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Longtime SRCD Member Kristina R. Olson Wins Prestigious Alan T. Waterman Award from National Science Foundation



The National Science Foundation announced today that SRCD Member and developmental psychologist **Kristina R. Olson** was awarded the 2018 Alan T. Waterman Award, the nation's highest honor for early career scientists and engineers.

Dr. Olson is currently an Associate Professor and Associate Chair at University of Washington's Department of Psychology. She is the Director of the TransYouth Project (TYP) which is the first large-scale, national, longitudinal study of socially-transitioned transgender children to date. TYP follows a cohort of about 300 children from 45 U.S. states and several Canadian provinces for 20 years.

"Kristina's groundbreaking research is already changing how we understand gender identity and gender development," said Dr. Laura L. Namy, Executive Director of SRCD. "Her work informs both mechanisms and

real-world implications. We are thrilled that her work is being nationally-recognized on such a grand scale."

She is the first social scientist to receive the Alan T. Waterman Award since 2005 and the first woman to receive the award since 2004. According to the NSF announcement, "Olson is recognized for her innovative contributions to understanding children's attitudes toward and identification with social groups, early prosocial behavior, the development of notions of fairness, morality, inequality and the emergence of social biases." The Award comes with a research grant of $1 million over 5 years and other recognition.

In one of the first examinations of early gender development among transgender children (first available online in *Child Development* in April 2017 and published in the March/April 2018 issue), Dr. Olson and co-author Anne Fast, Ph.D. found that transgender children were just as likely as nontransgender children to have preferences associated with their gender, and to have as strong and clear a sense of their gender identity.

Dr. Olson says her work is important for all major societal issues -- from trade disputes to health disparities to international relations. "I believe it is impossible to solve any large-scale social issues without documenting, understanding and ultimately bridging differences in people's racial, cultural, gender and other identities," she said.

Watch a video tribute to Dr. Olson and her research on the National Science Foundation website.