NEWS | POSTED JUNE 14, 2022

Announcing the 2022 Recipients of the Small Grants Program for Early Career Scholars

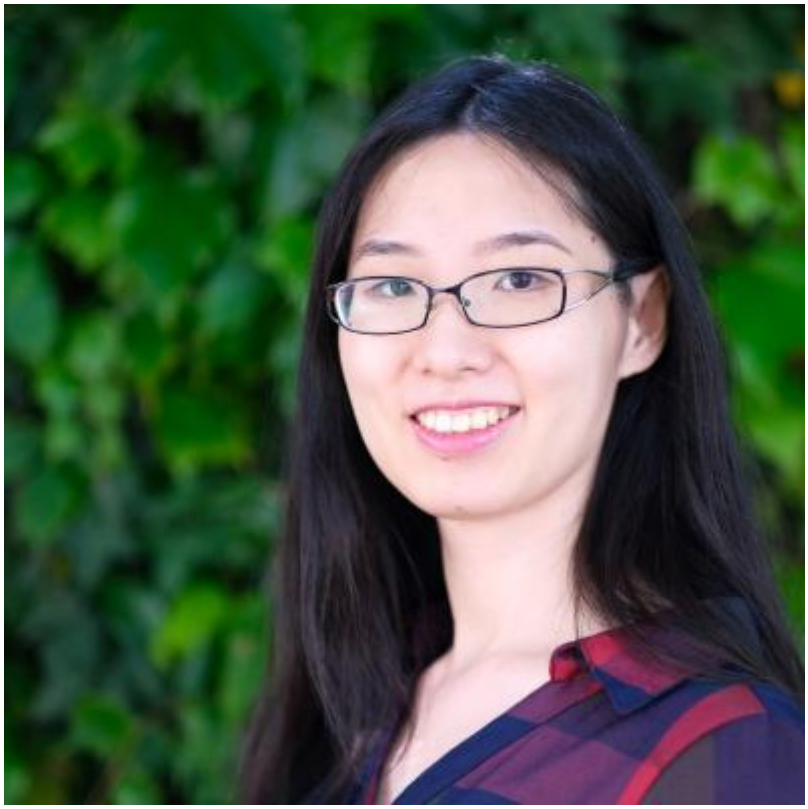
Driven by its Strategic Plan, the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) recognizes the importance of capacity building for early career scholars seeking to establish their research programs, especially considering the limited funding available for conducting exploratory work and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Small Grants Program for Early Career Scholars addresses this need within developmental science by supporting pilot or small-scale research projects proposed by members who completed their doctoral degree within the last five years.

The Small Grants Program celebrates its fifth year by awarding up to $7,500 USD to each of the ten selected projects, directly supporting a diverse group of early career researchers from institutions in the United States, Philippines, Turkey, South Africa, and Chile. The 2022 projects were selected from a highly competitive pool of 146 applications and cover many research areas and topics, including: parenting young children during the COVID-19 pandemic, improving sign language acquisition for hearing parents of deaf children, peer socialization and racism, and mental health, violence, and adversity in children.

SRCD thanks all 33 reviewers involved in the selection process and congratulates the 2022 Small Grant recipients:

Drs. Danming An, Caylee Jayde Cook (with Anna Blumenthal), Alexandrea Golden, Ka I Ip, Erin Kang, Dilay Karadöller, Amy Hyoeun Lee, Regina Tahirih Lohndorf (with Rodneys Mauricio Jiménez-Morales), Eden Hulipas Terol, and Denise Werchan.

The grant recipients will be recognized at the 2023 SRCD Biennial Meeting. Read on to learn more about this year's Small Grant projects and researchers!



Danming An

"Kenyan Early Adolescents' Relationships with Multiple Attachment Figures, Cognitive Schemas, and Adjustment"

Danming An is a Postdoctoral Research Scholar at the University of Iowa and an incoming Assistant Professor at Lehigh University. She earned her Ph.D. in Family and Human Development from Arizona State University. Her research examines the interplay among emotional, cognitive, interpersonal, and social processes in children's and adolescents' socio-emotional adjustment and mental health in North America, Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. The 2022 SRCD Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will support her research on collaborative child-rearing practices in the context of Kenya. Collaborative child-rearing by multiple parent and non-parent (e.g., grandparents, siblings, extended family) caregivers is common in non-WEIRD societies but not well understood. The goals of the project are 1) to develop a caregiver-reported measure of collaborative child-rearing from infancy to early childhood, and 2) to investigate the associations among the early caregiving network and attachment security, cognitive schema, social competence, and behavioral problems during early adolescence.

Follow on Twitter



Caylee Cook

"Exploring the impact of exposure to violence on executive function, attention to threat, and mental health outcomes in South African children: A pilot study"

Dr. Caylee Cook is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the SAMRC Wits Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. She obtained her PhD in Exercise Science in 2019 at the University of Cape Town where her research focused on the relations between preschool physical activity, motor skills, and cognition in children from low-income settings in South Africa. Having seen the need for more research on cognition and early learning in these settings, her work now looks at the potential risk and protective factors for early learning and cognition in children from adverse, low-income settings. She is particularly interested in understanding the effects of early childhood stressors such as poverty and exposure to violence. The 2022 Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will support a project that aims to help investigate some of the effects of exposure to violence on the child's executive function, attention to threat, and mental health.

Follow on Twitter



Anna Blumenthal

Dr. Anna Blumenthal is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Université Laval & Cervo Brain Research Center in Québec City, Québec, Canada. She obtained her Ph.D. in Cognitive Neuroscience at Western University, where her research focused on the neural basis of visual perception and memory. She became fascinated by neurodevelopment of perception and memory systems, leading her to pursue a postdoc at the University of Toronto studying semantic memory in children. The aim of her current work is to examine these fundamental questions of cognitive development in underrepresented populations and link them to mental health outcomes. The 2022 Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will support a pilot project that will investigate links between exposure to violence, cognition, and mental health in young children in South Africa.

Follow on Twitter



Alexandrea Golden

"Understanding Peer Racial Socialization Amidst a Pandemic of Racism: A Qualitative Study with Black Adolescents"

Alexandrea Golden, Ph.D. is currently Postdoctoral Fellow in the Center for Urban Education at Cleveland State University and an incoming Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Memphis. Dr. Golden earned her Ph.D. in Clinical-Community Psychology at the University of South Carolina. Her research program focuses on promoting the resilience and positive development of racially-minoritized youth who experience racism in their schools and communities. Accordingly, she focuses on three lines of inquiry including school racial socialization, peer racial socialization, and critical consciousness. The 2022 SRCD Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will support her work exploring the developmentally rich process of peer racial socialization and its protective capacities for Black adolescents in the face of racism.

Follow on Twitter



Ka I Ip

"Parsing heterogeneity in cultural-salient stressors among communities of color and the intergenerational effect on child socio-emotional outcomes"

Ka I Ip is a Susan Nolen-Hoeksema Postdoctoral Fellow at Yale University. Dr. Ip obtained his Ph.D. in Clinical Science and Developmental Psychology at the University of Michigan. His research focuses on typical and atypical emotion regulation, cultural factors that shape regulation, and how early adversity, inequity, and social determinants of health “get under the skin” to confer risk and resilience for developmental psychopathology, especially among communities of color and immigrant families. This award will support the development of a novel measure to assess different features (e.g., types, timing, predictability, appraisal) of stress exposure to better understand experiences of racism and inequities that communities of color and immigrant families face. The study will set the foundation to elucidate the potential intergenerational “spillover” effect of these stressors on young children’s social-emotional development.

Follow on Twitter



Erin Kang

"Neural Mechanisms of Cognitive Inflexibility in Children on the Autism Spectrum and Associations with Clinical Presentation"

Dr. Erin Kang is an Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department at Montclair State University. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Stony Brook University in 2020 with an advanced graduate certificate in Quantitative Methods. Dr. Kang's research focuses on integrating science and practice by understanding processes that shape clinical presentations in youth on the autism spectrum, investigating neural mechanisms of clinical phenotypes and plasticity in autism, and applying these insights to evidence-based interventions for supporting social functioning. The 2022 SRCD Small Grants Program for Early Career Scholars will support research understanding of how differences in neural and behavioral presentations of flexible thinking in children on the autism spectrum relate to clinical presentation.



Dilay Karadoller

"My Sign App: Supporting Sign Language Acquisition of Deaf Children with Hearing Parents"

Dilay Z. Karadöller is a postdoctoral researcher at Department of Psychology, Koç University, Turkey and a part-time faculty at Department of Psychology at Middle East Technical University, Turkey. She received her PhD degree from Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics and Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Her research focuses on the development of spatial language and cognition in a multimodal perspective and draws evidence from early and late acquisition of sign language as the first language. The 2022 Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will support Dr. Karadöller to investigate lexical development of deaf children with late sign language exposure by developing an app that provides a consistent and accessible platform to teach early-acquired lexical signs in Turkish Sign Language (Türk ☒☒ret Dili, T☒D).

Follow on Twitter



Amy Hyoeun Lee

"Early Childhood Sleep as a Mechanism Linking Dimensions of Adversity to Emerging Psychopathology"

Dr. Amy Hyoeun Lee is a postdoctoral scholar in the Developmental Stress and Prevention Lab at Stony Brook University and an incoming Assistant Professor of Psychology at Hofstra University beginning September 2022. Dr. Lee earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at St. John's University. The overall aim of her research program is to facilitate behavioral health equity for minoritized youth with interpersonal trauma histories. To this end, her research focuses on identifying developmental mechanisms linking adversity and psychopathology, examining the impact of evidence-based interventions on these mechanisms, and addressing disparities in access to evidence-based interventions for traumatized youth. The 2022 Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will support her multi-method study examining early childhood sleep as a potential mechanism by which dimensions of adversity confer vulnerability for emerging psychopathology among young children of color.

Follow on Twitter



Regina T. Lohndorf

“Parenting and Child Development in Latin American Preschoolers during the Pandemic”

Regina T. Lohndorf is an assistant professor at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in the Department of Learning and Development. She obtained her Ph.D. in Child Development from a Cultural and Educational Perspective from Leiden University, The Netherlands. Dr. Lohndorf´s research focuses on understanding how the home and early childhood education environments impact child development. She is particularly interested in early child development in ethnic minority groups and culturally diverse samples from low SES backgrounds.



Rodneys M. Jiménez Morales

Rodneys M. Jiménez Morales is Department Director for Promotion, Research, and Development at the Higher Education Institute Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, Misiones, Argentina. He received his Ph.D. in Psychological Sciences (specializing in clinical psychology) from the Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de las Villas Cuba. Dr. Jimenez is interested in how sociocultural factors impact early child development.

The 2022 SRCD Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will allow Dr. Jiménez and Dr. Lohndorf to conduct a joint research project that investigates how parenting practices impact child development of preschoolers in 17 Spanish Speaking Latin American countries encompassing rich cultural diversity. The study pilots innovative, culturally sensitive, and remotely applicable low-cost measures of parenting and child development. The Small Grant makes the much-needed research of chronically underrepresented populations in the Global South possible and helps build human capital and scientific and technological infrastructure in low-and-middle-income-countries. The principal investigators are very happy and proud to receive the Small Grant as first Global South researchers in a long time, may many follow in the quest of closing the opportunity gap and decolonizing research!



Eden H. Terol

“Exploring Indigenous Children’s Learning and the Challenges and Opportunities of Mother-Child Interaction in Relation to Distance Education in the Time of COVID”

Dr. Eden H. Terol is an Assistant Professor of Applied Psychology Program at the University of the Philippines- Diliman Extension Program in Pampanga. She also served as a psychologist at the National Center for Mental Health. Her research interest focuses on mental health and child/ adolescent development, including the development of Filipino indigenous youth. Her current research will examine the indigenous children’s experience of learning in the context of distance education during the pandemic. The mother-child interaction around their study sessions will be explored, including the challenges faced and the opportunities offered in these learning interactions. This study may contribute to initiatives that will promote indigenous children’s welfare such as in the development of supplemental literacy/life skills programs and technical support.



Denise Werchan

"Naturalistic studies of infant visual attention: improving ecological validity and diversity in developmental science through innovation in remote infant eye tracking"

Denise Werchan is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at NYU Langone Health. Dr. Werchan received her Ph.D. in Cognitive Science from Brown University in 2020. Her research examines how early sociocultural and biological factors (e.g., perinatal mental health, caregiving, poverty) shape trajectories of neurocognitive development over infancy and early childhood. The 2022 Small Grant for Early Career Scholars will support her project to identify how variations in the complex, visually-rich environments that infants' experience in their day-to-day lives influence visual attention in a diverse sociodemographic sample of families. She will evaluate this question by conducting remote, naturalistic assessments of infant looking behavior in the home using innovative webcam-linked eye tracking technology.

Follow on Twitter