Welcome to all our new Neuronauts members! Below we would like to share with you some projects that our researchers have been, or are, working on.

**Holiday Research Program Outcome**

In April this year, Yvette Kezilas and Nic Badcock held a holiday research program for children aged 6-12 years. The program was very successful and fun for the children, who were challenged with a series of activities and puzzles set in a space exploration theme. Their hard work during the program has helped us to better understand how the brain works during reading development.

One of our discoveries relates to the position of letters within words. Interestingly, people are very good at reading words with jumbled letters. For example, you will easily read jugde as “judge”. We found that younger children were more likely than older children to perceive jumbled words, such as jugde, as real words. This finding suggests that children become increasing sensitive to the order of letters within words as their reading improves. Understanding why this change takes place will help us assist children with letter position dyslexia, who continue to show the same pattern as young children, even as other aspects of their reading improve.

*Yvette and Nic would like to thank all of the children and their parents who were involved in the program. Stay tuned for more exciting holiday programs coming up in the near future!*

**Early Understanding of Sounds in Words**

From 18-24 months, children undergo a critical process of language development. They tune in to their native language sound system in a functional way and build up the first 50-100 words in their vocabulary. Once they figure out that certain changes in sounds can result in changing word meanings, they have an amazing lexical spurt and develop a much larger vocabulary.

Miss Hui Chen has been working on her PhD project investigating when and how children use various vowel contrasts to identify early words in the 18-24 month stage. She has tested a group of 18-month-olds, and found that infants did not show strong ability in distinguishing different vowel contrasts at the beginning of the stage. Now she is looking for monolingual Australian English children at 24 months and expecting a dramatic change of phonological competence.

*Please see the list of studies on the Neuronauts web site if you are interested in your child taking part in this study.*