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## Weight Determines Future Cognitive Development Of Children Born Very Premature, Study Suggests

*ScienceDaily* (July 26, 2009) — Researchers of the Department of Neuroscience and Health Sciences of the University of Almería and Hospital Torrecárdenas are carrying out an assessment of the physical neuropsychological characteristics of children born before 32 weeks' gestation or whose weight is lower than 1500 grams (3 lbs. 5 oz.) -- very premature.

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- [Premature birth](#)
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The main aim of this project, coordinated by M<sup>a</sup> Dolores Roldán Tapia, from the UAL, is to accurately define the origin of brain damage, so as to stimulate the affected area early thus causing the adequate cognitive and motric development of the individual.

The most common differences between premature babies and those born after a nine-month pregnancy are mainly related to visoperceptive skills, memory and movement which eventually translate into learning and spatial orientation difficulties. That is why the difficulties that these

children have in their cognitive performance and the development of perceptual and executive functions are being studied.

A population sample of 35 very premature children is being taken for this project, together with the same number of healthy children, all of them born between 2000 and 2001, with their parents' authorisation. Special attention has been paid to the fact that both the children and their parents have similar educational and social levels, as the stimulation they get in the early stages of their lives has a decisive influence in their later development.



Tests carried out on a premature girl. (Credit: Image courtesy of Andalucía Innova)

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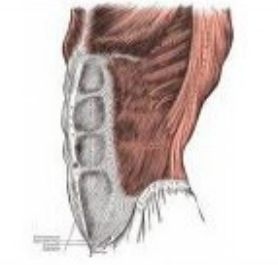
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laboratory complex.  
The results obtained so far are promising. The study was conducted at the University of California, San Francisco, and the results are published in the journal *Science*.  
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In the near future, the University of Almeria will include a new variable in its research: the difference in very early birth and natural multiple births. The researchers hope to find out if bad nutrition

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