

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

(<http://psychology.clas.asu.edu/developmental>)

Updated October 2009

The Ph.D. program in developmental psychology is ranked in the top 10 graduate programs in developmental psychology in North America, under most categories (see National Stature, below). It is offered as one of six major areas of advanced (doctoral) study within the Department of Psychology (the others being Behavioral Neuroscience; Cognition, Action, and Perception; Clinical; Social; and Quantitative psychology described in separate brochures).

The developmental program is designed to equip its graduates with the necessary conceptual, methodological, and teaching skills for careers in academia or applied developmental research positions. The developmental graduate students frequently collaborate with faculty in related programs within the department (e.g., child-clinical, prevention, and social psychology programs) and with faculty in other programs with allied research interests. The developmental psychology program has seven core faculty members: Drs. Robert Bradley, Nancy Eisenberg, William Fabricius, Gary Ladd, Kathryn Lemery-Chalfant, Morris Okun, and Armando Pina. Students are trained to be researchers and scholars, with the expectation that any practical applications will follow from this basic expertise.

We admit only a limited number of students (10-15 students are usually in the program at any given point in time) and encourage close faculty-student mentoring relationships. Each student begins research training during the first year and, over time, research products become more specialized and tailored to the student's individual interests and expertise. Each student develops and pursues research in conjunction with an appropriate faculty member(s), which culminates in the dissertation.

The primary focus of the program is on understanding the process of normative development, as well as the relevance of these normative processes for the development of mood and behavior problems. We characterize development as an emergent property reflecting transactions occurring across levels of an active, developing organism embedded in its environment. We emphasize conceptualizing and measuring *mechanisms* across levels of analysis from genes to cultural contexts. Historically, personal characteristics and social environments have received most of the research attention, but advances at the genetic, biological, and cultural levels of analysis now permit closer study of both the biological underpinnings of development and the cultural context.

GRADUATE CURRICULUM

The graduate curriculum in developmental psychology places equal emphasis on course work and research experience. It provides training in the core areas of emotional, social and social-cognitive development; developmental theory; and fundamental methodological, statistical, and design skills. Advanced seminars are available on specialized topics of research interest, which currently include infancy, childcare influences, home environment, theory of mind, moral development, emotional development, peer relationships, and aging. Students complement their developmental courses with related courses either within or outside the psychology department. Many other relevant courses are available in the department (e.g., developmental psychopathology, child assessment, prevention programs for children of divorce, growth modeling) and in ASU's interdisciplinary School of Social and Family Dynamics (e.g., child development courses on research methods, risk and resilience in children and adolescents,

cultural competence in infants, prevention and child development, adolescent identity development, and family studies courses such as social networks).

In the course of their graduate training, students develop and pursue their own programs of research in conjunction with an appropriate faculty member or members. The major milestones of the program include a written and oral presentation of the first year research project, a master's degree, a comprehensive examination, and the student's doctoral dissertation.

Opportunities to develop teaching and communication skills are offered both through formal coursework and through participation in departmental teaching and seminar activities. An ongoing, informal seminar of developmental students and faculty provides a forum for the discussion of a wide range of theoretical, methodological and substantive research issues in developmental psychology.

Students typically develop strong interests in quantitative methods and take advantage of the advanced coursework provided by the Department's outstanding Quantitative Psychology doctoral program. Quantitative faculty have ongoing research in the development of statistical methodologies for mediational analysis, multi-level modeling, the evaluation of the performance of structural equation models under violations of assumptions, research design strategies under conditions of self-selection and attrition, cross-group measurement equivalence, measurement bias in psychological tests, testing and interpreting statistical interactions and the longitudinal growth modeling of psychological constructs. These topics have direct application to longitudinal research, research on theoretical models, and the evaluation of interventions.

For additional information, go to <http://psychology.clas.asu.edu/graduate/resources> and download the graduate handbook.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The developmental program has been 100 percent successful for over a decade in providing its graduate students in residence with uninterrupted financial support, enabling them to pursue full-time study. Such assistance is typically in the form of nine-month research or teaching assistantships, which normally include an out-of-state tuition waiver. All of our students also receive summer support as well, from various sources.

NATIONAL STATURE OF ASU'S DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

The new gold standard index of graduate program rankings is Academic Analytics' Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index. The RSP Index is a cumulative score representing the scholarly productivity of faculty using their journal and book publications, journal article citations, federally-funded research grants, and honorific awards. In the latest report (2006-2007), the Developmental Psychology Program at Arizona State University was ranked 4th in the "Psychology, Various" category that included programs in developmental psychology as well as social psychology and health psychology.

Additionally, a study by Byrnes & McNamara (2001) published in *Developmental Review* empirically evaluated the quality of 97 North American doctoral programs in the developmental sciences. Arizona State University's Developmental Psychology Program was objectively ranked as among the top quarter of programs in North America. More specifically, our program ranked:

- 6th out of 97 in Graduate Student Placements in Faculty Positions
- 7th out of 97 in Faculty Scholarly Productivity
- 17th out of 97 in Research Impact (citation rates of faculty)
- 10th out of 97 in Journal Editing and Editorial Board Memberships (note that Nancy Eisenberg's editorship of *Psychological Bulletin* was mistakenly not counted and if it had been counted, our ranking would have been 2nd in this category)

In conclusion, the Developmental Psychology Program at Arizona State University ranks in the top 10 programs under most categories.

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM FACULTY

Our core faculty members are leaders in their fields and active researchers, funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the National Science Foundation.

Recognized Strengths:

- *Highly Collaborative Faculty.* Without exception, the developmental faculty is involved in collaborative research, most of whom have multiple collaborations within the department, university and community.
- *Highly Productive in High Impact Publications.* In the past two years alone (2008-2009), faculty and students in developmental psychology have published over 85 refereed journal articles and book chapters.
- *Very Effective in Obtaining Extramural Funding.* Members of the developmental faculty are currently principal investigators/co-principal investigators on five federal grants, with several under review.
- *Thriving Graduate Training Program.* In the past two years, seven students have successfully obtained their Ph.D.'s in developmental psychology. Over half of these students benefited from mentoring from more than one faculty member.
- *Service Orientation.* Our ranks include the Associate Chair of Psychology, the Associate Director of the School of Social and Family Dynamics, two journal editors, members on over 10 journal editorial boards, members on at least 3 NIH grant review panels, numerous leadership roles in professional organizations, advisory panels and community service organizations. An exemplar is Dr. Robert Bradley, member of the NICHD Study of Early Child Care & Youth Development Steering Committee, Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Steering Committee, and advisory board of the American Indian / Alaska Native Head Start Research Center.
- *Award Winning.* An exemplar is Nancy Eisenberg, who was the 2009 recipient of APA's highest award in Developmental Psychology, the G. Stanley Hall Award for Distinguished Contribution to Developmental Psychology, as well as the recipient of the 2008 International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development Distinguished Contribution Award. In 2007, Nancy received APA's Ernest R. Hilgard Award for a Career Contribution to General Psychology. In addition, she has received three career awards from NICHD and NIMH.

Core Faculty Research Interests:

Dr. Robert Bradley's research focuses on child care, early education for high risk children, parenting, measurement of the home environment, families with high risk and medically-fragile children.

Dr. Nancy Eisenberg's interests are in the domain of social and emotional development and self-regulation, especially social competence, problem behavior/adjustment, temperament, emotion and its regulation, parenting, altruism, moral judgment and empathy, as well as the psychophysiology of emotion. She has been named an Arizona State University Regent's Professor.

Dr. William Fabricius' research focuses on social cognitive development, especially the development of theory of mind in early and middle childhood and adolescence, and also on the contributions of fathers to adolescents' social development and physical health in different family contexts (intact families, divorced families, and stepfather families).

Dr. Gary Ladd's research interests include investigating factors that contribute to children's successes and difficulties in the peer culture, the contributions of families, peers, and teachers to children's psychological and school adjustment, and on linkages between family processes and the development of children's social competence.

Dr. Kathryn Lemery-Chalfant uses the developmental behavior genetic approach to study individual differences in appropriate and inappropriate emotional responding—including temperament, internalizing, externalizing, and attentional disorders; Risk and resiliency; Parent and sibling influences; Context effects; Person-environment transactions. Behavioral (e.g., videotaped interactions) and biological (e.g., basal and reactive cortisol) measures.

Dr. Morris Okun's research interests include applications of social psychological theories and concepts to several domains including commitment to higher education, volunteering by older adults, health and well-being, and social control in dyadic relationships. He is currently co-PI on a grant funded by the NINR to examine how variations in daily pain affect daily goal pursuit and how this association is moderated by a set of resilience and risk factors.

Dr. Armando Pina's research interests include the study of intra-individual level risk factors in the development of anxiety and its disorders in youths and the evaluation of psychosocial preventive and treatment interventions for use with this population. Dr. Pina's work integrates cultural and child-adolescent anxiety research and is aimed at developing empirically informed, culturally robust assessment and intervention strategies for youth.

Affiliated Faculty in the Department of Psychology:

Manuel Barrera, Jr. (Clinical): Prevention and behavioral treatment for type 2 diabetes, social support interventions, behavioral health interventions for Latino families.

Sanford L. Braver (Social): Psychology, social psychology and economics of the family, especially after divorce. Dynamics and effects of fathers in families. Methodological and statistical approaches within the social sciences generally, and the field of prevention science specifically.

Laurie Chassin (Clinical): Adolescent risk and resilience, and transitions from adolescence to adulthood. Longitudinal studies of the intergenerational transmission of substance use and cigarette smoking, and adolescents in high-risk families, desistance among serious juvenile offenders.

Keith Crnic (Clinical): Parent-child interaction, parenting, and family process predictions to emerging behavior problems in young children. The nature of stress in parent-child relationships and its influence on child and family functioning.

Paul Karoly (Clinical): Development and use of a cognitive-motivational perspective applied to normal and abnormal adjustment and to physical health and physical illness.

Nancy Gonzales (Clinical): Culture / Ethnic Issues in Prevention Research; Prevention of Mexican American School Dropout and Mental Health Problems; Acculturation and Enculturation of Mexican American Children and Families; Contextual Influences on Adolescent Development.

George Knight (Social, Quantitative): Acculturation and enculturation in Mexican American families, the development of ethnic identity among Mexican Americans, cross-cultural development, cooperative and competitive behavioral styles, prosocial behavior.

Linda Luecken (Clinical): Health Psychology, Women's Health. Social, developmental, and personality predictors of cardiovascular and hormonal stress reactivity and vulnerability to stress-related illnesses.

Clark C. Presson (Cognition, Action & Perception): development of spatial knowledge and reasoning, spatial maps and models; applications of cognitive development to child and adolescent health psychology;

Nancy Felipe Russo (Social): Social development, sex roles and mental health, factors influencing women's educational and career achievements, ethnic minority women's issues, and population and environmental psychology.

Irwin Sandler (Clinical): Coping and coping efficacy in promoting health adaptation to stress, the assessment of stress events and ongoing chronic difficulties and preventive interventions for children of divorce and bereaved children.

Alex Zautra (Clinical): Stress and emotions on the capacities of people to sustain wellbeing and recover from illness and other life challenges.

Affiliated Faculty in Related Departments:

ASU is home to a large and active group of faculty studying various aspects of families and human development. Many of us collaborate with one another in our research and we have some joint speakers and meetings. Graduate students often draw on the expertise of this group in forming their committees and in developing their own research careers. In addition to faculty from Psychology, this group includes faculty from the School of Social and Family Dynamics, Department of Speech and Hearing, and Educational Psychology.

Richard A. Fabes (socioemotional development),
William Griffin (family interactions),
Laura Hanish (peer victimization, social development),
David Ingram (language development),
Becky Ladd (peer victimization; peers relationships in school),
Carol Martin (gender differences and related processes)
Mark Roosa (social development in high risk groups),
Alyson Shapiro (dynamics within the mother-father-infant-triad, co-parenting, father involvement, psychophysiology)
Sandra Simpkins (peer relationships, out-of-school activities/programs, policy)
Tracy Spinrad (emotion-related regulation in young children, parenting, psychophysiology),
Adriana Umana-Taylor (ethnic identity formation, parent-adolescent relationships)
Kim Updegraff (social relationships in adolescence, gender, culture),
Carlos Valiente (executive functioning and school success),
Jeanne Wilcox (language development).

RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

The program is fortunate to have a number of unusually strong resources that support its research and training activities, including the Child Study Laboratory, a preschool program located in the Psychology Building. This preschool program is attended by more than 100 children and has facilities for both laboratory and naturalistic research. Two other preschool/daycare centers are available on campus. In addition, all faculty in the program have their own research space to house their research programs.

The department encourages research that crosses traditional boundaries within psychology and the faculty in developmental enjoy close ties with the faculty in clinical, social, and behavioral and cognitive systems programs. For example, the Psychology Department is home to the Prevention Intervention Research Center funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. This center is involved in applied research dealing with children in situations of stress (e.g., children of alcoholics or divorce) that put them at risk for mental health problems. Some faculty and students in the developmental program are involved in the studies at the Prevention Center.

The department also has one of the strongest quantitative programs in the world, a fact that allows developmental students to obtain outstanding training in methods and statistics. In addition, we have nationally and internationally prominent researchers visit and teach in our department for a semester or year.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be received by **January 5**.

The application process involves the following requirements:

1. Complete the graduate college application, available online at <http://graduate.asu.edu/admissions>.
2. Request one copy of your official transcript from all previous undergraduate and graduate institutions and send to: Unofficial copies must be sent to the Psychology Department.

Graduate College
Arizona State University
Interdisciplinary B-Wing
Room 170
P.O. Box 871003
Tempe, AZ 85287-1003

3. Request ETS to send your official GRE scores to the address above.

Additional information about how and where to have transcripts and test scores forwarded is available online from [the ASU Graduate College Admission Checklist Web page](#).

4. Submit the following materials to the Department of Psychology:

Coordinator of Graduate Admissions
Department of Psychology
950 S. McAllister
PO Box 871104
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona 85287-1104

Materials:

- A copy of your general GRE scores. This copy can be an unofficial copy.
- A copy of your transcripts from undergraduate and/or graduate school (unofficial is accepted).
- Three letters of recommendation, with at least two coming from members of the academic community who are familiar with your academic background and research experience. Preferably all three letters should be from individuals familiar with your research training and qualifications. If you have been out of school for some time, letters from non-academic professionals may be acceptable. The psychology department provides a letter of recommendation form in the application packet that is available for download at <http://psychology.clas.asu.edu/graduate/application>. Letters should be sent to the Coordinator of Graduate Admissions. The address is listed above.
- International students should include their TOEFL score (an unofficial copy is acceptable) in the materials provided directly to the Psychology Department as well

providing an official copy to the Graduate College.

- A brief statement of purpose (approximately 600 words), describing any prior research training, your professional goals, and the fit between your academic interests and our training program's emphasis.
- An applicant information sheet (available online) on which you must indicate an area of specialization within the psychology department (i.e., developmental).
- An applicant response form
- **Download** the [Application Forms Packet](#) containing the letter of recommendation form, the statement of purpose form, applicant information sheet, and applicant response form.

NOTE: The department strongly supports diversity and encourages applications from members of underrepresented groups.

Questions?

Please contact Jackie Wilcock at psygrad@asu.edu or 480-965-7606.