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Nine Scholars Recognized for the 14th Annual Student and Early Career Council Dissertation Research Funding Awards

SRCD congratulates the 2022 Student and Early Career Council Dissertation Funding Awardees.

Established in 2008 by the SRCD Student and Early Career Council (SECC), the Dissertation Research Funding Awards (DFAs) are given to dissertation research proposals that are exceptionally noteworthy and display a strong potential to contribute to the field of child development. Each recipient is awarded $2,000 USD to use for research costs related to the proposed dissertation project.

SRCD is pleased to recognize the following nine scholars as the 2022 awardees: *Alp Aytuglu, Anna Drozdova, Katherine Edler, Brett Greenfield, Paola Guerrero-Rosada, Parisa Kaliush, Catalina Rey-Guerra, Catherine Rogers Gaspar, and Daneele Thorpe.*

Given the strength and quality of their applications, SRCD would also like to recognize the following five scholars as 2022 Honorable Mentions: *Corinne Carlton, Elizabeth Choi, Kate Nussenbaum, Emmy Reilly, and Katrina Simon.*



Alp Aytuglu, University of Georgia

“Understanding Rural, African American Fathers’ Parenting: Correlates and Consequences for Early Development”

Alp Aytuglu is a doctoral candidate in human development and family science at the University of Georgia under the mentorship of Dr. Geoffrey Brown. Alp’s research program is focused on parenting in diverse socio-cultural contexts, with particular interests in the transition to fatherhood, neurobiological correlates of fathering, and the development of father-child relationships. His dissertation examines (i) the longitudinal impact of prenatal readiness for parenting among expectant, rural, unmarried African American fathers on their infants’ socioemotional adjustment, and (ii) potential mechanisms linking paternal sensitivity to executive functioning via children’s physiological regulatory capacities (e.g., vagal tone and cortisol) in rural, low SES, African American families. This project is intended to elucidate paternal contributions to early cognitive and socioemotional functioning among an underrepresented population of parents (African American fathers in low-resource environments) who have been largely neglected and highly stigmatized. In his future work Alp plans to continue documenting the neurobiological and socio-contextual correlates of fathering, and fathers’ contributions to health and development in diverse ecological settings.



Anna Drozdova, University of Texas at El Paso

“Teens' Social Media Use and (Mis)perceptions of Underage Drinking”

Anna Drozdova is a doctoral student in the Legal Psychology program at the University of Texas at El Paso, where she works with Dr. April Gile Thomas in the Adolescent Development and Delinquency Lab. Anna’s work investigates how adolescents’ social relationships impact their criminal offending and substance use patterns. Her dissertation will use ecological momentary assessment (EMA) methods to examine how online peer influence contributes to youths’ attitudes towards—and behaviors surrounding—substance use. More specifically, Anna will use daily diary assessments to examine how adolescents’ engagement on social media impacts their perceptions of peer norms related to alcohol and marijuana use and, subsequently, adolescents’ own attitudes and behaviors related to alcohol and marijuana use. Findings from this research have the potential to help elucidate how social influence operates online with regard to youths’ health risk behaviors, thereby increasing the understanding of the role of child development in outcomes across the lifespan.



Katherine Edler, University of Notre Dame

“Longitudinal associations between maternal and child emotion regulation: Examining the role of maternal emotion-related socialization behaviors”

Katherine Edler is a doctoral candidate in Developmental Psychology at the University of Notre Dame working with Dr. Kristin Valentino. Her research investigates longitudinal cascades through which family processes and adversity increase children’s risk for psychopathology, with a focus on emotion dysregulation. In addition, she is interested in identifying mechanisms that underlie parenting processes, including emotion-related socialization behaviors and child maltreatment. For Katherine’s dissertation, she will recruit a community sample of 6- to 8-year-old children and their mothers. Mothers’ emotion regulation, emotion-related socialization behaviors, and children’s emotion regulation will be assessed with a multimethod battery including questionnaires, interviews, and observational and physiological assessments. Katherine will examine which aspects of mothers’ emotion regulation are most relevant for their engagement in emotion-related socialization behaviors and children’s emotion regulation over time. This longitudinal, multimethod research will inform public health efforts to improve children’s psychological functioning by identifying processes that may be targets for translational programs aimed to improve children’s adaptive emotion regulation skills.



Brett Greenfield, Rutgers University

“Exploring connections between early attachment relationships, adoption decision-making, and parental identity among queer couples”

Brett Greenfield is a doctoral candidate in social work at Rutgers University, under the mentorship of Dr. Edward Alessi. Brett’s research focuses on the lived experiences and family constellations of LGBTQ+ parents and youth, adoption and foster care, and impacts of child welfare involvement for children and families. His dissertation research focuses on queer adoptive parents’ attachment experiences, adoption decision-making, and parental identities. This research aims to inform the ways in which queer couples’ parenting can be supported over time to enhance child development, and shape best practice standards for adoption professionals that move beyond heteronormative assumptions about family formation and parenting. Additionally, Brett’s dissertation work will improve research and advocacy efforts focused on the rights of queer families. Across all areas of research, he seeks to highlight the policy and practice implications of his work in order to improve people’s lives in ways that are guided by their own perceptions of meaningful change.



Paola Guerrero-Rosada, University of Michigan

“Identifying Actionable Classroom and Program Features for Scaling High-Quality Prekindergarten”

Paola Guerrero-Rosada is a Ph.D. candidate in the Combined Program in Education and Psychology at the University of Michigan, where she works with Dr. Christina Weiland in the Equity in Early Learning (EEL) Lab and collaborates with a long-standing Research Practice Partnerships between Boston Public Schools, the University of Michigan, Harvard Graduate School of Education, and MDRC. Paola’s research focuses on the classroom and center features that better support children’s development and mechanisms to increase equitable access to high-quality early education settings. For her dissertation, she is leveraging observational, geo-spatial, and administrative data to (1) compare the descriptive and predictive properties of two observational measures of time-use in prekindergarten classrooms, (2) examine whether exposure to challenging instructional content from prekindergarten to first-grade predicts children’s academic gains, and (3) describe statistical and geo-spatial differences between centers that self-select to participate in the Boston Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program and other centers in the Boston area, focusing on characteristics associated with centers’ engagement with the Boston UPK quality improvement supports. Paola’s goal is to partner with practitioners to generate and disseminate evidence with immediate applications for quality improvement and prekindergarten expansion processes, emphasizing the policies

and programs that benefit children's equitable access to high-quality early education.



Parisa Kaliush, University of Utah

"Transdiagnostic susceptibility for self-injurious thoughts and behaviors during the perinatal period: A dynamic systems approach"

Parisa Kaliush is a Ph.D. candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Utah working under the mentorship of Dr. Sheila Crowell. She identifies as a lifespan developmental psychopathologist with particular focus on health during the perinatal transition. Her dissertation stems from her predoctoral National Research Service Award and involves ambulatory assessment of sleep, emotion dysregulation, and self-injurious thoughts and behaviors among birthing parents during pregnancy and early postpartum. This project informs Parisa's ongoing program of research that centers around perinatal psychopathology and suicide risk, family dynamics, and multilevel processes. As Parisa completes this project and prepares for a predoctoral internship, she feels inspired to pursue a clinical science career dedicated to preventing maternal self-harm-related deaths, reducing perinatal health disparities, and increasing families' capacities to thrive. During her spare time, Parisa finds joy in coaching youth soccer, hiking, playing with her pets, and

spending time with family.

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Catalina Rey-Guerra, Boston College

“Gender Disparities in Early Childhood Development and Learning Opportunities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries"

Catalina Rey-Guerra is a doctoral candidate in applied developmental and educational psychology at Boston College, where she works with Dr. Eric Dearing and Dr. Brinton Lykes. Catalina’s research examines global patterns of gender disparities in early learning opportunities and development in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). For her dissertation, Catalina will (1) examine variations in gender similarities and differences in the cognitive and social-emotional development of young children growing up in more than 70 LMICs, (2) explore potential mechanisms underlying gender disparities in early childhood (e.g., gender-differentiated parenting practices and provision of learning opportunities for girls and boys) in LMICs, and (3) co-design and co-conduct together with Colombian families and early childhood education teachers participatory workshops to have a more nuanced understanding of their perspectives about gender-related

variations in learning opportunities and caregiving practices in different learning contexts. In the short term, Catalina seeks to advance the current knowledge base and develop materials to reduce gender stereotypes in early learning environments in partnership with ground-level stakeholders and organizations in LMICs. In the long term, she envisions herself as an advocate for gender equality and children's rights, using her academic work to promote children's healthy development.



Catherine Rogers Gaspar, Teachers College, Columbia University

"The Experiences and Practices of Parents of Color of Preschoolers with Disabilities: An Exploration of Cultural and Ecological Factors"

Catherine Rogers Gaspar is a doctoral candidate in Intellectual Disability/Autism at Teachers College, Columbia University under the mentorship of Dr. Laudan Jahromi. Her research investigates factors which influence the experiences and parenting behaviors of culturally and linguistically diverse parents of young children with disabilities. Much of her work has examined the socio-contextual risk and protective factors that inform the experiences and wellbeing of parents of children with disabilities during the transition from preschool into kindergarten special education services using a Community-Based Participatory Research

(CBPR) approach. Her dissertation emphasizes culturally-inclusive, strengths-based approaches and is composed of three studies which examine 1) ecological contexts influencing parents' experiences during the early childhood special education transition, 2) the key elements of the virtual learning and pandemic-experiences of parents of young children of color with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 3) relationships between cultural values and practices and the educational involvement of parents of preschool children of color with disabilities. Catherine aims for her research to provide foundations for family-centered supports and resources, as well as inform special education parent policies and procedures to empower parents from underserved backgrounds in their advocacy and participation in the special education process.



Daneele Thorpe, Stony Brook University

"Permeable Walls: Examining the Associations between Multiple Indicators of Neighborhood Disadvantage and Child Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior and the Moderating Role of Parenting Behaviors."

Daneele Thorpe is a doctoral candidate in the Clinical Psychology Program at Stony Brook University, working with Dr. Kristin Bernard in the Developmental Stress and Prevention Lab. Daneele's research focuses

on early adversity and its impacts on parenting and child development. She aims to broaden current conceptualizations of adversity to include neighborhood-level factors, including lack of access to resources and exposure to community violence. Daneele's dissertation will integrate ecological systems theories to examine how families' neighborhood environment influences parenting behaviors that may protect children in the face of neighborhood disadvantage. She will use a mixed methods design that includes 1) collecting qualitative data from parents of toddlers about how the neighborhood environment shapes their parenting behaviors and 2) conducting a quantitative study to examine associations between neighborhood factors (assessed via publicly available data) and parenting behaviors. Daneele hopes her work will inform multisystemic interventions at the individual level (i.e., to build children's resilience), family level (i.e., to support positive caregiving), and the broader community level (i.e., to address systemic disparities in resource access and safety). Her long-term goals include conducting community-informed research and collaborating with key stakeholders and policymakers to advocate for historically disenfranchised communities to ensure healthy child development.

Honorable Mentions

Corinne Carlton, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
"Characterizing Reward Function During Social Stress: Associations with Anhedonia in Socially Anxious Adolescents"

Emmy Reilly, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
"Compassion in Action: A Micro-trial of the Effects of a Loving-Kindness Meditation on Parent Sensitivity and Salivary Alpha Amylase"

Kate Nussenbaum, New York University
"The Development of Adaptive Memory"

Katrina Simon, Columbia University
"Associations among noise exposure, brain development, and language development in childhood"

Elizabeth Choi, University of Southern California
"Investigating sociocultural influences on the early caregiving environment and likelihood of autism"