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Recruitment begins for landmark study of adolescent brain development

More than 10,000 children will participate in study of brain, social, emotional, and cognitive development

Recruitment for the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development ([ABCD](#)) study, the largest long-term study of brain development and child health in the United States, began today. The landmark study by the National Institutes of Health will follow the biological and behavioral development of more than 10,000 children beginning at ages 9-10 through adolescence into early adulthood. Recruitment will be done over a two-year period through partnerships with public and private schools near research sites across the country as well as through twin registries.



Adolescence is a time of extraordinary physical, emotional, and intellectual growth as well as a changing social environment full of new challenges and opportunities that help shape a young person's adult identity, health and well-being. There is much to learn about how varied adolescent experiences (e.g., participation in extracurricular activities; playing video games; sleep habits; head injuries from sports; experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other substances), affect development and vice-versa. This is particularly true in our rapidly changing world, which is now dominated by social media and other forms of communication in which adolescents readily engage.

"We know the brain is still developing well into the mid-20s, making it vulnerable to a host of influences," said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D. "With several NIH institutes and centers working together on this important study, we will be able to learn how a variety of biological events and environmental exposures affect brain development, giving us greater insight into what helps adolescents traverse that potentially tumultuous time to become healthy and productive adults."

During the course of the next decade, scientists will use advanced brain imaging, interviews, and behavioral testing to determine how childhood experiences interact with each other and with a child's changing biology to affect brain development and—ultimately—social, behavioral, academic, health and other outcomes.

Understanding these relationships may help reveal the biological and environmental building blocks that best contribute to successful and resilient young adults. This enhanced knowledge also may lead to ways to predict potential developmental problems so that they can be prevented or reversed. Families that volunteer will be part of groundbreaking research that promises to

inform future educational strategies, child development innovations, research priorities, more effective public health interventions, and science-based policy decisions.



The [ABCD Coordinating Center](#) is housed at the University of California San Diego and recruitment will be conducted through schools at 19 study [sites](#) across the country. For more information about this landmark study, please visit its website at www.ABCDStudy.org.

The ABCD study is supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the National Cancer Institute, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, and the Division of Adolescent and School Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

About the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is a component of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIDA supports most of the world's research on the health aspects of drug use and addiction. The Institute carries out a large variety of programs to inform policy, improve practice, and advance addiction science. Fact sheets on the health effects of drugs and information on NIDA research and other activities can be found at www.drugabuse.gov, which is now compatible with your smartphone, iPad or tablet. To order publications in English or Spanish, call NIDA's DrugPubs research dissemination center at 1-877-NIDA-NIH or 240-645-0228 (TDD) or email requests to drugpubs@nida.nih.gov. Online ordering is available at

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