

Master`s thesis with Internship

Laughing Together

in Developmental Psychology

Co-supervisors: Prof. Stefanie Höhl & Dr. Carolina Pletti



The aim of this project is to better understand the mechanism of how laughing together leads to prosocial behavior and cooperation in preschool children. In this project the hypothesis is that laughing together synchronizes brain activity, heart rhythm and behavior between interaction partners, which supports bonding and prosocial behavior. In this study, preschool children first laugh together and then perform cooperative tasks in games. We measure the mechanism of interpersonal synchrony through ECG, behavioural observation and functional near infrared spectroscopy. We also collect data about bonding and prosociality towards the other interaction partner with questionnaires, and cooperation through behavioral observation.

We are looking for a master student who join our team and is interested in social cognition and developmental research. The tasks include conducting the study with children and analyzing parts of the data (e.g. behavioral data, fNIRS and/or ECG based on availability and students' skills/interests).

The candidate should be willing to do an 4-6 weeks **internship** (start in February) in the project before starting the master thesis. The goal of the internship is to evaluate whether the candidate is suited to perform data collection with children. If the internship is successful, the candidate will then start the master thesis.

Potential topics include but are not limited to

How does interpersonal synchrony mediate the influence of laughter on cooperative behaviour.

We offer:

- Gaining experience in neuroscientific developmental research
- Learning how to collect and analyse fNIRS Hyperscanning, ECG and behavioural data
- Close supervision in German and English

Requirements

- Study of psychology, neuroscience or related field of study
- Organizational skills, responsibility, and high motivation
- Advanced English skills
- Experience in developmental research and/or neurocognitive methods is preferred but not necessary
- Experience in working with children is preferred but not necessary

If you are interested in this position, please contact us at carolina.pletti@univie.ac.at and send your CV, short motivational letter, transcript of records and, if applicable, references.