

Social Skills

Individuals with Cri du Chat syndrome are commonly described as having a ‘friendly and happy’ demeanour and are considered to be relatively skilled in social interaction.

The first research study to explore social skills in 20 people with Cri du Chat syndrome did not find evidence to support this description. However, a later research study with 100 individuals with Cri du Chat syndrome found that socialisation skills were a significant strength in comparison to communication, motor and self-help skills. Over 80% of individuals with Cri du Chat demonstrated an interest in others and their actions.

In our research, at the University of Birmingham, we have focused our attention on three particular areas of behaviour that are important for our understanding of socialisation skills: social interaction skills (the tools to engage with others), social enjoyment, and the desire to engage in social interaction with others.

Social Interaction Skills

In our recent observations of children and adults with Cri du Chat syndrome, we found that social interaction skills including eye contact and approach behaviours in individuals with Cri du Chat syndrome were much more frequent compared to individuals with Angelman and Cornelia de Lange syndromes. This means that this relative skill in Cri du Chat syndrome is likely to be syndrome specific.

Social Enjoyment

Many children and adults with Cri du Chat syndrome are very sociable, friendly and outgoing and enjoy the company of people. They are often sensitive and concerned about others and are able to integrate well into social activities. Our research has found that social enjoyment is a strong characteristic in Cri du Chat syndrome.

Desire For Social Interaction

Desire for social interaction appears to be relatively high in many children and adults with Cri du Chat syndrome. In some cases children with Cri du Chat syndrome may appear to be excessively friendly and lack the ability to distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar adults. This may make some children and adults with Cri du Chat syndrome particularly vulnerable, so teaching stranger awareness may be important.