

# Student Employees

You might recognize one of these names from your most recent visit! Student employees are responsible for making sure all the recording information accurately captures each moment of your visit. Students then break down the audio and video into the components we need to run analyzes and interpret the results. Students also pitch in with record keeping and help to keep all the information appropriately stored in our database.

## Graduate Students

Madeleine Miller  
Nicole Thoma  
Leah Povolny  
Katelyn Zarem

## Undergraduate Students

Karly Dierckens  
Ally Sandoval  
Kelsy Ehr  
Grace McMurray  
Meredith Braza  
Ellie Hanewall  
Brittney McCoy  
Erin Mattern

Several students enjoy festive treats at our WISC lab holiday gathering!



# Exciting Work, Powerful Findings

There are always many projects going on in the lab! They are all part of the larger goal of determining what the communication skills and strategies are for children with CP. Each project relies on data taken from different parts of your child's visit, including the many questionnaires that you complete. Ongoing projects have been focusing on:

## Expressive Language:

We've been examining those 10 minute sessions where it's just you and your child playing or having a snack in the testing room. We hope to better understand how children's language skills change between the ages of 6 and 8 and which parent behaviors facilitate language growth.

## Increasing Intelligibility:

We're looking at all those words and sentences your child repeats from the iPad and gathering information about their speech rate, loudness, and pitch. Recently, some of the children have completed a new way of saying the sentences which is part of an experiment to examine ways to improve overall intelligibility.

## Child Functioning:

You've probably noticed the addition of a few questionnaires—thank you for filling these out! These questionnaires help us to better understand various aspects of your child's behavior, social functioning, independence and cognitive performance.

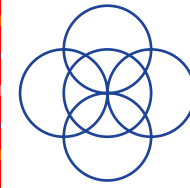
## Family Experiences:

Your thoughts and what you share with us is very important! Parent perceptions are contributing to work dedicated to understanding how CP influences family life, how parents advocate for their child, and how we can improve relationships and communication between parents and professionals.



Access recently published journal articles using the link below:

<https://kidspeech.waisman.wisc.edu/publications.htm>



# Wisconsin Intelligibility, Speech, & Communication Lab



Hello from the Wisconsin Intelligibility, Speech and Communication (WISC) lab! So many exciting new projects are brewing for the Communication Development Project and the team has grown in leaps and bounds! Out of all of that growth and excitement comes this newsletter. We look forward to sharing ongoing updates with our families.



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## A Note from Dr. Hustad

First and foremost, I need to say thank you to all the families who have given their time and commitment to this project. Your efforts are contributing ground-breaking insight into our understanding of how communication develops in children with cerebral palsy (CP). We plan to use this newsletter as an opportunity to keep you updated on this important work.



We have crunched some numbers and found that families have made over 1,500 visits!! Most of our participants are now between 7 and 16 years old. Continuing to come for visits during the adolescent years offers us an amazing opportunity to learn more about how children and teens are growing and changing, and how each individual is using their own communication skills and strategies to adjust to the academic and social demands they experience day to day.

We look forward to seeing each child and are always amazed at the growth in between visits. Our study continues to be the only one of its kind in the United States and we are very proud of the work we are doing. The information gathered and analyzed from the Communication Development Project is a powerful tool that will facilitate speech and language interventions for children with CP and other communication differences.

We know that you are extremely busy and we are endlessly grateful for your commitment to this project. Thank you! We look forward to seeing you soon.

*Dr. Hustad continues to run the WISC lab and is enjoying her new role as Chair of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department at the UW. In addition, Dr. Hustad is serving as the co-director of the Clinical Translation Core at the Waisman Center. Her three children also keep her quite busy!*

Waisman Center  
1500 Highland Ave.  
Madison, WI 53705



## A Brief History

This lab has grown so extensively and in such exciting ways that we want to share a short overview with you. You and your family have been a part of all these changes and it's thanks to you that this growth has been possible! All of these changes have served to facilitate all that we learn about communication in children with CP. This information is essential for improving diagnosis, intervention and outcomes for children with CP.

Look how far we've come!



**August 2005:** Dr. Hustad received a career development grant and the initial 35 families were registered! All children were between the ages of 24 and 48 months.

**July 2008:** Major grant funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was obtained and more than 100 families were enrolled. Each family planned to visit the Waisman Center 8 times.



**July 2012:** The major grant that supports this work was renewed! More than 100 families continue to make visits every year!



**July 2016:** Another major grant from the NIH was approved, and a comparison project has begun! Read below for more details about this exciting new venture.

**January 2017:** Today, we continue to receive visits from almost all of our original families (and a few new ones!). Some of you come to Madison from 170 miles away! The Communication Development Project continues to be regarded as one of the premier investigations of communication abilities in children. Thank you for giving your time and energy to this important work!

## A New Beginning

On July 1, 2016, Dr. Hustad received another grant from the National Institutes of Health which marks the exciting beginning of something new for the lab. The focus of this new project is to determine how intelligible the speech of typically developing children is at different ages. We will use recordings of children's speech to help establish expectations for typical speech develop-

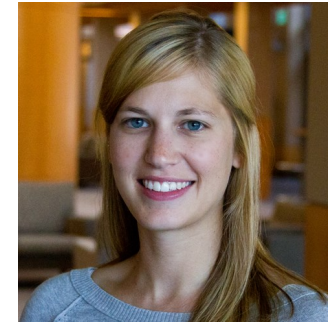
ment. This information will be compared to the same data obtained from children with CP, to help us understand the differences in speech characteristics between the two groups. Approximately 500 children who are typically developing will make a visit to the WISC lab to contribute to this project. The children will be between 2.5 and 7 years old.

<http://go.wisc.edu/TDspeech>



## Meet Our Team!

The WISC lab now employs 4 speech-language pathologists and 13 students! There are some new faces around the 4th floor so here is a short "Who's Who"!



### **Ashley Sakash, MS, CCC-SLP**

Ashley is a speech-language pathologist for the project and continues to see most of the children with CP. Ashley also coordinates all the student employees and manages the many details of such a busy lab. Ashley has worked on this project for 3 years! Ashley received her Masters degree from UW-Madison in 2011. Her research interests focus on speech intelligibility in individuals with dysarthria, parent-mediated interventions, and the use of video-conferencing in the delivery of interventions.

### **Phoebe Natzke, MS, CCC-SLP**

Phoebe is a speech-language pathologist who recently joined the team in order to provide assistance across projects. Phoebe will see children with CP and children who are typically developing and come in for other research projects. Phoebe is also working to



help organize and manage a variety of projects in the lab, as well as focusing on data that is ready for publication. Phoebe is passionate about better understanding family factors that influence communication development and access for school/recreational opportunities for children with disabilities.



### **Michael Molinaro, MS, CCC-SLP**

Michael is a speech-language pathologist who recently joined the team in order to coordinate a new project related to speech development in children who are typically developing (see page 2). Michael received his Masters degree from UW-Madison in 2010. Michael is passionate about the use of augmentative communication systems for children with

unique communication abilities, and has special expertise in coaching teachers to deliver specially designed services for children with autism.



### **Emily McFadd, MS, CCC-SLP**

Emily is looking forward to achieving her PhD degree in 2017! This remarkable accomplishment comes after receiving her Masters from UW-Madison in 2010 and working with Dr. Hustad since 2008. Emily has seen many of the children over the last 8 years and continues to help guide and influence the work happening in the WISC lab. Emily is excited to begin her own research program in the near future and hopes to learn more about how augmentative communication technology can enhance interactions between children with communication impairments and their family and friends.

Turn to page 4 to learn about our amazing student employees who work in the WISC lab!