Faculty Mentor: Prof. Anne Fernald

Project Title: The Development of Language Understanding by Spanish-learning Infants and Toddlers

Description:

The Habla Conmigo project in the Language Learning Lab at Stanford explores early language development by Latino children learning Spanish as their first language. In our research, we investigate language learning in the first years of life, conducting carefully controlled experiments with children from age 18 months to 5 years. A central question in our research is how infants’ early experience with language from caregivers at home influences their later language development. In particular, how does poverty affect parent-infant interactions in ways that may compromise early language learning and later school success? As an RA you will work both at our main lab on campus and at our community lab in Sunnyvale (easily accessible by Caltrain), helping to recruit participating families, run experiments with both Spanish- and English-learning infants and children, code and analyze data, and interact with parents and children. You will also be able to participate in an ongoing parent-education intervention study designed to help low-income Latina mothers learn to engage more effectively with their young children. RAs have the opportunity to join a lab-based summer seminar on language development as well as in weekly lab and project meetings. Our lab community is a lively and very supportive group of researchers at all levels of experience with lots of student involvement, an excellent environment in which to prepare for honors research in child development.

The news stories below describe two recent studies from our research group:

And this story reports on the Habla Conmigo Academy parent-engagement program we are running for low-income Latino families with young children:

Skills Required:
RA must have NATIVE fluency in Spanish
No previous research experience necessary!
High energy and desire to learn
Positive and professional attitude
Conscientiousness and meticulous attention to detail in the many different jobs you’ll do
Good organizational and interpersonal skills
You will work independently as well as part of a research team

Skills to be Learned:
Learn how developmental research is designed and conducted
Hone your critical thinking and analytic skills
Engage with parents and children from a broad range of backgrounds
Serious students interested in developing skills for honors research are especially welcome!

**Hours Per Week:**
30-40 hours/week for 8-10 weeks

**Contact Person:**
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