

Genes may explain similarities between child prodigies and children with autism

Child prodigies may share certain genetic traits with people who have autism, new research suggests.

The finding could help explain why the two groups share certain characteristics, such as exceptionally good memories. But the small number of [child prodigies](#) studied makes the findings preliminary, other scientists said.

The researchers found there were genetic markers on chromosome 1 that were shared between the prodigies and their [relatives with autism](#), the study authors said, though they have yet to find the specific mutations involved.

For the study, the researchers defined a prodigy as a child who achieved national or international recognition for a specific skill by adolescence. For example, one prodigy had played an entire DVD of classical music by ear at age 3, and earned a spot on a symphony by age 6, said study co-author Joanne Ruthsatz, an assistant professor of psychology at The Ohio State University.

Prodigies clearly share traits with [children who have autism](#), such as exceptional memories and attention to detail, Ruthsatz told Live Science.

Ruthsatz said she hopes further work will illuminate why the shared genetic variations benefit prodigies but cause dysfunction in autism. “We’re now looking for the moderator that’s shutting down the genes responsible for dysfunction in autism,” she said. Finding such a gene could lead to new autism treatments, Ruthsatz said.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full original post: [Child Prodigies and Autism: Is There a Genetic Link?](#)