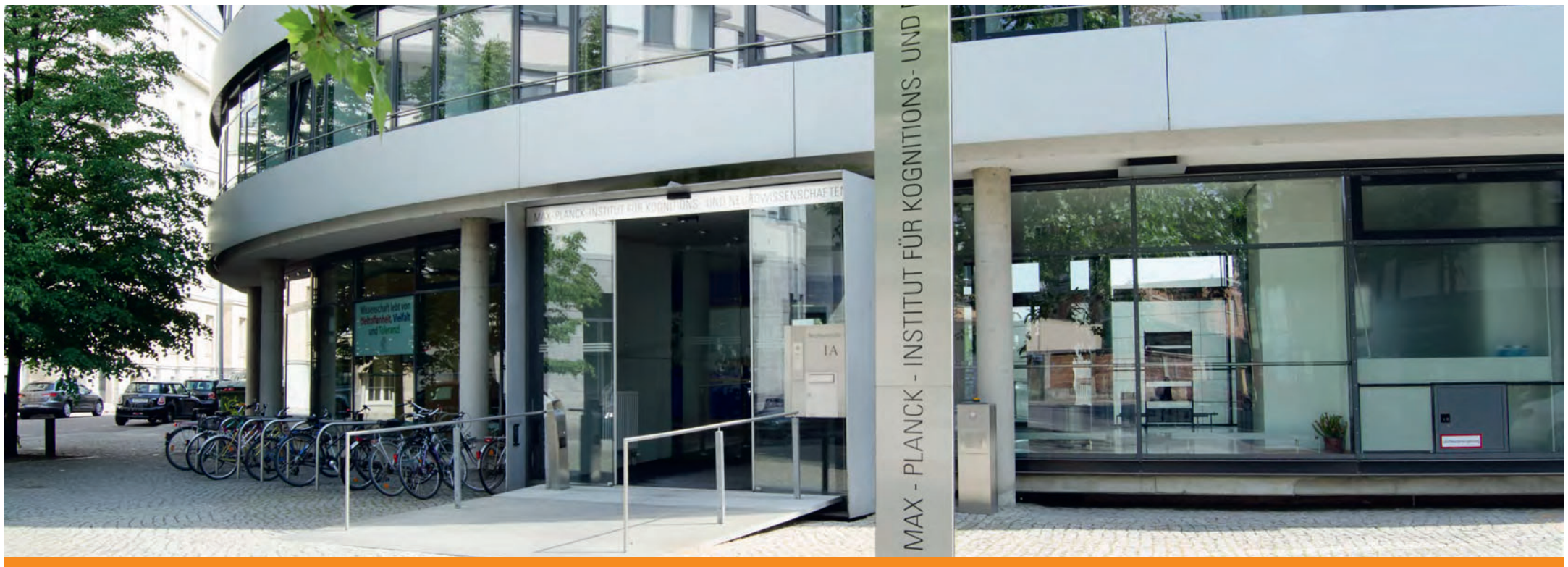
MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT
FÜR KOGNITIONS- UND NEUROWISSENSCHAFTEN



Call for applications

Master's students (m/f/d)

Master's Thesis on Self-Other Understanding in Young Children, Parenting & Multivariate fMRI

BACKGROUND

The Research Group Milestones of Early Cognitive Development investigates the development of cognitive abilities and their neural foundations in early childhood, with a focus on social cognition (theory of mind, self-concept), language, memory, and abstract thought.

The master's thesis will be a part of one of our projects investigating how preschoolers reflect on their own and others' mental states, and how these processes are represented in the developing brain. The goal is to understand the early development of self–other differentiation using multivariate fMRI, connectivity analyses, and behavioral assessments of children and parents.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

The student will support the project in some of the tasks listed below, depending on interest, experience, and project stage:

- Assisting with the preparation of child-friendly experimental materials
- Supporting data acquisition via organizing appointments and taking part in the behavioral testing
- Contributing to the literature review and project documentation
- Assisting with data organization, preprocessing (of fMRI), and basic analyses

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

- Excellent interpersonal skills and enjoyment in working with children and families
- High motivation, reliability, initiative, and attention to detail
- Very good command of German and English
- Flexibility in the afternoons, as testing with children often takes place after kindergarten hours
- Previous experience with child testing, behavioral studies, MRI/fMRI, or programming is helpful but not required

WHAT WE OFFER

- Opportunity to develop a Master's thesis project within the broader study
- Close supervision and involvement in an ongoing research project
- Experience with developmental cognitive neuroscience research
- Training in working with preschool-aged children and families
- Hands-on experience in fMRI study design and data processing

HOW TO APPLY

Send your application as a single PDF file, including a CV (max. 2 pages) and a short motivation statement (max. 1 page), by July 31, 2026, to Dorukhan Açıl: dacil@cbs.mpg.de.

Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Research Group Milestones of Early Cognitive Development,
Stephanstraße 1A, 04103 Leipzig • Responsible Scientist: Professor Dr. Charlotte Grosse Wiesmann