

Welcome to your ERIC Newsletter

Welcome to this ERIC Newsletter. We are sending one to everyone who took part in the ERIC project between February 2011 and August 2011. The Newsletter is to say 'thank you' for your help with the project and to let you know how the project is going.

Results from previous studies show that the Early Report by Infant Caregivers (ERIC) gives comparable results to traditional assessments of an infant's



mental development. As you know, it involves simple games for a parent to complete with their child, and a section to report on what the child can do. These assess such abilities as simple problem-solving, and memory.

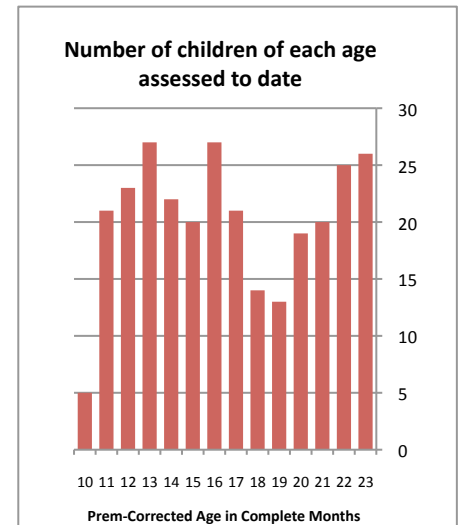
The plan is that ERIC will be used within the NHS as a first step in monitoring children who are known to be at risk for possible developmental delay. If the project is successful, and the NHS does start to use ERIC, your

family will have played an important part in this process.

The goal of the project

The current phase of the research is the biggest so far. It will last 3 years and involve around 400 children. The aim of this phase is to see if ERIC can identify both children with developmental delay, and children without delay. To answer this we have been recruiting parents of children who were born prematurely, or with low birth weight, or other complications. Although these children are 'at risk' of developmental delay, in practice almost all are developing well.

To date, we have assessed over 280 children, so we are well on track with recruitment to the ERIC project. We are really grateful to the parents and children who have helped us so far. By the end of the project, we hope to have tested around 25 children in each monthly age between 10 and 24 months (corrected for prematurity). The graph shows how many children have been recruited in to each month age group. At the moment, you can see we have a bit of a shortage around 18 months but by the end of the project it should have equal numbers in each age range.



ERIC progress

So how have the first 280 families got on? As you'll know, ERIC requires the use of small 'bits and pieces' (clothes pegs, small toys, pencil etc) which you might find around the house. One early worry was that some families might not have these to hand, but so far everyone has been able to find the things they need for ERIC.

Almost everyone has enjoyed the assessment, and everyone so far has been able to complete ERIC.

Children's performance on ERIC is compared with their performance on a standard assessment of cognitive development, called the Bayley Scale. The main aim of this phase of the study is not specifically to find children with delay, but to see if ERIC is as good at finding those children who *are* or *are not* delayed according to the Bayley Scale. Because we have not yet recruited 25 children of each age group, we can only estimate these figures. So, any statement is a bit of guesswork at this stage.

But we can say that in the first 280 children we have tested, nine children were delayed according to the formal medical definition of delay (and of course, according to their performance 'on the day'). ERIC detected all these cases, which is

At the moment, we think that ERIC might do as well as detecting 90% of delayed children, at the same time as correctly identifying 70% of the non-delayed children. These figures are very encouraging. But this is early days for this

better how ERIC performs in English.

Keeping up with ERIC

We have a website for ERIC. At the moment, it just has the basics on it, but as the project goes on, we'll be adding to it.
<http://www.reading.ac.uk/pcls/pc/pc-eric.aspx>

To keep within our funding constraints, **we will not send you another Newsletter unless you ask us to.** However, we'd be delighted to send one if you would like it. To be sent another Newsletter later in the project, please ring the number at the foot of this sheet. Or email Lucia on l.genesoni@reading.ac.uk

Thank you again for your help with this project, from the ERIC team!

We are:

Dr Graham Schafer
University of Reading

Dr Greg Boden
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Ros Jones
Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Lucia Genesoni
University of Reading

Sue Hallett
Sharon Westcar

Louise Willis
Morag Zelisko
Research nurses



good news. There is always a compromise, however: to make sure we detect everyone with delay, almost every test of this type has to accept some 'false positives'. (That means cases where one test—such as ERIC—says the child might have a problem, but another test—such as the Bayley—says that they don't). The best that tests such as ERIC usually hope to achieve is to detect four in every five (80%) of the children who are delayed, whilst correctly identifying as healthy four in every five (80%) of the children who were not delayed.

research, and our figures might get better—or they might not! At the moment, though, these results suggest that ERIC could become a really useful tool throughout the NHS and if it does, your family will have been part of it.

Next steps

We have recently expanded the project into the Oxford area. This work is funded under the current arrangements with the Department of Health. We'd also like to translate ERIC for use with families who do not have any English speakers—but this will have to wait until we know