A new perspective
Discover what we can do for you!

About us

Our child development experts can help you to design, advance, and evaluate toys and educational products for children of all ages.

Our Sussex Child Research Hub is a specialist facility for child research in the UK. These state-of-the-art facilities enable developmental research using a broad range of observational and experimental methods.

With a specialist knowledge of child development from early infancy to adolescence, we know how children learn, think, speak, and play.

We can help to maximise the fun and interactive aspects as well as the attractiveness and educational potential of your products!
I have been investigating how babies and young children see, think and learn for the last 12 years.

I am currently conducting research into how babies see colours, which is helping us understand how babies respond and interact with the visual world around them. I have also published several academic papers on how colour preferences develop from birth to adulthood.

**About my research**

One of my main research methods involves using a specialised eye-tracking camera that allows me to measure, with great precision, what infants and children look at. I have previously used this method in a consultancy with a leading children’s TV company to show what children looked at and noticed when they were watching the company’s new TV show. My research fed into the final stages of product development. I have also conducted consultancies with child-related industry, drawing on my expertise in infant and child perception.

My research has been widely reported in the media. For example, I have talked on a BBC Horizon TV documentary, and on several radio shows including BBC World, BBC 5 Live and National Public Radio in the USA. In addition to scientific publications, my research findings have also been reported in BBC News Online, The Times and Junior Baby and Pregnancy Magazine.

**Recent research findings**

Newborn babies have difficulty seeing some colours, but by the time they are four months they can see the full range.

Babies prefer to look at certain colours.

Find out more at [www.sussex.ac.uk/babylab](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/babylab)
Dr Jessica Horst
Director of the WORD lab

My research focuses on how infants and toddlers learn about the world around them – particularly language, but I am also an expert in categorisation. I primarily study toddlers who are just beginning to learn how to name objects and combine words to communicate.

**Expertise**

- How young children learn words
- How toddlers play with toys
- How children learn words through picture and storybooks

**About my research**

I use several methods in my research including giving children toys to play with while we sort them and learn their names; reading picture and storybooks, and playing language games using a touch-screen. As a parent, I recognise the benefits of incorporating learning into everyday play with toys and books.

My research into how children learn words has gained a lot of international media attention. I have been quoted in newspapers on five continents and given several TV and radio interviews. I have also written editorials for parenting and nursery magazines and websites. I have conducted a follow-up experiment on a Channel 4 programme with Jo Frost (aka ‘Supernanny’).

**Recent research findings**

- The colours of toys played with together influences how well toddlers learn names for objects.
- Toddlers learn words better when they see things in the same context over-and-over.
- Preschoolers learn words better from hearing fewer stories more often.

Find out more at [www.sussex.ac.uk/wordlab](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/wordlab)
Dr Nicola Yuill  
Director of the Chatlab

I conduct research into designing and evaluating how objects and environments can promote play and learning – particularly using new technologies.

My research identifies what helps children learn through interacting with others, and I have a special interest in how a new generation of technologies can support parent-child and peer interaction.

My expertise includes children with special needs, particularly autism.

About my research

The ChatLab has specialist tools such as computerised video analysis to study children’s interactions with others, and cognitive and behaviour assessments to measure learning. I have worked with a specially-designed digitally-augmented castle playset and with creative group apps for families on tablets. I also work on developing and evaluating software tools and games to support children’s reading and language development from 4 to 11 years old, drawing on our evidence-based published research.

Recent popular press articles include comments on technology and children in *The Psychologist*, *Mother and Baby* and *Wired* magazines. My published papers include studies on how different designs of play spaces, shared touchscreens and high-tech toys influence children’s behaviour and learning.

Recent research findings

- Playing sounds in context helps children play more cooperatively.
- Dual control in games helps children learn social skills.
- How tablet technology can be used for family interaction.

Find out more at [www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/chatlab](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/chatlab)
Our services

We design and carry out research projects to answer your specific commercial questions

We provide observational reports and analysis on how children interact with a product

We offer master classes for individuals or groups in many key areas of child development
Discover how our child development experts can help you.

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