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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COGNITION SEED GRANT PROGRAM LAUNCHED TO FUND PROMISING NATURAL APPROACHES
Program to Accelerate Controlled Research on Products that Caregivers can Use Immediately

Cambridge, MA, 2/10/15: Thanks to the generosity of a private family, the 3-21 Foundation has just launched a program which contemplates giving “Ignition” grants of up to \$10,000 each over the next few years. These Ignition Grants will focus on scientific, controlled testing of worthy natural approaches to cognitive enhancement for people with Down syndrome. The goal of this program is to support approaches that can be used immediately, versus the 10+ years required for pharmaceutical approaches.

Background

Recent progress in unraveling the genetics and biology of Trisomy 21 has caused great excitement in scientific circles. Several new pharmaceutical compounds specific to cognition in Trisomy 21 have entered clinical trials. In addition, [animal research indicates that many natural products](#) – or nutraceuticals target many of the same cognitive pathways as the drugs under development. Since natural products are sold “over the counter” or OTC, they are available immediately. However, because they cannot typically be patented, companies are unlikely to invest in rigorous natural product testing for cognitive applications. This funding gap is what the 3-21 Foundation’s Ignition Program attempt to address.

“There are a number of potentially excellent drugs for cognitive enhancement under development. This is a major shift from 2005 when I began investigating the state of pharmaceuticals for cognition”, said Christopher Messina, 3-21 Foundation’s Director overseeing its Ignition Program. *“However there are many potential nutraceuticals with positive animal data and anecdotal human data that have not been rigorously tested. This is a critical knowledge gap, which has not, until now, been addressed by current funders. This is critically important as these are approaches which parents can use now with their children.”*

About the Ignition Program:

In 2015, the 3-21 Foundation received a grant from a private family to expand its effort in cognition. Specifically, we have launched a program to stimulate (ignite) cognitive approaches through direct investment. A series of grants of up to \$10,000 each are planned with the objective of contributing useful approaches that parents and caregivers can immediately use to support cognition. Special priority will be given to nutraceuticals, generics, or commercially available devices currently in development and/or testing (in controlled, peer-reviewed trials). These approaches are typically not well funded (even by other research funders) because they lack patent or regulatory exclusivity. However, these approaches are those that can be used immediately upon proof of efficacy by people with Down syndrome. [More](#)

About the 3-21 Foundation:

The 3-21 Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit based in Cambridge, MA focused on advancing innovations in education, and cognition for people with Down syndrome (Trisomy 21). Its mission is ensuring that individuals with Down syndrome are empowered to pursue their dreams.

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