



# NEWSLETTER 2019

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In 2014 we opened the **Centre for Attention, Learning and Memory (CALM)** at the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit at Cambridge. The aim of CALM is to understand the causes of learning problems in a large and varied group of children.

To help us do this, families visit us for half a day and we measure children's learning and thinking skills. Some children are struggling with learning, paying attention, or remembering things, and some are not. When they visit us, the children are asked whether they would like to come back again for an MRI brain scan, and if they wish to provide a saliva sample that will allow us to look at their DNA.

This information is helping us to understand why some children do struggle with learning and behaviour and what can be done to support them.

## What have we been doing at CALM?

In the last  
**5 years**

**863**  
children have been  
assessed at the clinic

**367**  
children have had  
brain scans

**99%**  
of families have  
indicated that they  
would participate in  
future research

# The CALM team



*Researchers in the CALM team*

We are a team of research professionals, including professors, senior scientists, early career researchers, and research assistants. We come from different backgrounds but share one common goal: to understand why children struggle at school.

Your participation in CALM has helped us take positive steps in reaching our goal. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you again.

## What we've found

In our research, we've discovered that:

- Communication and behaviour are closely linked – language difficulties make day-to-day activities and interactions very challenging.
- Children's concentration limits are under-recognised, which may contribute to difficulties in the classroom.
- Hyperactivity is linked to sadness in some children.
- High levels of hyperactivity do not directly cause learning problems.



# What we've found



We've also found that:

- There is a lot of variation in how children think and learn – but this doesn't relate closely to diagnoses such as ADHD or dyslexia.
- Children who have participated in CALM have many individual strengths, for example strong personalities and experience of coping with difficulties, which may be of benefit in the longer term.
- Children can find school challenging for many different reasons. If we could understand these reasons, it would help teachers and parents to provide more effective support for each individual child.



You can find more information about our research on our website :  
<http://calm.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/>

## What's next ... ? (turn over to find out)



*MRC Festival of Medical Research - Unit Open Day, Summer 2018*

# Follow-up study

We would like to **invite you and your child to come back to the CALM clinic** to take part in a follow-up study.

We have worked with many families, including **you and your child**, to measure different skills that are important for learning. We are interested in understanding how children's learning skills have **changed** over time. To do this, we would like to measure your child's abilities now that they are **older**.

## Who can participate?

All families who have previously attended the CALM clinic and who agreed to being contacted again about future studies. We will schedule appointments **approximately 3-5 years** from the first time families visited CALM.

## What is involved?

We will ask your child to complete the same assessments as he/she did when you came to CALM a few years ago. We will also ask you to complete some questionnaires.

## Where can I get more information?

Please contact us to receive additional information about the study.

Email: [calm@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:calm@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk)

# Stay in touch!



centre for attention, learning and memory

<http://calm.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/>

Please send us your questions about the research or any updates to your contact information.

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