What is it?
EF Touch is a tablet-administered assessment designed to measure children’s three key executive function skills: working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility. These functions are important for organizing information, planning, solving problems, sustaining attention, and coordinating action and thoughts in support of goal-directed behaviors. Consequently, these functions are integral to children’s ability to learn how to learn. Most of what we know about executive functions has been gathered from studies in high-income countries. However, EF Touch is now being adapted and tested with young children living in LMICs, including Kenya and Liberia.

How does it work?
During EF Touch administration, children interact with the tablet during six tasks, or games, that measure working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility. Children touch the appropriate stimuli on the tablet screen according to the relevant instructions of each game, and accuracy of responses and reaction time are automatically recorded. EF Touch is integrated within RTI’s Tangerine software application, which is optimized for offline data collection, enabling it to be administered easily within LMIC contexts.

What’s next?
In the Fall of 2018, EF Touch will be adapted, pre-tested, and implemented with a sample of primary 1 students in Liberia. This is an exciting expansion of EF Touch to new contexts, and it will also allow us to explore relationships between children’s oral language abilities and executive functions in this sample of students. Additionally, EF Touch will be integrated into the newest version of the Tangerine platform, which will allow for EF Touch tasks to be used with other assessments within the same application.

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