Welcome!

The ADP program at George Mason is excited to meet you! 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 in which children grow. Our program offers a variety of research and applied opportunities to help you meet your goals, whatever they may be. For more information visit http://adpsyc.gmu.edu/ or reach out to any faculty or student in the program. We look forward to getting to know you!
ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

WHAT IS APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Applied Developmental Psychology is concerned with enhancing and shaping developmental processes in individuals and contexts across the life span. It uses the knowledge base and methodologies of developmental science to assist the development of individuals who vary in cultural and ethnic background, economic and social opportunity, physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities, and conditions of living (e.g., families, neighborhoods, communities, and physical settings). Activities of applied developmental psychologists include: (1) applied research on questions concerning children's development, (2) the study of developmental correlates and outcomes of contemporary social phenomena (i.e., child care, parenting transitions, poverty, low birth weight, schooling, media use etc.), (3) the construction, validation, and utilization of developmental assessment instruments, (4) the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions for improving the welfare of children, and (5) the dissemination of developmental science knowledge to groups and individuals through education, written materials, the mass media, advocacy, and expert testimony.

WHAT WE DO

Every day, Mason faculty and students help solve pressing problems, illuminate important issues, and shape conversations. We work to answer questions of relevance through research, scholarship, and creative endeavors—any enterprise offering the chance to break new ground and have a meaningful impact. One of ADP's major goals is to train students to teach and do research on basic and applied issues in child development. Keep reading to learn more about what types of research we do!

At Mason, we prepare our students for success in life and in their careers. Graduates of ADP are prepared to do applied work in developmental psychology (consultation, program evaluation, assessment and evaluation, developmental interventions, and parent training) in such settings as schools, hospitals, courts, childcare facilities, and other organizations. Many of our graduates also pursue careers in research and teaching. In this newsletter, you will meet some of our recent graduates!

WE'D LOVE 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, Jordan Greenburg (jgreenbu@gmu.edu). The ADP faculty meets at least once per month, we hope to hear from you!
NEW DEVELOPMENTS

NEW FACULTY ADDITION!

WELCOME TO DR. SABINE DOEBEL

We are excited to announce that Dr. Sabine Doebel will be joining the ADP faculty in the Fall of 2019. Dr. Soebel’s research primarily focuses on how experience shapes the development of executive function, the mind’s ability to direct and engage its own cognitive processes in the service of goals.

For her postdoc, Dr. Sobel was funded by an individual NIH NRSA Postdoctoral Fellowship from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and conducted her research in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of Colorado - Boulder. She completed her Ph.D. in developmental psychology at the Institute of Child Development in Minnesota and her B.A. in psychology at York University in Toronto, where she also studied philosophy.

Dr. Sobel is bringing expertise in several lines of research: social influences on the development of executive function, mechanisms through which language shapes executive function, and relations between executive function and other processes supporting flexible thought and behavior. To learn more about Dr. Doebel and her research, visit http://www.sabinedoebel.com.
I am currently a 4th year doctoral student in Dr. Adam Winsler’s lab. This past fall semester, I completed my coursework! I am very excited to have dedicated time towards research activities and writing. In addition to completing coursework, I finished my comprehensive exams during this past winter break.

I’ve really enjoyed my time at GMU thus far. The first two years you spend a lot of time on coursework and have the opportunity to meet psychology students outside the ADP program. This is awesome because you get to make friends across the department, which can lead to collaboration. Additionally, you get to know other students in your cohort and you can make great long-lasting friendships.

GMU is located in an excellent region for our research. Many times, conferences are held in D.C. which is great for us! We have more access to conferences compared to graduate students located outside the Washington metropolitan area (DMV). Also, several think tanks and research companies are located all over DMV. We have many opportunities for internships, fellowships, and even part-time jobs while in graduate school.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

I am currently a Program Manager with Behavior Basics, LLC. Behavior Basics is a private behavior clinic in Alexandria, VA that helps individuals and families acquire and develop communication skills, independent living/vocational skills, and social skills as well as decrease undesired/problem behavior through the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis. We work with children and families in the clinic, home, and community settings.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE NOW?

My schedule varies depending on the day. I spend my time at work in direct sessions with clients, conducting assessments, reviewing data to update interventions or write new interventions, writing treatment plans and progress reports, providing support for new behavior technicians, or assisting to facilitate parent training. I review current research to be applied to interventions. I also prepare and lead trainings for co-workers. Additionally, my week typically involves trainings for continuing education. I recently passed the board certification exam for Behavior Analysts and am awaiting licensure approval. Once approved, I will supervise my own case load and behavior technicians assigned to my team.

HOW DID YOUR TIME AT MASON PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CURRENT JOB?

In conjunction with the ABA certificate program, the ADP program helped to prepare me for my current position with Behavior Basics. It was through my practicum at Mason that I was even connected with my current place of employment. My time at Mason gave me the research skills I need to critically evaluate research and the statistical skills I need for my job. Additionally, Mason helped to improve my writing ability and the skills to shape my writing for the intended audience.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

I am a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Maryland, College Park in the Prevention and Early Adversity Research Lab, directed by Dr. Brenda Jones Harden. As part of my job responsibilities, I am in charge of a team of Research Assistants and together we are the Local Evaluation Partner for an early care and education center in Washington, DC serving children ages 0-5. We collect language and school readiness data from about 150 children at the center twice per year, complete classroom observations for 14 classrooms, conduct parent interviews, and distribute staff surveys. My job is to make the data we collect accessible and useful for the teachers and staff at the center. This includes giving presentations to the staff, teachers, parents, and board members along with providing data to the staff and teachers that can help them improve their practice.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE NOW?

Each day is completely different. Some days, I am at the center and I am doing anything from answering questions about our data collection process, to doing classroom observations, to meeting with staff members to disseminate data. Other days, I’m back at UMD in our office and meeting with other lab members to talk about other projects in the lab, conferences that are coming up, papers we’re writing, or other managerial issues that come up.

HOW DID YOUR TIME AT MASON PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CURRENT JOB?

Without a doubt it’s the applied focus that we had in our program that I lean on quite a bit in my current position. In graduate school, I learned how to make presentations and other written documents accessible to non-research audiences. These skills have helped me every day in my new job whether it’s explaining what our assessments are to teachers, to displaying a graph for staff members, to creating a PowerPoint that is easy for parents to understand. I learned so many of these skills during my time at George Mason, and I’m so thankful that I did! I also use my statistical skills daily in my new job! I have to explain complicated statistical results to staff members in plain language. I also have quite a bit of data management that is required in my job (e.g., merging files, connecting family and child data from different data files, organizing and keeping track of data collected), and I have heavily leaned on the skills I learned from doing data management for the Miami School Readiness Project in graduate school.
ADP GRANTS


With this grant, Drs. Olga Kornienko and Dr. Pamela Garner (Childhood Studies) will use innovative methods (e.g., social network analysis and salivary measurement of hormones related to stress) to examine the role of peer networks as sources of support and resilience against stressors associated with transition to college.


This grant is a George Mason University internal collaborative grant for Dr. Goldstein along with faculty from I/O and the School of Integrative Studies. We will be investigating the different types of leadership styles and information that is provided to children about leadership through media sources, and how this information is remembered and processed by college students.

2018-2021. Institute for Education Sciences. (GMU sub-award from UNC; $184,352). Young Children in Dual Language Education Programs: Language of Instruction, Student Classroom Engagement and Motivation, and Student-Teacher Relationships as Contributors to Academic Outcomes

With this grant, Dr. Winsler and colleagues from UNC examine dual language learners in K-3 in two-way immersion bilingual education programs. They are seeing whether learning (academic outcomes and English and Spanish) for DLLs depends on the amount of English or Spanish used by the teacher, and whether home language use increases teacher-child relationships.

2018-2020. The George Mason University Arts Research Center (MasonARC): NEA research lab.

With this grant, Dr. Goldstein, Dr. Winsler, and Dr. Sheridan (Education and Visual/Performing Arts) will conduct cutting-edge research on the effect of the arts on development. This interdisciplinary center will bring together researchers, artists, and professionals from within and around the GMU community.


Dr. Pasnak, in combination with Drs. Julie Kidd and Patrick McKnight, have been awarded $1,690,000 to study the effects of patterning instruction. The effects of this instruction on standardized tests of early literacy and early mathematics will be compared with the effects of state-of-the-art instruction on those subject matters.


With this grant, Dr. Goldstein is investigating the types of teaching strategies and terminology the very best acting teachers in the United States use to teach social and emotional skills to adolescents.


This goal of this project, led by Dr. Zinsser (UIC) and Dr. Curby, is to develop an observational tool for measuring the quality of social-emotional teaching in preschool classrooms.
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.

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.
The Social Skills, Imagination, and Theatre (SSIT) Lab conducts research on children’s imagination and their social development. Specifically, we’re interested in how involvement in fictional worlds and the arts affects children’s social and emotional understanding, and how children understand the social information presented in fictional worlds. Adults and children engage with imagined worlds daily via books, television, films, theatre, and stories. Yet psychologists know little about the effects of such fictional engagement. The SSIT lab’s work investigates how children and adolescents engage in, understand, and react to fictional and pretense worlds, and how this engagement interacts with developing social cognition. We study the effects of embodiment in pretend play on memory for social information; what kinds of implicit and explicit social skills the very best acting teachers teach; the structure of the development of pretend abilities; social belongingness in marching band; and children’s understanding of fictional characters such as Santa Claus.
Peer Networks and Development Lab
Dr. Olga Kornienko

Peer Networks & Development (PND) Lab seeks to understand how social networks promote and constrain psychological adaptation, development, and health among ethnically diverse youth in the US and international populations. Our research focuses on understanding how peer networks serve promotive, protective, and detrimental roles for adolescent development (e.g., psychosocial adjustment, ethnic-racial identity development, health-risk behavior, and biological processes related to stress, social status, and immunity). We employ longitudinal research designs, advanced statistical modeling approaches, and social network analysis methods to understand how social dynamics shape developmental and psychosocial outcomes. We also use salivary bioscience methods to measure stress physiology and activity of the immune system in naturalistic settings (e.g., schools, organizations).

Right now, we are working on data analyses from several projects including (a) understanding how peer networks are associated with positive youth development among ethnically diverse and immigrant youth from the U.S. and Europe (i.e., ethnic identity, national identity development), (b) investigating transactional associations between depressive symptoms, risk-taking behaviors, and peer rejection as shaped by peer networks, and (c) exploring peer network attunement and dynamics associated with biological factors linked to stress, social status, and immunity.

We are working on several new studies that focus on:
1. Examining the role of friendship networks, romantic, family, and teacher relationships as shaping psychological adjustment and academic outcomes in a sample of predominantly Latinx adolescents in Arizona.
2. Delivering and evaluating effectiveness of a personality mindset intervention to improve adolescent psychological adjustment and social relationships in Virginia.
3. Examining peer social networks as a source of support and social buffering against stressors associated with a transition to college (George Mason University).

Members of the PND 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.
Under the able leadership of Deb Gallington and her sidekick Lauren Strauss, my lab has been conducting a cognitive intervention in four Alexandria City Public Schools. Graduate students Jihyae Choe, Mehreen Hassan, Hao Lyu, and Courtney Holmberg are overseeing about 130 GMU undergraduates who are teaching kindergartners patternning, reading, math, or social studies. The goal is to see which form of instruction produces the best results. For 1st graders, patternning was best, producing gains in both reading and math. “Patternning” consists of recognizing patterns like circle square circle square circle __? or 1, 4, 7, 10 __? Or DKFFD __? This research is supported by a grant of $1,621,738 from the Institute of Education Sciences, which is providing assistantships or salaries to those involved.
WinsLab has had a good year! We were awarded (together with Drs. Goldstein and Sheridan) a major renewable grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to establish the Mason Arts Research Center (MasonARC), an interdisciplinary center that will conduct cutting-edge research on the effects of the arts on children, and bring together researchers, artists, and professionals from within and around the GMU community. We also received another major grant from IES to study bilingual language use in dual-language bilingual education classrooms. We published 7 papers last year and have an astounding 24 mostly student first-authored papers currently in review or revision! Topics of these projects mostly using Miami School Readiness Project 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, predictors of gifted or advanced course placement in school, and outcomes from school retention.
PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS IN REVIEW


Thompson, B., & Goldstein, T. R. (in review). Disentangling pretend play research and measurement: Defining the essential elements and developmental progression of pretense. Developmental Review

RECENT STUDENT WORK

CONFERENCE POSTERS AND PRESENTATIONS


Mumma, K., & Winsler, A. (2018, October). Sustained effects of pre-K through fifth grade, but not through eighth grade in Miami. Poster to be presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management annual conference. Washington, DC.


CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS


The ADP student group is a collection of students who aim to represent student concerns and provide services relevant to student life. These include a student writing group, the planning of social events for the department, and other forms of student advocacy. We also provide some funding for conference travel!

OFFICERS:
- Courtney Ricciardi (President)
- Angelique Williams (Vice President)
- Rachel Stephenson (Treasurer)
- Mayra Parada (Policy Chair)
- Jordan Greenburg (Activities Coordinator)

Happy hour in DC

ADP "Labsgiving"

ADP loves Halloween! Lab decorating and trick-or-treating.