dr Helen Paterson (02) 9036 9403 or helen.paterson@sydney.edu.au.

(12) Will we be told the results of the study?

You and your child have a right to receive information about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive this feedback by ticking the relevant box and completing the details on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a one page lay summary. You will receive this after the study is finished.

As discussed in section (8) you will also be provided with a summary of your child's behavioural assessment results. If you were informed about this study by your child's Psychiatrist/Paediatrician, a copy of this report will also be sent to your child's nominated clinician. Summary reports will be provided within one month of your visit to the Lab, and at no cost to you.

(13) What if we have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney 2015/837. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you (or your child) are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep