Welcome!

The ADP program here at George Mason is excited to have you. Here we work collaboratively on a wide range of research topics aimed at improving the understanding of how children develop and the policy that shapes the contexts these children develop in. Our program offers a variety of research and applied opportunities that can help you meet your goals, whatever they may be. For more information visit [http://adpsyc.gmu.edu/](http://adpsyc.gmu.edu/) or reach out to any faculty or student in the program. We look forward to getting to know you!
We want to hear from you!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns that you would like to share with the faculty or students, contact your ADP student representative, Courtney Ricciardi. The ADP faculty meets at least once per month, we hope to hear from you!

Who We Are

Teachers

“Teaching allows me to transfer my knowledge and research experience to the next generation of young students. Through the curiosity of my students I am constantly challenged to expand my expertise.”

*Lucia Stillerova

Researchers

Students in Mason’s ADP program are actively involved in research, present in conferences across the country, and publish in many important journals.

Activists

The applied nature of the program easily lends the connection of student’s research to the community around them. For instance, Mayra Parada recently provided expert testimony in court regarding her knowledge of immigrant children in the school system.

Friends

Annual ADP Cereal Party

First year outing at Hard Times Cafe
Stay organized. Schedule out what assignments you are going to do every day of the week and try to stick to it. Use a hand-written planner or an electronic one (like Google calendar, or cool Apps like Wonderlist or Evernote) – whichever you prefer to keep you organized.

Meet with your advisor early and often. Your relationship with your advisor, whether you’re a Masters or Doctoral student, is the most important relationship of your graduate career. Make sure you’re cultivating it early, and it will make the rest of your graduate career much easier. Set up weekly or bi-weekly meetings with your advisor, even if just to catch up on the things you have been working on.

Don’t be afraid! If you have a question, don’t hesitate to ask anyone! Graduate students (especially in our department) are like a family, we help each other out and want to learn from each other’s mistakes.

Don’t procrastinate… yes, let’s all just admit it…we’ve been there, you’ve been there, and it always stinks! As graduate students, we are expected to balance many different responsibilities at once, and excel at all of them. This is an extremely difficult task on its own, so don’t leave assignments for the last minute. This will ensure that you are able to complete all your responsibilities, and come out standing on the other end.

Stay healthy and active. Graduate school can be one of the most fun, but also most stressful life experiences. Don’t let yourself become victim to the severe negative consequences of stress. Make sure you schedule in some “you-time”. Go for a run or a hike, bake cran-oat chocolate chip coconut muffins, play with puppies, make fish tacos, take a yoga class, go to Sweetgreen and get a deliciously overpriced salad…whatever it is that you like to do that relaxes you and keeps you mentally and physically healthy! Get out there and do it!

Make new friends…join study groups, attend social events, don’t be afraid to have a little fun in grad school. Set up study sessions at Panera with a buddy, go to ADP happy-hours, or just hang out in your lab and get to know your lab-mates. Making friends in graduate school is your first step to developing your social network of colleagues, so get out there and socialize!

Join professional organizations. By joining professional organizations (like SRCD, APA, APS, etc.) you become eligible for discounts to attend conferences, receive journals subscriptions, and you can hear about the latest news in the field. Most of them have student rates too, so us poor-old grad students can afford the hefty bill.

Relatedly, start following your favorite professional organizations on social media. Almost all professional organizations keep and maintain Facebook and Twitter accounts and constantly update them with the latest news, articles, research findings, and cool facts. It’s an excellent way to get your favorite information, fast, simply by browsing your Facebook or Twitter accounts, which, let’s face it, we would all be doing anyway.

Attend conferences. Conferences are usually associated with a professional organization. This is where you can start to build your professional network of collaborators, friends, colleagues, and the like. You never know where these relationships will take you! Submit to them as often as you can, talk with your advisor about potential topics and research ideas that could get you towards a conference submission. There is always something out there that you can do!

Update your CV…OFTEN. Any time you take on a new task or responsibility make sure you are updating your CV ASAP. Graduate school is about taking advantage of the many opportunities that are being thrown at you; make sure you’re giving yourself credit for those opportunities on your professional Vita. Trust me, if you don’t put it on your CV right away, you WILL forget, so update it many times throughout your career to ensure you always have the most up-to-date version. You never know when you’re going to need to whip out your trusty CV and impress someone in an elevator...

Being a TA is important, but don’t let it take over your life. Some graduate students will be asked to be a teaching assistant (TA) for an undergraduate course. This is a very educational, but time-consuming assignment. You will learn A LOT, but it can easily take over all your time, so don’t let it! Get it done, and make it good, but don’t let it take over your life!
What are you doing now?

I am now an assistant professor of psychology at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Arkansas. Arkansas Tech is a small (about 12,000 students) regional 4-year college. My position is in the Behavioral Science Department.

What does your day-to-day life look like now?

My day-to-day life now is spread out between teaching, research, and service. It’s much like grad school for doctoral students, which shows the appropriateness of the ADP program in preparing those with ambitions for academia. My experience today is different from being a student in some ways. I teach more, around 4 classes a semester, and I advise and mentor more students. Research occupied much more time in grad school than I get now. There are ways that I get creative. I collaborate with another faculty member. I am also integrating research projects within courses I teach (e.g., research method, independent studies). So, there are ways to double on teaching and scholarship. As for service, I am now an advisor to the departmental student group. I aid and approve ideas and projects.

All in all, my functions have not changed drastically, and getting paid for it is pretty good. I will say the perception of my responsibility has changed the most, because students look toward me now for direction. I'm still getting used to being called "Dr. Thibodeaux"!

How did your time at Mason prepare you for your current job?

My mentor, Dr. Winsler, was very helpful! He prepared me with the knowledge and practice that I carry out daily. He gave me lots of feedback, which helped to tweak my teaching and manage the research cycle. My time as a TA and instructor with Dr. Curby was also a great preparation for teaching. Teaching institutions are a good place to be if as a grad student you enjoyed being in the classroom. My time at Mason gave me a wealth of classroom experience, for which I am grateful.

I am also thankful for the ideas that I got from just being at Mason. Schools in different parts of the country, especially smaller schools, bring in faculty from places like Mason because even administration needs good ideas and fresh perspectives. For instance, the school I am at is still working out it’s Honor Code, and me and another new faculty member (who came from UVa), were like, "You need an Honor Court system!" It’s an idea that I took for granted. It can feel empowering when you get to contribute to important conversations.
What are you doing now?

I am pursuing my PhD in Psychology at Georgetown University, concentrating in Human Development and Public Policy. It is a dual degree program with a PhD in Psychology and a Masters in Public Policy from the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown.

What does your day-to-day life look like now?

Since I am a first year in my program, I am taking lots of classes! I take classes in the policy school and in the Psychology department, and when I am not in class I am working on research. At the policy school, I get to learn about how the world of public policy operates, and then I use that information to guide my research. I work with Dr. Rebecca Ryan and we study early childhood, parenting practices, and school readiness. Specifically, right now we are looking at how parenting practices for biologically vulnerable children differ across the socio-economic spectrum.

How did your time at Mason prepare you for your current position?

When I started at George Mason I knew I wanted to do research in Developmental Psychology, but I really did not know what I wanted to study or what area I wanted to focus on. Through working with Dr. Winsler and being exposed to the Miami School Readiness Project, I learned all about the school readiness gap. I realized that I wanted to continue my education and do research that could influence social policies and programs that help children from all backgrounds.

Not only did I discover my passion for research at George Mason, but I also learned lots of skills that are extremely valuable to me now in my current program. My statistics classes and exposure to The Miami School Readiness Project, a large longitudinal data set, helped me build the foundations necessary for the quantitative research I focus on now. And by working with Dr. Winsler, I became a better writer and a better presenter. My time at George Mason was invaluable in preparing me for my current program!
Life After Mason

What are you doing now?

I’m working at American Institutes for Research (AIR), a behavioral and social science research and evaluation firm based in DC. AIR’s work focuses on several different areas, like early childhood development and education, language acquisition/learning and literacy, social emotional learning and school climate, and much (much!) more. I work in the special education concentration.

What does your day-to-day life look like now?

At AIR, my day to day changes drastically depending on which deliverable or client work is being prioritized, but it can range anywhere from developing content related to assistive and instructional technology in schools, to conducting calls with state leaders to advise them on best practices around accessibility for students/families with disabilities, to working with the Dept of Ed’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to plan and run their conferences for federal grantees, to researching and writing briefs on topics such as educational interventions for lead poisoning in the classroom. It’s nice that I get to do work across different topics, and AIR’s structure also allows me to get experience doing more administrative (corporate, if you will) tasks such as managing staff and pursuing professional development opportunities.

How did your time at Mason prepare you for your current job?

In the ADP program, I learned a lot about a lot -- meaning, I appreciate that the program provided opportunities to discuss a variety of topics related to development, education, housing, social emotional learning, policy, language development, etc. At AIR, we’re encouraged to work across concentrations and my time in the ADP program has helped me to position myself in such a way that I can contribute to multiple projects across multiple concentrations and hold my own.
In the Development in School Contexts (DISC) lab, we are busily working on a variety of projects. We currently have a Dept. of Education-funded project developing an observational tool for measuring the quality of social-emotional teaching. In addition, through a partnership with the American Psychological Association, Dr. Curby surveyed 10,000 Kindergarten teachers to identify current kindergarten teachers’ judgments about children’s problems at kindergarten entry. Two students are working on two translations of this instrument and gathering survey data from other countries for comparison. Also, we continue to analyze data examining the role of teachers in the development of children’s academic and social-emotional competence. In particular, we have investigated how the consistency of classroom emotional support may benefit children.
Her area of research:

My research area is the intersection of social-emotional learning and imagination. I'm a developmental psychologist with interests in children's social cognitive and emotional development, particularly how these developing abilities are aided by engagement in pretend play, theatre, and imagination. My current research explores how engagement in dramatic pretend play and theatre enables learning of emotional control skills, empathy, and social understanding. This work spans typically developing children, at risk children, and children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. I also investigate how children reason and learn about morality, personality, and emotion in the fictional characters they encounter through television, movies and popular culture.

Her goals for her lab:

My goal is to build an active and vibrant lab that investigates children's social learning through play, prosocial behavior and development, and interventions using the arts. I'm open to following these questions wherever they may lead, and look forward to working with students at every level! I'm hoping to conduct research in the lab, at preschools and local museums, and partnering with arts organizations and theaters throughout the greater DC area.

What she is most looking forward to about starting at Mason:

I am most looking forward to the excellent colleagues I'll gain as a faculty member in ADP and across the Psychology Department and College, and working with students who have a passion for developmental psychology, play, and imagination.

Dr. Goldstein fun facts:

I'm also looking forward to getting to know the local food scene, theatre scene, and perhaps some flying trapeze!
Katrina Schmerold, who earned her Ph. D. last fall, Laura Lauderdale - who graduated with her M. A. after only 3 semesters, and Kaity Burdette, who will graduate with her M. A. at the end of her second year this spring, leave big shoes to fill, but we are filling them. Amber Shriver was central in a pioneering a year-long patterning project. The resulting article is submitted for publication, Amber coauthored another, and she has a conference presentation this year. Ally Patterson was lead author on one article and coauthored another, along with a conference presentation and a conference poster. She and Mandana Mohtasham completed a project on the links between cognitive and socio-emotional development and have a conference presentation scheduled for this spring. Eileen Chen, a terrific undergraduate who is making a conference presentation, and Kate Vennergrund – who graduated with her MA – played big roles in this research. This year Brittany Thompson, Brittany Pierceall, and Monica Yassa have joined the lab, accompanied by Matt Righi, another top undergraduate (Virginia Tech) are conducting a definitive study of patterning in kindergarten. They all will have two poster presentations this year. We hope to find out why learning patterns of letters, numbers, and objects promotes reading and mathematics in primary school children. “Patterning” instruction is commonplace in American schools – it is part of the Common Core of American education. But so far, only our team has shown that it actually improves school achievement, and is actively involved in discovering why it works.

Meanwhile Mandana, Ally, Eileen and Brittany Thompson are continuing the research on links between socio-emotional development and cognition, which should produce Mandana’s Ph. D. along with authorships for all, and Ally, along with undergraduates Kayla Vaughan and Illiah Burke, has a project investigating gender differences in approaches to mathematics. Lots of initiatives here!
Her area of research: My research examines how peer social networks promote and constrain psychological adaptation and health in adolescence and across the lifespan. I investigate how peers play protective and detrimental roles in youth development. I am particularly interested in understanding these dynamics as contributing to psychological adaptation and development of ethnically diverse youth in the United States and immigrant populations in the global context. My research focuses on understanding how peer social networks shape psychosocial adjustment, socio-emotional development, gender and ethnic-racial identity development, health-risk behavior, and biological processes related to stress, social status, and immunity. I employ longitudinal research designs, advanced statistical modeling approaches, and social network analysis methods to understand how social dynamics shape developmental and psychosocial outcomes. I also use salivary bioscience methods to measure stress physiology and activity of the immune system in naturalistic settings (e.g., schools, organizations).

Her goals for her lab: In the near future, my work will focus on:

1. Expanding our understanding of the developmental contributions of peer relationships by including network dynamics of positive (i.e., friendship) and negative (i.e., conflict, rejection) types of relationships;

2. Discovering how peer networks can mitigate the adverse effects of socio-cultural stressors, including ethnic-racial discrimination, and promote adaptation and positive development for immigrant youth and adults;

3. Pursuing these goals enables me to inform strategies and tactics for addressing challenging societal problems, including promoting social cohesion as well as mitigating negative and leveraging salubrious peer influence in social groups. My ultimate goal is to generate translational research to promote positive development and health of diverse youth.

Members of my lab will be engaged in all aspects of research from conceptualizing the studies to building relationships with schools, collecting survey data from adolescents in the naturalistic settings of their schools, data entry, management, and analysis, as well as dissemination of research products at conferences and peer-reviewed outlets.

What she is most looking forward to about starting at Mason:

I am looking forward to joining the diverse and interdisciplinary community of scholars and students at Mason. I am excited about developing new collaborative relationships with colleagues and students as well as building partnerships with local youth organizations and schools to foster and promote positive development among diverse youth.

Dr. Kornienko fun facts:

I was born and raised in Obninsk, Russia, which was founded as one of many science towns back in the Soviet Union days. I moved to Moscow to pursue undergraduate education in Psychology and Psychophysiology from M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University. In 2000, I moved to the United States to continue my education. When I am not working on my research, I enjoy traveling, hiking with my dogs, yoga, pilates, cycling, and spending quality time with my friendship networks.
WinsLab has had a good year! We finished our project funded by the National Endowment for the Arts using Miami School Readiness Project (MSRP) data to examine differences between students that do and do not take elective arts-related courses (i.e., dance, art, music, drama) in middle school, and after controlling for such selection effects, whether students benefit from such experiences with the arts. The answer is a) arts access in middle school is not equal - those who take the arts are more advantaged in numerous ways (even 7 years earlier) than those who do not, but more importantly, b) YES, even after controlling for large selection effects, students who take arts electives in middle school do better later in school than those who don't. Graduating PhD students (Thibodeaux and Conway Turner) got their dream jobs (faculty in Arkansas, and SRCD policy fellow in DC, respectively). Plus many are finishing their undergraduate honor's theses and getting into grad school, and finishing MA theses. We published 11 papers last year, have 15 papers currently in review, and another 15 in the works. Topics of these projects mostly using MSRP data include immigrant advantage, predictors and outcomes of school mobility and high stakes testing, ethnic composition/diversity of elementary schools and child achievement, school quality as a moderator of the preschool fade-out effect, progress for children of color with ASD, consequences of school suspensions, and predictors of gifted or advanced course placement in school. We are applying for various types of external funding this year.


**Upcoming Conferences**

**125th ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**Washington, D.C.**
**AUGUST 3–6, 2017**

**SRCD Biennial Meeting**
**April 6-8, 2017**
**Austin, Texas**

**NHS**

44th Annual National Head Start Conference and Expo
**April 7-10, 2017**
**Chicago Illinois**
GRADS

Graduate Researchers Advancing Disability Studies (GRADS) is a student group that has students from across the Applied Developmental Program. We meet to discuss research and practice for those people who are diagnosed with a disability and those that care for, treat, and teach them. For example, this year we have discussed neurofeedback therapy and the rapid prompting method. Our meetings are for anyone wishing to learn more about these issues — you do not need to have experience working with children with developmental disabilities. Ultimately, beyond these discussions, we would like to invite speakers to campus and support each other in doing research on children with developmental disabilities. We hope you will consider joining.

Thanks to GRADS for providing this newsletter!