Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Pediatric Clinical Neuropsychology

2023-2025

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

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

One (1) post-doctoral 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 5, 2023, 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.

Our program has been a member of the Association of Post-Doctoral 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 8 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 post-doctoral level in Paediatric Health Psychology (1 position), residency level (3 positions, accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association), and graduate practicum level.

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.

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.

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

Post-doctoral 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, 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.

Primary rotations are available within the following programs:

- Neurology
  - Stroke
  - Epilepsy Surgery Program
  - Epilepsy Classroom
  - Neonatal Neurology
  - Neurology General Consultation

- Genetics/Metabolics
- Neurosurgery (pending staffing updates)
- Solid Organ Transplant
- Hematology/Oncology
  - Brain Tumor
  - Leukemia/Lymphoma
  - Sickle Cell Disease
  - Long-Term Follow-Up for Cancer

Other Training Opportunities

Additional training opportunities may include:

- Adult Neuropsychology rotation (appropriate experience is required)
- Psychological intervention and/or parenting training 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.
- We are currently piloting a primary rotation in Neuropsychological practice and advocacy with diverse populations (Supervisor: Dr. Ashley Danguecan).
- Exposure to the Tic Disorders and Tourette’s syndrome clinic may also be an option for trainees.
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 Post-Doctoral 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
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 $48,000 CAD in the first year and $50,000 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. Fellows have individual office space, a computer with internet connection, a private phone line and access to electronic medical journals through the University of Toronto 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) 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 6, 2023. 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 5, 2023.
- 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 5, 2023.

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 pediatric 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

**Naddley Désiré, Ph.D., C.Psych.** (Université de Montréal).
Staff Neuropsychologist

**Program:** Neurology

Neuropsychological assessment and consultation of children and adolescents with history of early acquired brain injury, preterm birth complications, hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, pediatric stroke, and other neurological or neurovascular conditions. Special interest in providing culturally and linguistically sensitive patient care, including offering French assessment and consultation services to French-speaking families. Research interests also include examining neurocognitive and psychosocial outcomes following pediatric acquired brain injuries.


**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.


**Sharon Guger, Ph.D., C. Psych.** (York University).
Staff Neuropsychologist, Director of Clinical Training in Psychology.

**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 Pediatrics, University of Toronto.

Program: Hematology/Oncology

Neuropsychological assessment of children with hematology/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; Department of Paediatrics, University of Toronto.

Program: Neurology – Epilepsy Surgery, Epilepsy Classroom

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


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


Eva Mamak, Ph.D., C. Psych., ABPP-CN (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). Staff Neuropsychologist, Coordinator of Post-Doctoral Training in Neuropsychology

 Programs: Clinical and Metabolic Genetics, Epilepsy Surgery

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


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.


Robyn Westmacott, Ph.D., C. Psych., ABPP-CN (University of Toronto).
Staff Neuropsychologist

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.


Tricia Williams, Ph.D., C. Psych. ABPP-CN (York University).
Staff Neuropsychologist.

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 pediatric 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


Ashley Danguecan, PhD., C.Psych. (University of Windsor), Staff Neuropsychologist

**Lupus Clinic:** Dr. Danguecan works in close collaboration with staff rheumatologist Dr. Andrea Knight. Our research program is focused on cognitive dysfunction and mental health disorders in youth with childhood onset systemic lupus erythematosus (cSLE). Current studies examine the association between affective function and multimodal brain imaging metrics, cognitive skills, and serum biomarkers in cSLE. Most recently, Dr. Danguecan has been focusing on mixed methods research examining mental health service disparities in cSLE. The fellow would be invited to participate in weekly research meetings with other physicians, fellows, and graduate students, with whom the fellow would also collaborate on projects.

**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.

