

Opportunities for Research in Family and Human Development in the T. Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics



Justin Jager

While focusing primarily on the family and peer contexts, Dr. Jager's research is devoted to unpacking how complex person-context interactions inform development across adolescence and the transition to adulthood. In terms of developmental outcomes, his research focuses primarily on substance use, risky behavior, mental health, and academic achievement. In particular, Dr. Jager is currently looking for new students who are interested in the development of substance use across the transition to adulthood.



Sarah Lindstrom Johnson

Dr. Lindstrom Johnson's research takes a positive youth development approach towards identifying ways to prevent youth involvement in risk behaviors, which focuses on supporting development assets and improving the environments in which youth learn and grow. Much of this work involves partnerships with youth serving organizations such as schools, primary care clinics, and community organizations. She has a particular interest in understanding and mitigating the consequences of exposure to and involvement in violence. Due to her training in public health, Dr. Lindstrom Johnson focuses on developing solutions that are feasible and sustainable; her work often involves dissemination trials of preventative interventions. Currently she has three funded grants that involve programs and tools to improve school climate in which she is eager to incorporate a new student.



Sabina Low

Dr. Low's program of research focuses on social-contextual influences on development using life-span, and dyadic dynamic systems frameworks, with an emphasis on adolescent outcomes. As a prevention scientist, she engages in school and family-based interventions to promote healthy relationships and healthy, equitable and safe school climates. Dr. Low is currently looking for students to assist on a series of projects focused on 1) understanding how the peer, family and school systems that contribute to the achievement gap, 2) the role of software-assisted collaborative learning interventions in reducing the achievement gap, and 3) understanding the role of peers, discrimination and school success for disadvantaged youth.



Holly O'Rourke

Dr. O'Rourke's research focuses on the intersection of quantitative methodology and substantive research in psychology and human development. Specifically, her research examines statistical performance of mediation models, which are used to examine how programs achieve their effects on behavioral outcomes. She also studies longitudinal structural equation models, particularly the latent change score model, which assesses how behavioral outcomes change over time. Other research areas of interest include statistical power, Bayesian and Frequentist performance of effect sizes for mediation. Her statistical work is grounded in real-world questions and issues in the behavioral sciences, with a focus on substance use.

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Tracy Spinrad

Dr. Spinrad's research focuses on young children's social and emotional competencies, including children's moral emotions and behavior and the socialization of children's emotions and regulation. She is the director of **Project K.I.D. (Kindness in Development)** that aims to understand children's empathy, sympathy, and prosocial behavior toward diverse targets. She also directed the **Toddler Emotional Development (TED)**—a project that longitudinally examined the role of parenting and toddlers' effortful control on children's social and emotional outcomes. She collaborates closely with Drs. Nancy Eisenberg (Professor Emeritus, Psychology) and Carlos Valiente.



Brandon Yoo

Dr. Yoo (Ph.D., University of Minnesota) is an associate professor of Asian Pacific American Studies in the School of Social Transformation and the School of Social and Family Dynamics. His research draws on multiple disciplines (including Psychology, Sociology, and Ethnic and Asian American Studies) to examine uniquely racialized risks, resiliency, and resistance of minoritized youth and families. In particular, Dr. Yoo is looking for students to join his research team who are interested in topics of stereotypes and discrimination, racism and racial identity, ethnic and racial socialization, and critical consciousness and collective action.