

Annual Newsletter

Issue 8, January 2019

Our Research

Dear Families, educators, and practitioners:
Thank you for participating in a research study at our developmental psychology lab and for supporting our research throughout the years. We hope that you and your child(ren)/students enjoyed your experience at the laboratory, school, or community setting. We could not do this work without your valuable contribution and are excited to share our interesting findings with you. We hope you will find this newsletter interesting and informative.

Sincerely,
Dr. Tina Malti



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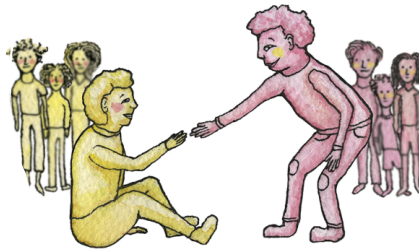
On-Going Studies

How are Children's Emotions Formed?



In this project, we examine how children ages 4 to 8 years attend to different cues in hypothetical social conflicts. By studying children's eye movements, we can examine how the cues to which they attend impact their self-reported emotions, facial expressions, and physiology. With this, we hope to better understand how children move from being self-centered and selfish to other-oriented and kind.

Emotions in Intergroup Contexts



Emotions such as guilt, sympathy, pride, and schadenfreude (feeling pleasure in another's misfortune) may play an important role in the development of children's prosocial orientations. In this international study being conducted in Canada, Italy, and Japan, we examine how children's emotional responding differs toward peers who are similar to? vs. different from them. We aim to garner insight into how moral emotions may contribute to the development of kindness in diverse settings.

Prosocial Development and Resilience in Syrian Newcomers



With many Syrian refugees arriving in Canada, it is important to understand how to best help these children and families successfully integrate and resettle into society. In this study, we aim to understand how refugee children and families deal with their transition to Canada and the factors that contribute to their resilience, helping them to adjust and thrive.

Understanding the Development of Aggression



Do children bully others because they lack sympathy or because they have trouble expressing their concern for others in positive ways? In this study, we investigate children's physiological (i.e., bodily) responses to situations that involve bullying others. This knowledge will help treatment efforts determine when and how to target aggression and reduce the risk of bullying as children develop.

Child Development in Marginalized Communities



Growing up in marginalized communities expose children to not only poverty, but also violence, inadequate care, limited access to services, and so on. This project focuses on children from birth to 24 months in marginalized urban informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya. We aim to design, implement, and evaluate an intervention to support children's early development in physical, cognitive, and social-emotional domains.

Research News



How does biology affect reactions to bullying?

Our recent research has found that children's biology might affect how they react to being bullied by peers. Specifically, some children show particularly sensitive biological reactions to bullying. These children may feel less concern for needy peers if they themselves are often victims of bullying. (Colasante, Peplak, Sette, & Malti, in press)

Why do children get into fights?



We found that anger and sympathy may help to explain two different types of aggression. Children who have difficulty controlling their anger are more likely to behave aggressively when they feel threatened and frustrated. Helping these children cope with their emotions may help to reduce their aggressive behavior. In contrast, children who are less able to feel sympathy and concern for others are more likely to use aggression as a means of getting what they want (e.g., toys). Teaching these children to be mindful of others' emotions by using different strategies for achieving their goals (e.g., asking politely for a toy) may be most effective at reducing their aggressive behavior. (Jambon, Colasante, Peplak, & Malti, 2018)

How can we encourage inclusion?



In another study, we found that by fostering children's sympathy, we can motivate children to include peers from poorer backgrounds in social activities. This may be a valuable step in rectifying some of the negative consequences experienced by children living in poverty. (Dys, Peplak, Colasante, & Malti, 2018)

Community Involvement



In addition to conducting research, the SEDI Lab is also committed to working with service providers to integrate our social-emotional knowledge into social services that aim to nurture healthy development in children across families, schools, and communities. To help support the quicker transfer of knowledge from research to practice, the SEDI Lab continues to establish our growing community of practice. Community organizations that we work with include partners from the Child and Youth Mental Health, Early Years Services, Education and Child Welfare sectors in the Peel Region.



This year, we started a collaboration with schools in the Kingston and Belleville area. In this collaborative study, we are examining how children's emotions may differ when interacting with Canadian versus refugee children. With our new knowledge, we hope to inform strategies to increase kindness among diverse peers in the classroom.

[CONTACT](#)

[MEDIA](#)



A BIT ABOUT US

In 2018, we welcomed new managerial staff, students, and volunteers to our team. Featured here are four of our newest members:



Chanel

Chanel Tsang received her Hon. B.A. from the University of Toronto before obtaining her Montessori Elementary Teaching diploma, going on to spend more than ten years in the education and non-profit sector. She was a facilitator in (what are now known as) EarlyON Child and Family Centres for the past few years, where she developed her passion for family support work, community engagement, and promoting social-emotional development. Chanel is committed to building on our community partnerships to help strengthen the research-practice link that SEDI Lab has established in order to create intervention and training resources to support practitioners, educators, and parents/caregivers.

Emma Galarneau received her B.A. in psychology from McGill University. She joined the SEDI lab as a master's student in September 2018, and is currently studying how psychological processes affect the development of other-oriented emotions and behaviours. She is particularly interested in the development of emotion regulation, and how this affects the way children resolve conflict and engage in prosocial behaviours.



Emma



Stephanie

Stephanie is a PhD student in Developmental Psychology & Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Her research focuses on how cognitive and emotion processes shape the learning process and affect academic achievement. Stephanie will be working with the SEDI lab to complete a project on attention processes, physiology, and moral emotions. Specifically, her project will look at how children's ability to control their attention contributes to emotion processes and prosocial tendencies.

We also welcomed Beatrice Bobba, a visiting student from the Catholic University of Sacred Heart in Milan, Italy. Beatrice is interested in moral development and intergroup relationships.



Beatrice

Recent Publications

Colasante, T., Peplak, J., Sette, S., & Malti, T. (in press). Understanding the victimization–aggression link in childhood: The roles of sympathy and respiratory sinus arrhythmia. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*. doi:10.1007/s10578-018-0841-5

Colasante, T., Zuffianò, A., Haley, D., & Malti, T. (2018). Children's autonomic nervous system activity while transgressing: Relations to guilt feelings and aggression. *Developmental Psychology*, 54(9), 1621-1633. doi:10.1037/dev0000500

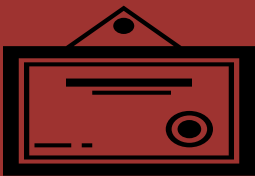
Dys, S. P., Peplak, J., Colasante, T., & Malti, T. (in press). Children's sympathy and sensitivity to excluding economically disadvantaged peers. *Developmental Psychology*. doi:10.1037/dev0000549

Jambon, M., Colasante, T., Peplak, J., & Malti, T. (2018). Anger, sympathy, and children's reactive and proactive aggression: Testing a differential correlate hypothesis. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1007/s10802-018-0498-3

Malti, T., Dys, S. P., Colasante, T., & Peplak, J. (2018). Emotions and morality: New developmental perspectives. In C. Helwig (Vol. Ed.) and M. Harris (Series Ed.), *Current issues in developmental psychology: New perspectives on moral development* (pp. 55-72). New York: Psychology Press

Malti, T., Zhang, L., Myatt, E., Peplak, J., & Acland, E. (forthcoming, 2018). Emotions in contexts of conflict and morality: Developmental perspectives. In V. LoBue, K. Perez-Edgar, & K. Buss (Eds.), *Handbook of emotional development*. New York: Springer.

Awards



Our post-doctoral fellow, Tyler, received the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 7 Dissertation Award in Developmental Psychology

Our newest graduate student, Emma, received the Canadian Graduate Scholarship-Master's from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council



Our graduate student, Joanna Peplak, received the SSHRC-funded Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement



Thank you!

Thank you to all the families, educators, and practitioners for participating in our research, and to our community partners in St. Catherines, Hamilton, the GTA, Belleville, and Kingston for collaborating with us. We would also like to thank our sponsors:



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A special thanks fo our post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, visiting students, undergraduate students, and research assistants:



Abby Mitchell, Akpene Kutuadu, Alyssa Bottoni, Anjali Suri, Beatrice Bobba, Bolarinwa Balogun, Caterina Cavallo, Chanel Tsang, Charis Liu, Connie Cheung, Danah ElSayed, Danielle Mitrevski, Durga Ramesh, Eleanor Myatt, Elizabeth Drysdale, Emma Galarneau, Erinn Acland, Parinka Celly, Ganeesha Sivakumaran, Hannah Bride, Joanna Peplak, Jose Chacon, Kathy Yang, Linlin Zhang, Maanya Khanna, Maarya Abdulkarim, Marc Jambon, Mishika Mehrotra, Natalie Keeler-Villa, Nicole Sell, Noelly Bonilla, Noor Al Kaabi, Paolina Onorato, Ramsha Mir, Rand Al-Houssan, Rose Jajarmi, Sarah Rashid, Sebastian Dys, Shahdah Mahhouk, Shahd Fulath-Khan, Stephanie Buono, Teresa Sellitto, Tulip Marawi, Tyler Colasante.