



# ABCD Study News

December 2017



Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development<sup>SM</sup>  
Teen Brains. Today's Science. Brighter Future.

## ABCD Site Highlight

### University of Florida

The Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study site at the University of Florida (UFL) began recruiting 9- and 10-year-old participants in February 2017. Led by Drs. Sara Jo Nixon and Linda B. Cottler, the UFL ABCD team has enrolled over 200 families representing more than 50 schools in north central Florida!



Members of the UFL ABCD team. From left to right: Asia Cobb, Rebecca Morgan, Taylor Hopper, Bryant Hutchins, Abigail Zulich.

We are thrilled to have such enthusiastic support from the school districts in our surrounding counties, and we have enjoyed getting to know our community and interacting with our ABCD families. We continue to take advantage of every opportunity to maintain and nurture these important relationships, and we look forward to continuing conversations with all our community partners.

Participants enjoy playing card games with ABCD team members during breaks, as well as earning tokens to exchange for prizes at the end of the day. As participants depart, they often tell us that a year is too long to wait for their next visit!

## Fun Fact

### Fun Fact about Gainesville

Gators are not just the mascot for UFL—they are often spotted at various locations on campus!



Alligator Photo credit: Abigail Zulich, UFL

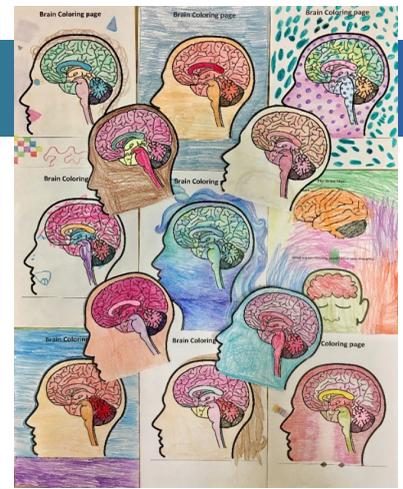
## Students' Space

ABCD participants leave their mark at UFL by coloring a brain for our Brain Wall. (Image to the right)

### Did You Know?

An alligator's brain weighs about 8 grams (about 1.5 teaspoons). Compare that to a human brain, which weighs about three pounds!

Source: *Brain Facts and Figures* - <https://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/facts.html>



## ABCD In The News

### Learning the ABCs of childhood brain development

**Dr. Terry Jernigan, Co-Director of the ABCD Study Coordinating Center at the University of California San Diego, speaks to Research Features Magazine about adolescent development and the questions the ABCD Study hopes to answer.**

Dr. Jernigan explains what is special about the adolescent brain: "Regardless of your age, the brain is constantly undergoing biological and functional changes. However, recent work has shown that adolescent behavior may be driven by a unique phase in brain development, during which reward mechanisms in the brain are strengthened relative to those that manage risk. This mismatch during adolescent brain development may explain the increased risk-taking and exploration noted during this period. While a new openness toward peers and novel experiences during this time paves the way for independence, it can also put young people at risk." (Research Features, 8/21/17). <http://researchfeatures.com/2017/08/21/nih-learning-abcs-childhood-brain-development/>



### In Appreciation

Dr. Rolf Loeber, Co-Investigator for the ABCD Study at the University of Pittsburgh, passed away on November 6, 2017. In addition to being an esteemed psychologist and researcher, Dr. Loeber was a scholar in the fields of sociology, literature, and philosophy, and an avid photographer. He also was an internationally known expert in Irish literature and published a foundational book on Irish fiction that spans three centuries. Dr. Loeber dedicated his career to promoting health and well-being in children and families, and will be missed by the entire ABCD Consortium. He also will be remembered for his commitment to science and scholarship, his generous mentorship of young investigators, and his leadership within the ABCD Study and beyond. (Photo source: University of Pittsburgh)

For More Information, Please Visit:

[ABCDDStudy.org](http://ABCDDStudy.org)

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