

Name of Study: Brain Development in Infants at High Risk for Autism

Location: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - Chapel Hill, NC

Eligibility Criteria: Infants under 12 months of age with an older sibling diagnosed with autism

Principal Investigator: Joseph Piven, M.D.

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The Autism Research Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is proud to announce a new study of very early brain development in infants at risk for autism. This multi-center study, which is funded by both the National Institute of Health and the Cure Autism Now Foundation, involves the collaboration of five sites (UNC, Yale, University of Washington, Washington University, and Montreal Neurological Institute) collectively known as the ACE Network and projects to enroll over 100 families of children with autism at the UNC site alone.

Under the direction of Dr. Joseph Piven, the researchers at UNC are studying brain development in autism by studying brain development in infant siblings of autistic individuals (i.e., who have older siblings diagnosed with autism). This study builds upon earlier findings of Dr. Piven's group which indicate that brain enlargement in autism appears to start late in the first year of life. This innovative research will be using some of the most advanced brain imaging technology available to examine how brain structure changes during this important period from 12 to 24 months of age. The data gathered in this study will provide important information regarding early brain development in autism, which may in turn provide clues leading to earlier intervention strategies and better outcomes for children with autism.

If you have an older child who has been diagnosed with autism and are currently pregnant, or have an infant less than 12 months of age, your infant may be eligible for our study. Participating infants will receive developmental and behavioral assessments, an MRI scan of the brain, and screening for Fragile X Syndrome. Participation at the UNC site is limited to residents of MD, VA, TN, SC, NC, and GA as travel to the research facilities for a 2-3 day time period is required. Travel arrangements will either be provided for you or, if you choose to drive, your travel expenses will be reimbursed.

For residents in other states or for more information about how you can participate, please visit our website at www.babysibsimaging.org or call toll free to the UNC Autism Research Program at 800.793.5715 and refer to the Baby Sibs Study.

Thank you for your support in the advancement of autism research.

Sincerely,
Joseph Piven, M.D.
Neurodevelopmental Disorders Research Center
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill