Postdoctoral Fellowship in Paediatric Clinical Neuropsychology

2024-2026

Department of Psychology
The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, ON, Canada

Paediatric Neuropsychology Fellowship Coordinator: Eva Mamak, Ph.D., ABPP-CN
Director of Training: Sharon Guger, Ph.D., C.Psych
Overview

One (1) postdoctoral fellowship position in paediatric clinical neuropsychology is offered through the Department of Psychology at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Ontario. The two-year, full-time training position begins on September 3, 2024, with the second year conditional on successful completion of the first-year requirements. Employment is contingent upon meeting The Hospital for Sick Children’s Occupational Health Requirements.

Interviews for this position will take place virtually, to improve access and equity for all eligible candidates. Virtual interviews will be scheduled January 25 or 26, 2024, for 1-2 hours. Interviews outside this time period will be considered based on the availability of both the candidate and interview committee.

Our program has been a member of the Association of Postdoctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology (APPCN) since 2008 and training conforms to the Houston Conference Guidelines for Specialty Education and Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. The fellowship adheres to a scientist-practitioner model and training prepares fellows for independent practice in paediatric neuropsychology, registration with the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO), and board certification through the American Board of Clinical Neuropsychology (ABCN).

The philosophy of the fellowship mirrors that of The Hospital for Sick Children in that the needs of the patient and family are primary. An evidence-based/best practice approach is used and clinical research is closely integrated with patient care activities. Conceptualizing the child’s neuropsychological needs and challenges within a developmental framework is integral to practice.

The Department of Psychology at SickKids exists as an independent department within a Child Health Services cluster model of service provision. It includes over 30 psychologists, 11 psychometrists, and numerous research staff and trainees providing clinical services and conducting research within the hospital. There are 11 staff paediatric neuropsychologists who regularly provide clinical supervision in our training program. Four are board certified (ABPP-CN). In addition to specialty training in Paediatric Neuropsychology (2 positions), the Department offers clinical training at the postdoctoral level in Paediatric Health Psychology (1 position), residency level (3 positions, accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association), and graduate practicum level.

Goals of the Fellowship

Fellows are exposed to a wide array of patient populations (aged 0-18 years) in both inpatient and outpatient settings. A primary goal of the first year is to develop a working model of neuropsychological assessment, consultation, and intervention that allows for accurate, thorough, yet efficient service delivery in the fast paced and complex setting of an academic health sciences centre. Goals of the second year are to obtain registration as a psychologist (CPO) or eligibility for registration outside of Ontario, and to further develop clinical and research skills by working with a broader range of supervisors, patient groups, and multi-disciplinary
teams. By the end of the second year, fellows should be eligible to apply for board certification (ABCN). Graduates of our program have entered into positions in academic medical centers, private practice and multi-disciplinary community clinics.

**Training Activities**

Postdoctoral fellows are involved in direct clinical service for at least 75% of their time and participate in focused research and educational activities for the remaining 25% of their time. The focus of training is on advanced practice in paediatric clinical neuropsychology, including comprehensive neuropsychological consultation, intervention, functional neuroanatomy, ethical practice, individual/cultural diversity, writing integrated reports, multi-disciplinary and school consultation, and clinical research. The fellow receives high-level training in conducting neuropsychological evaluations, providing feedback (including recommendations and education) to family, staff and school personnel, providing supportive psychological services, participating in multi-disciplinary teams, and assisting with treatment and discharge planning. Fellows receive supervision from various staff neuropsychologists in their work with a diverse range of patients across multiple programs and in conducting applied research.

**Rotations**

The first year of training consists of three, four-month rotations chosen to meet the fellow’s training needs, balancing exposure to patients of varying ages, levels of functioning, and focal vs. diffuse deficits. There are opportunities to conduct assessments with special patient populations (e.g., severe sensory, motor or behavioral needs requiring non-standardized assessments) and combined neuropsychological and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnostic assessments.

The second year of training allows for more depth of training in a particular population and neuropsychological consultations to programs within the hospital that are not served by a staff neuropsychologist, allowing for both depth and breadth of training. Second-year fellows work with greater autonomy, often providing supervision to others. Evaluations are typically conducted through the outpatient Psychology Clinic, but inpatient consultations may be provided.

While rotations are often specific to a particular primary supervisor, there are opportunities for joint supervision within specific clinics with more than one clinical supervisor (e.g., Neurosurgery, Epilepsy Surgery, Neonatal Neurology, Cardiology, etc.). Neuropsychological services include assessment, direct intervention, and consultation.
Primary rotations are available within the following programs:

- Neurology
  - Stroke
  - Epilepsy Surgery Program
  - Epilepsy Classroom
  - Neonatal Neurology
  - Neurology General Consultation
  - The NeuroOutcomes Lab (//lab.research.sickkids.ca/neurooutcomes/)
- Genetics/Metabolics
- Neurosurgery
- Cardiology
- Solid Organ Transplant
- Hematology/Oncology
  - Brain Tumor
  - Leukemia/Lymphoma
  - Sickle Cell Disease
  - Long-Term Follow-Up for Cancer

A sample of a postdoctoral program of rotations follows:

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Other Training Opportunities

Additional training opportunities may include:

- Adult Neuropsychology rotation (appropriate previous experience is required)
- Parent Coaching and intervention with medically-complex patients
- Provision of lectures and presentations within the hospital or for community groups
- Providing supervision to more junior trainees (residents and/or practicum students) to develop competency as a supervisor.
- Mentored journal-article peer reviews.
- Clinical psychology or Health Psychology competency for the College of Psychologists of Ontario is also a possibility in the training program (appropriate previous experience is required)
Supervision

Fellows are assigned a primary supervisor and receive at least two hours of individual face-to-face supervision per week. Regularly scheduled, one-to-one supervision involves case review, setting and monitoring of training goals, and professional development. Supervision follows a developmental model and fellows work with a variety of faculty members throughout the fellowship for broad exposure to different styles of clinical practice and supervision.

Group professional support/supervision meetings with the Coordinator of Postdoctoral Training occur on a monthly basis to address advanced topics in neuropsychology, including professional/ethical standards, professional practice issues, and preparing for ABCN board certification. In addition to formal supervision, fellows receive ongoing mentorship and coaching in developing a career path and establishing a professional identity.

Didactics

A variety of formal and informal educational opportunities exist. Rotation-specific readings will be suggested by individual supervisors. More formal didactics are provided to ensure a broad knowledge-base in clinical neuropsychology, and include:

Required:
- Paediatric Neuropsychology Directed Readings Seminars (monthly)
- Professional Issues Seminar for Neuropsychology Clinical Fellows (monthly)
- Psychology Department Rounds (monthly)

Optional
- Clinical Health Evaluative Science (CHES) Rounds (weekly)
- Brain and Behavior Cross-Talks (monthly)
- Neuroscience and Mental Health Program (SickKids Research Institute) Symposia (monthly)
- Paediatric and Neurology Grand Rounds (weekly)
- Clinical and research rounds associated with individual rotations (e.g., Neurology, Neurosurgery, Hematology/Oncology, Psychiatry)
- Adult Neuropsychology journal club and case presentations

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion at SickKids

SickKids believes that an equitable and inclusive culture empowers staff and trainees to freely explore and express their ideas without fear, which has consistently led to new ideas and innovations. The goal is to transform health-care systems to authentically reflect the communities we serve by engaging in community partnerships to improve the health experience of racialized communities and other communities who have traditionally faced oppression. Postdoctoral fellows are encouraged to become involved in EDI Committees, initiatives, and learning opportunities in directions that further their own personal development.
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

The SickKids Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy aims to advance equitable inclusion of diverse people and communities across SickKids’ care, research and education initiatives so that all can feel acknowledged, valued and respected. Aligned with our SickKids 2025 Strategic Plan, the EDI Strategy provides a path to boldly embed EDI in all that SickKids does and create safe and brave spaces for meaningful change (2025.sickkids.ca/edi/). Developed through engagement and consultation with patients, families, staff and community partners, this plan set the stage for a more equitable and culturally safe future as SickKids.

The SickKids EDI Strategy guides the work of various committees and is embedded in many initiatives, including:

- The EDI Steering Committee provides a platform for discussion and guidance regarding EDI initiatives, programs and policies across the organization with representation from across clinical, learning and research groups.
- Research Institute Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office
- Black Experiences in Health Care Working Group
- 2SLGBTQIA+@SK Committee
- Accessibility Steering Committee
- The SickKids Indigenous Health Strategy developed five key guiding principles:
  - Self-determination
  - Truth and reconciliation
  - Cultural safety and sensitivity
  - Honesty and transparency
  - Efficient use of resource
- Land Acknowledgment
- Signing of the BlackNorth Initiative Pledge (2020)
- Adoption of the Inclusion Flag and 2SLGBTQIA+ acronym
- Preferred Name Initiative

Additional EDI Learning Opportunities:

- **Tea with Tee**: An opportunity for staff to come together in conversation to discuss equity, diversity and inclusion and how it can be further integrated at SickKids in an effort to create a safe space so everyone is acknowledged, valued and respected.

- **EDI Champions Program**: The EDI Champion program helps prepare EDI Champions at SickKids to engage in EDI conversations, share knowledge and create safe spaces for reflection and learning among their peers.

- **Health Equity Rounds**: The Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care hosts a virtual “Health Equity Rounds” series for staff, providing a forum for discussions on disparities in health care and health outcomes experienced by certain
groups based on race/ethnicity, and various other areas of discrimination. The Equity Rounds focus on learning opportunities about health equity, the social determinants of health, and the impact of bias in health care as well as strategies to address health disparities and take action on inequities.

- **Dialogues in Diversity:** A series of conversations among leading academics, EDI practitioners, and social justice advocates discussing equity, diversity, and inclusion across a wide spectrum of topics. The series is intended to explore the various ways in which the application of an EDI lens, and engagement of EDI best practices and principles, can impact equitable health outcomes.

**Safe Consultation**

Integrating with the hospital culture of Sick Kids can be both a daunting and rewarding experience. The Department of Psychology is committed to ensuring trainees feel welcomed, included, supported and heard.

In addition to having access to the Fellowship Coordinator, Director of Training and staff, fellows will have access to Safe(r) Spaces at SickKids. This initiative comes from the EDI Office and the organization’s EDI Steering Committee and is a part of our ongoing efforts to create positive environments. Safer Spaces allow individuals who are members of specific communities, and allies, to network, establish a sense of community and create affirming spaces at SickKids. Safer Space sessions are available on a drop-in basis and are led by the EDI Steering committee caucus.

These caucuses are situated around identity and community groups including:

- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Accessibility, Access and Inclusion
- Anti-Black Racism
- Women in Science
- Indigenous Reconciliation Working Group (coming soon!)
- Racialized, Unity, and Solidarity (coming soon!)
Employee Wellness

Sick Kids is committed to supporting its staff in their movement toward wellness in a variety of ways, including:

- **Employee Assistance Program:** The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential and voluntary support service that can help you develop strategies to help you with personal or work-related concerns, tensions and stress before they lead to more serious difficulties. EAP is available at no cost to employees and their families.

- **Employee Relations:** The Employee Relations group provides support to all staff who work at SickKids when dealing with difficulties in the workplace such as interpersonal conflict or issues related to discrimination, breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Respect in the Workplace policy and the Prevention of Workplace Violence and Harassment policy.

- **Peer Support Program:** A confidential resource, offering individual mental health outreach and trauma support 24/7 to staff in need. Peers can connect with their colleagues in a variety of ways (e.g., meeting one-to-one or providing support via telephone, email or text).

- **Spiritual & Religious Care Department:** The SickKids Spiritual Care Department Consists of Four Pillars: Chaplaincy, Clinical Pastoral Education, Counselling, and The Mindfulness Project. Visit the site to find information about the four pillars, religious observances and related events.

- **Physical Wellness:** The hospital provides workplace benefits including massage therapy, as well as on-site massage as available. There are hospital-wide, free running and walking clubs with an on-site wellness centre and stretching. There is also on-site bike storage and staff showers.
COVID-19 Impact on Training

Since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic, the training program and faculty have navigated the uncertain landscape with flexibility prioritizing clinical care, training and safety. Through this, our staff and trainees have learned a great deal about different models of care. In learning about these different models of care, a hybrid model of care (combination of in-hospital and virtual) is being provided by most neuropsychologists. This also allows for family-centred care given the large catchment area for The Hospital for Sick Children.

The SickKids Psychology Department leadership, training committee, and supervisors are committed to the training of future neuropsychologists, and high-quality training experiences remain the priority. This brochure describes the intended program structure and rotation experiences, which may require modification depending on limitations imposed by COVID19 and/or other organizational or Infection Prevention and Control policies. We are committed to being transparent with information, collaborating with trainees to develop contingency plans guided by training goals, and to documenting adjusted goals and expectations (including supervision arrangements). Should disruptions to rotations occur in the future, potential and current fellows will be notified as soon as information is available.

Fellows are expected to comply with any and all federal, provincial, and Sick Kids organizational regulations and other Infection Prevention and Control procedures within the context of providing clinical services, or otherwise.

Research

The Hospital for Sick Children is an active and exciting research environment. Fellows work with at least one research mentor as a member of a specialized research team, working on grant-funded or clinical research projects. Demonstration of scholarly activity is a required exit criteria for the fellowship. This may be accomplished through presentation at a national or international conference, and either one manuscript submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal or a grant proposal submission.

Ongoing research at SickKids involves characterizing the impact of various adverse insults on development, understanding the core neurocognitive deficits associated with neurodevelopmental disorders or acquired brain injury, and identifying the relations between neuroimaging measures of brain structure/function and neurocognitive outcome. Opportunities to collaborate in research presentations or peer reviews of research (e.g., mentored journal article peer reviews) are also available.
Evaluation

Formal written progress evaluations are prepared by the Neuropsychology staff at the conclusion of each rotation. Fellows also evaluate supervisors and rotations. Fellows whose performance is not at an expected level of competence will be advised regarding the problem areas in their performance, and a specific plan to remediate those weaknesses will be developed.

Salary and Benefits

Salary is $58,000 CAD in the first year and $62,000 CAD in the second year, with an additional annual stipend of $5,000 CAD. Fellows are eligible for the modified SickKids benefits package (health and dental), as well as 3 weeks of paid vacation, nine statutory holidays recognized by the hospital, and one week paid professional development leave per year. There is also a $500/year professional development fund which may be used by Fellows. Fellows have access to individual office space similar to that provided to staff neuropsychologists, a computer with internet connection, a private phone line (MS Teams Voice or equivalent) and access to electronic medical journals through the University of Toronto Library and SickKids internal library.

Eligibility

Applicants should be graduates of CPA/APA accredited clinical or school psychology programs and have completed a CPA/APA accredited internship in clinical psychology. It is expected that applicants will have internship-level training in paediatric psychology and neuropsychology. Applicants with prior coursework in Functional Neuroanatomy, Clinical Neurology, Basic Neuroscience, and/or Neuropathology are preferred. Applicants who bring diversity to the program (e.g., fluency in other languages or experience with under-served populations) are especially encouraged to apply. **All degree requirements must be completed before the start date.**

Our program is an APPCN Match Participant; applicants must therefore register with National Matching Services, Inc. ([www.natmatch.com](http://www.natmatch.com)) to participate in the APPCN Resident Matching Program. This residency site agrees to abide by the APPCN policy that no person at this facility will solicit, accept or use any ranking-related information from any fellowship applicant.

*Applicants whose training has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are encouraged to have their Director of Clinical (University) or Internship Training highlight the nature of this impact in their letter of reference.*
Application

The deadline for applications is January 5, 2024. Applicants should submit their materials (e.g., letter of interest, application form, CV) electronically as a single .pdf file. Transcripts and letters of reference can be sent separately. All material should be emailed to: eva.mamak@sickkids.ca

- Letter of interest including clinical and research goals.
- Application Form – The Hospital for Sick Children Clinical Neuropsychology Fellowship (see link on website)
- Curriculum vitae.
- Official graduate transcripts listing courses, grades and degrees.
- Three (3) letters of reference (two clinical supervisors and one academic/research mentor).
- A letter or e-mail from the internship Training Director confirming that a CPA/APA-accredited internship will be completed by September 1, 2024.
- If dissertation has not been defended at the time of application, a letter or e-mail from the CPA/APA-accredited graduate program Training Director confirming that the doctoral degree will be awarded before September 1, 2024.

Contact:

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Information about SickKids and Toronto

The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), affiliated with the University of Toronto, is recognized as one of the world’s foremost paediatric health-care institutions. It is Canada’s leading centre dedicated to advancing children’s health through the integration of patient care, research and education. To learn about the SickKids Strategic Plan 2020-2025 “Unprecedented outcomes powered by Precision Child Health” please see: https://2025.sickkids.ca/

With a staff that includes professionals from all disciplines of health care and research, SickKids provides the best in complex and specialized care by creating scientific and clinical advancements, sharing knowledge and expertise and championing the development of an accessible, comprehensive and sustainable child health system. The Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning is a hub where researchers and learners can congregate and share ideas to transform the current state of child health care since its 2013 opening. We are undergoing transformative change as a hospital through Project Horizon, which will add much needed capacity to the hospital system. More information is available at: https://www.sickkids.ca/en/about/project-horizon/

SickKids is located in downtown Toronto, Canada’s largest city. Toronto lies on the shore of Lake Ontario, the easternmost of the Great Lakes. Over 4 million people live in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Toronto is a clean, safe, cosmopolitan city with a wonderful network of parks, recreational, and cultural facilities. For more information: www.seetorontonow.com

Core Training Faculty: Programs and Recent Publications
*names of current or prior fellows in italics
Program: Neurology & Neurosurgery

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation of children and adolescents with history of early acquired brain injury, preterm birth complications, vascular malformations, TBI, hemorrhagic stroke, benign brain tumours, arachnoid cysts, and hydrocephalus. Pre- and post-surgical evaluations. Special interest in providing culturally and linguistically sensitive patient care, including offering French assessment and consultation services. Research interests also include examining neurocognitive and psychosocial outcomes following paediatric acquired brain injuries and neurological disorders.


Anna Gold, Ph.D., C. Psych. (University of East Anglia, UK).
Staff Neuropsychologist

Program: Transplant and Regenerative Medicine Centre

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation of paediatric patients who are awaiting or have undergone solid organ transplant (heart, lung, liver, kidney and small bowel). Research interests include neuropsychological outcomes following transplant, longer term neurodevelopmental sequelae of complex surgically treated gastro-intestinal failure and paediatric transition.


Program: Hematology/Oncology – AfterCare

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation of late effects of childhood cancer, promotion of transition.


Laura Janzen, Ph.D., C. Psych., ABPP-CN (University of Victoria). Staff Neuropsychologist, Department of Paediatrics, University of Toronto.

Program: Hematology/Oncology

Neuropsychological assessment of children with haematology/oncology diagnoses, including brain tumors, leukemia, and sickle cell disease; neuropsychology training and professional issues; research on the neuropsychological implications of congenital and acquired neurological conditions as well as the effects of various interventions on cognitive outcomes.


Elizabeth N. Kerr, Ph.D., C. Psych. (University of Calgary). Staff Neuropsychologist, Director of Epilepsy Classroom, Active Scientific Staff Division of Neurology, SickKids; Adjunct Professor Department of Paediatrics, University of Toronto

Program: Neurology – Epilepsy Surgery, Epilepsy Classroom

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation: medically refractory epilepsy/epilepsy surgery.


doi.org/10.1111/epi.17357


doi.org/10.1111/epi.17357


Tavares TP, Kerr EN, Smith ML. Memory outcomes following hemispherectomy in children. Epilepsy & behavior;Epilepsy Behav. 2020;112:107360.


Programs: Clinical and Metabolic Genetics, Epilepsy Surgery, Neurosurgery

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation of metabolic genetic conditions and epilepsy surgical candidates, patients followed in the neurosurgery program, infant/toddler and preschool assessment, and research on lysosomal storage diseases, other genetic conditions, epilepsy, and infant development.


**Renee Sananes, Ph.D., C.Psych.** (University of Ottawa).
Staff Psychologist

**Dragana Ostojic-Aitkens, Ph.D., C.Psych.** (University of Windsor)
Staff Neuropsychologist

**Program:** Cardiology

Assessment and consultation of children and adolescents with history of complex congenital heart conditions or acquired heart conditions. Research interests include examining neurocognitive and psychosocial outcomes in congenital heart disease and program evaluation.


Katia Sinopoli, Ph.D., C.Psych. (University of Toronto).
Staff Neuropsychologist

Program: Neurology

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation of children and adolescents with diverse neurological conditions including non-surgical epilepsy, multiple sclerosis/demyelinating diseases, and inflammatory brain diseases. Research interests include exploration of predictors of neurocognitive outcome, examination of neurodevelopment following early injuries and early medical interventions, and cross-disorder comparisons of cognitive functioning.


Program: Neurology

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation in the area of paediatric stroke and other neurovascular or neurological conditions; Neuropsychological outcomes in paediatric stroke; Impact of age at injury on outcome; Emerging deficits following early brain injury.


**Program:** Neurology

Neuropsychological assessment, consultation and research involving children and families from neonatal neurology, paediatric stroke and other neurovascular or neurological conditions. Special interest in early interventions to promote optimal mental health outcomes following neonatal brain injury.


Affiliated Faculty (Research)

Donald J. Mabbott, PhD., C.Psych., ABPP-CN (University of Alberta), Senior Scientist and Program Head, Neurosciences and Mental Health Program, Research Institute, The Hospital for Sick Children; Professor, Department of Psychology, The University of Toronto

Research using innovative brain imaging techniques (i.e., Diffusion Tensor Magnetic Resonance Imaging; Magnetoencephalography) and psychological tests to study the impact of brain injury on how the brain grows and develops in childhood, particularly in children treated for paediatric brain tumours.


Mary Lou Smith, Ph.D., C. Psych. (McGill University).
Staff Neuropsychologist, Professor of Psychology, University of Toronto.
Senior Associate Scientist, Neurosciences and Mental Health Program

Programs: Neurology, Infectious Diseases


Young JM, Chen V, Bitnun A, Read SE, Smith ML. Attention and neurodevelopment in young children who are HIV-exposed uninfected. AIDS Care, 2023, doi:10.1080/09540121.2023.2240069


Neonatal Neurodevelopmental Follow-Up Clinic: Dr. Danguecan conducts research on developmental outcomes in children with a range of neonatal brain injuries, as well as postpartum parent trauma and coping. The fellow would have the opportunity to collaborate with interdisciplinary team members including occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, social work, and medical staff. Dr. Danguecan also conducts research on social determinants of health and mental health disparities in chronic illness populations.


