



Clinical Externship in Pediatric Neuropsychology & the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD)

Training at Children's National Hospital

We offer a 12-month, 16-hour a week, pre-doctoral externship practicum in pediatric neuropsychology and clinical psychology involving opportunities for neuropsychological assessment in children/adolescents with medical complexity and/or neurodevelopmental disorders including Autism Spectrum (ASD), ASD diagnostic evaluation through young adulthood, and individual or group-based treatment with autistic individuals. Our neuropsychology training combines clinical and didactic activities to prepare the trainee to be a good consumer of neuropsychology or for future training and practice as a neuropsychologist or clinical psychologist. While the positions themselves are unpaid, we do anticipate being able to offer a **stipend** to assist with transportation costs.

The patient population at Children's National is culturally and racially diverse, providing trainees with the opportunity to work with families from a variety of backgrounds. **At Children's National, we stand for diversity, equity and inclusion.** We strive to foster, nurture and sustain a culture where everyone feels welcomed and respected at work and we champion these values in our community. Our continued commitment to each other and all the families we serve is central to our mission. Externs learn to evaluate children with a wide range of complex developmental and acquired neurological disorders. Referral questions most often relate to the child's profile of cognitive strengths and weaknesses, diagnostic concerns, and educational and therapeutic program planning. Much of our service includes multidisciplinary interactions. **Students who have fluency in Spanish may be able to work with a bilingual supervisor and gain experience in conducting evaluations in Spanish.** Some opportunities for conducting parent training in Spanish may also be available.

Collectively, the Division of Pediatric Neuropsychology and the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders includes 18 faculty neuropsychologists, 7 clinical psychologists, 6 post-doctoral fellows, and multiple pre-doctoral interns and externs. CASD's multidisciplinary team also includes speech therapists, psychiatrists, and social workers. Our faculty and fellows are involved in grant-funded *clinical research*, and our team contributed numerous publications last year within high impact, peer-reviewed journals. Our neuropsychology faculty

members are leaders in the field, serving as chair and committee members, grant reviewers, and panel experts for national and international societies, research consortiums, and foundations. This high level of expertise, combined with our greater Washington DC area location, uniquely positions us for involvement in *legislative advocacy* related to issues such as mild TBI in children and ASD. Multiple faculty members have attained or are currently pursuing board-certification in neuropsychology (ABPP/ABCN).

About Children's National Hospital

Children's National Hospital, based in Washington, D.C., was established in 1870 to help every child grow up stronger. Today, it is the [No. 5 children's hospital in the nation](#) and ranked in all specialties evaluated by U.S. News & World Report. Children's National is home to the Children's National Research Institute and Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation. It is recognized for its expertise and innovation in pediatric care and as a strong voice for children through advocacy at the local, regional and national levels.

Clinical Training Tracks/Opportunities:

Assessment Only: (10-16 externs total)

- General Neuropsychology
- Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery & Education (SCORE)
- Combined SCORE & General Neuropsychology
- Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD)
- Gender, Autism, and Neurodiversity Program
- Inpatient Neuropsychology

Assessment & Intervention: (4-6 externs total)

- Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD)
- Gender, Autism, and Neurodiversity Program (CASD and Gender Development Program)
- Spanish/bilingual Assessment, with treatment option (CASD)
- Treatment with Autistic Youth, with assessment option (CASD)

Training Experiences

Externs will receive **approximately 2 hours of individual supervision weekly** with their primary supervisor. Externs can attend any and all *didactics* within the Division of Neuropsychology, CASD, or within Children's National. We offer a weekly neuropsychology seminar that consists of talks by faculty and guest lecturers on topics including structural and functional anatomy, diseases/disorders, psychometrics, legal/ethical issues, case discussions, and journal clubs. CASD also offers a seminar series focused on topics and issues specific to autism spectrum disorders. Additional opportunities through the larger medical center include hospital Grand Rounds, Behavioral Medicine Grand Rounds, Neuroscience Seminar, Neuroradiology Rounds, Epilepsy team meeting, shadowing a neurologist, etc. Many of these meetings are available over video teleconference. Students

can also access monthly trainings through the Psychology Department on practicing with Latinx families and providing psychological services in Spanish.

Although the externship focuses on clinical activities, there are also many opportunities to participate in clinical *research* for advanced students.

Neuropsychology assessment externs learn to administer tests assessing a broad range of neuropsychological functions, including intelligence, attention, executive function, language, visual processing, learning and memory, social cognition, fine motor skills, and emotional adjustment. Externs are taught to interpret test data, formulate diagnoses and conceptualize each patient's unique pattern of neuropsychological strengths and weaknesses, assist with report writing, and participate in clinical interviews and/or parent feedback conferences when possible. This service works in close consultation with Children's National physicians and multi-disciplinary teams. This externship is designed for students who are interested in developing advanced skills in assessment of children and adolescents, as well as those with a specific interest in the specialty of pediatric neuropsychology, either with a broad range of patient populations (General) or a focused population (SCORE and CASD).

A typical assessment training week for General or CASD neuropsychological evaluations would include one clinic day when the extern will be directly evaluating a patient (child-young adult) and scoring test instruments. The second training day allows for supervision, report writing, and didactics. Externs are generally expected to be on-site for two 8-hour days, though some supervisors/clinics may allow for some remote participation on the student's non-clinic day provided expectations are being met. SCORE externs and mixed assessment/therapy CASD externs have two clinic days, with supervision and didactics interspersed.



 **We help children
grow up stronger.**

Pediatric Neuropsychology / General Neuropsychology (6-8 externs)

This track provides broad, general training in comprehensive pediatric neuropsychological assessment to children and adolescents. The extern receives exposure to a range of pediatric populations with neurodevelopmental (e.g., ADHD, learning disabilities, genetic conditions, etc.) and/or medical/neurological disorders (e.g., epilepsy, brain tumors, stroke, etc.). Our patients are typically school-age through late adolescence, with some opportunities to see preschool-aged patients and occasionally young adults. Clinical experiences provide opportunities to develop facility with: test battery selection and administration, process-driven behavioral observations, case formulation, report writing, and involvement in clinical interviews and feedbacks. **This track is best suited to advanced practicum students or students with a strong interest/career goals in neuropsychology.**

An additional add-on opportunity for inpatient assessment is available for an advanced extern with additional time availability.

Opportunities for Bilingual/Spanish neuropsychological assessment may be available to qualified students.

Possible Locations: Rockville, Takoma (DC), Main Hospital or HSC campus (DC), PG County/Lanham.

Pediatric Neuropsychology/ Concussion and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (SCORE) (2-3 externs)

The Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery & Education (SCORE) Program at Children's National evaluates, monitors, and manages the care of children and adolescents with sport and non-sport related concussions (mild Traumatic Brain Injury; mTBI). This externship provides a foundation of training in general pediatric neuropsychology in a *multidisciplinary* clinic with a focused patient population. Externs will be specially trained to provide *focused evaluation* & develop *empirically based treatment plans* through the Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery and Education (SCORE) Program within the Division of Neuropsychology. The extern can participate in didactics, including presentations by various medical professionals (e.g., emergency department, sports medicine, neurology, athletic trainers) regarding evaluation and treatment of mild TBI/ concussion.

Possible Locations: Takoma (DC), Rockville, Annapolis, PG County/Lanham, Silver Spring, Salisbury.

Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD) – Assessment and/or Intervention (8-12 externs)

The Center for Autism offers externship positions across a diverse set of experiences. While most of our externship positions are assessment-focused, primarily treatment-focused positions may also be available depending on supervisor availability and match.

For the incoming training year, 2 of our available positions will participate in Spanish/bilingual evaluations. Applicants with fluency in Spanish, at any level, are strongly encouraged to apply.

Evaluations may be full-day or half-day assessments, depending on factors such as age, medical complexity, and referral questions. Apart from direct testing experience, externs can expect to gain experience with clinical interviewing, report writing, providing feedback, and consultation with families. All evaluation experiences may include autism diagnostic assessment (e.g., exposure to, and potential training in the administration of the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised and/or the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2).

Listed below are the types of experiences externs may be exposed to at CASD.

- **Neuropsychological Evaluation:** Training and experience providing comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations for school-age children to young adults. Individuals seen either have an established autism diagnosis or a question of autism, and may present with medical, genetic, and/or psychiatric complexity. These full-day assessments include a broad range of standardized measures and neuropsychological assessment tools. **This experience is best suited for advanced students with prior evaluation experiences.**
- **Targeted Diagnostic Evaluation:** Experience providing targeted, abbreviated batteries for school-age children to young adults. Individuals seen have a primary diagnostic question of autism. Apart from autism diagnostic measures, these half-day assessments may include testing and/or screening of relevant areas of functioning (e.g., cognitive screener using the WASI, social-emotional functioning). **This experience is best suited for students who primarily seek autism diagnostic experience.**
- **Infant/Toddler Evaluation:** Experience in providing diagnostic evaluations with toddlers. Evaluations may be multidisciplinary (e.g., with developmental pediatricians, speech/language pathologists). Evaluations include autism diagnostic testing and may include developmental assessment (e.g., Bayley, Mullen). **These experiences are best suited for students with an interest working with very young children.**

- **Developmental Evaluation:** Trainees will gain experience and facility in the assessment of young children with a history of developmental delays and/or a diagnostic question of autism. Young children may also present with medical and genetic complexity (e.g., Down Syndrome, Rare Genetic Disorders, Congenital Heart Defects). These half-day evaluations may include a range of standardized measures (cognitive assessment, ADOS-2), as well as out-of-level, developmental assessment (e.g., Bayley, Mullen). **These experiences are best suited for students with experience with young children and an interest in developmental disabilities.**
- **CASD Gender, Autism and Neurodiversity:** Externs who pursue this optional elective will receive training in the common intersection of autism and gender diversity. They will work with the Gender and Autism Program team and learn about gender-related assessment and characterization of intersecting autism/neurodivergence. Externs will receive training the WPATH Standard of Care 8. This optional elective includes training in assessment and/or intervention.
- **Intervention:** Trainees interested in intervention can expect to work with autistic youth and/or their caregivers either providing individual or group-based services. CASD externs involved in intervention learn about cognitive-behavioral treatment approaches (e.g., interventions for anxiety, executive functions, and social cognition/skills). Treatment experiences may include outpatient psychotherapy as well as manualized group therapy. Therapy services may be held in person or via telehealth.
- **Opportunities for treatment experiences are available to all externs in CASD, pending an extern's interests, experience level, and availability.**

Additional experiences available to all CASD externs: weekly multidisciplinary team evaluation discussions, case conferences, and didactic seminars with our neuro/clinical psychologists, child psychiatrists, and speech and language pathologists.

Possible Locations: Rockville, PG County/Lanham (Neuropsychology evaluation only); Takoma (DC)

How to Apply

Qualifications:

The **General Neuropsychology** and the **CASD Neuropsychology** assessment placements are primarily **advanced child assessment externships**, and thus are most appropriate for students in their third year or beyond, who have completed coursework in assessment, and have had prior externship experience with testing, and direct clinical experience with children.

Other **CASD** placements are appropriate for doctoral students with less assessment training or experience, but draw on the student's broader *prior clinical training and experience*. The externship in the **SCORE** clinic is appropriate for doctoral students at all levels of training who may have less assessment training or experience or have a particular interest in working with children and adolescents with mild traumatic brain injuries/concussions or sports-related injuries.

Externs are matched to positions and supervisors depending on their expressed training interest, schedule availability, and prior experience. Children's National is committed to training of students from diverse backgrounds.

Application Procedure

Use our online portal to submit your application



<https://redcap.link/neuropsychexternship2024>

Complete an Application Form online and upload supporting documents. *If you want to start the application and finish it later, please note your "return code"* and enter it ('Returning?' link at upper right of page) when you come back to the site later to avoid duplicate applications. You may apply to one or all tracks with the same application.

All materials are DUE at 11:59pm on January 29, 2024.

Materials to be uploaded to the online portal:

- Letter of interest/Cover letter. Please tell us about your clinical interests and goals for externship.
- Curriculum Vitae
- List of test measures administered (identify which measures were *administered to patients* and number of administrations)
- Graduate transcripts (may be unofficial)





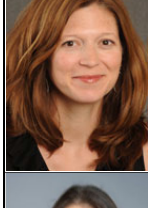
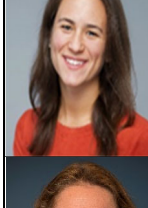


Materials to be emailed separately:




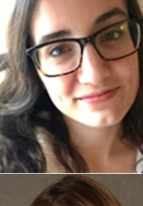
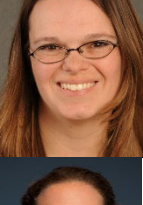

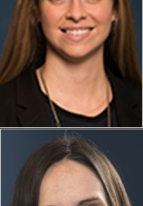
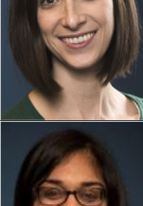

- Two letters of recommendation. Ask your letter writers to email these directly to:




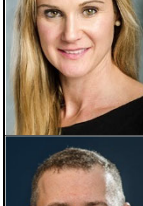
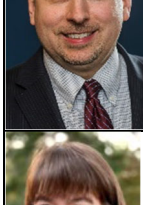
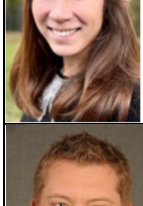
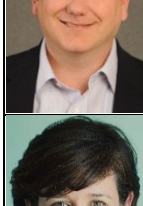

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Children's National Faculty

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	<p>Leigh Sepeta, PhD Neuropsychologist Interests: Epilepsy, neuroimaging, acquired brain injury, plasticity of cognitive functions, inpatient neuropsychological assessment. LSepeta@childrensnational.org; 202-476-5358</p>
	<p>John Strang, PsyD Neuropsychologist. Director, Gender and Autism Program Interests: Transgender/ gender diverse youth assessment/ research, Autism Spectrum Disorders, transition to adulthood JStrang@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5447</p>
	<p>Christina Thomas, PhD Neuropsychologist Interests: Oncology, concussion, neuropsychological functioning in medical disorders. cthomas2@childrensnational.org</p>
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	<p>Karin Walsh, PsyD Neuropsychologist Assistant Research Director Interests: Hematology/Oncology (neuro-oncology), Neurofibromatosis Type 1, anxiety and cognition KWalsh@childrensnational.org; 202-476-3923</p>

Recent Representative Publications

Selected recent publications by our team

Boutzoukas, EM, Crutcher, J, Somoza, E, Sepeta, LN, You, X, Gaillard, WD, Wallace, GL, Berl, MM (2020). Cortical Thickness in Childhood Left Focal Epilepsy: Thinning Beyond the Seizure Focus. *Epilepsy & Behavior*; 102:106.

Gioia G, Babikian T, Barney BJ, Chrisman SPD, Cook LJ, Didehbandi N., Richards, R, Sady, M D, Stolz, ER, Vaughan, CG, Rivera, FP, Giza, C (2020). Identifying School Challenges following Concussion: Psychometric Evidence for the Concussion Learning Assessment & School Survey, 3rd Ed. (CLASS-3). *Journal of Pediatric Neuropsychology*, (6) 203-217.

Habayeb, S., Kenworthy, L., De La Torre, A. *et al.* (2022) Still Left Behind: Fewer Black School-Aged Youth Receive ASD Diagnoses Compared to White Youth. *J Autism Dev Disord*. doi: [10.1007/s10803-021-05118-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05118-1)

Hardy KK, Walsh KS, Gioia AR, Berger C, Griffin D, Packer RJ, Acosta MT (2021) Computerized working memory training for children with Neurofibromatosis type 1. *Journal of Child Neurology*, doi: [10.1177/08830738211038083](https://doi.org/10.1177/08830738211038083)

Kenworthy L., Verbalis A., Bascom J., daVanport, S, Strang JF, Pugliese C *et al* (2022). Adding the missing voice: How self-report of autistic youth self-report on an executive functioning rating scale compares to parent report and that of youth with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or neurotypical development. *Autism*, doi: [10.1177/13623613211029117](https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613211029117)

Loblein H, Vukmirovich P, Donofrio M, & Sanz J (2022). Prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders in a clinically referred sample of children with CHD. *Cardiology in the Young*. doi: [10.1017/S1047951122001469](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1047951122001469)

Ramsey K, Vaughan C, Wagner B, McGuire J & Gioia G. (2021) Impact of Self-Efficacy and Affective Functioning on Pediatric Concussion Symptom Severity. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* doi: [10.1017/S1355617720001320](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355617720001320)

Ratto, AB, Reimann, G & Nadwodny, N. (2022) Dual Language Learning Predicts Improved Executive Functioning in Youth with Autism. *J Autism Dev Disord* .doi: [10.1007/s10803-021-05356-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05356-3)

Rau S, Whitman ET, Schauder K *et al.* (2021) Patterns of psychopathology and cognition in sex chromosome aneuploidy. *J Neurodevelopmental Disord*. doi: [10.1186/s11689-021-09407-9](https://doi.org/10.1186/s11689-021-09407-9)

Rau S, Skapek MF, Tiplady K, Seese S, Burns A, Armour AC, Kenworthy L, (2020). Identifying comorbid ADHD in autism: Attending to the inattentive presentation, *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 69, doi: [10.1016/j.rasd.2019.101468](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2019.101468).

Root JM, Sady MD, Gai J, Vaughan CG & Madati PJ (2020) Effect of cognitive and physical rest on persistent post-concussive symptoms following a pediatric head injury. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, doi: [10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.07.049](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.07.049)

Sanz JH, Anixt J, Bear L, Basken A, Beca J, Marino BS, *et al*; (2021). Characterization of Neurodevelopmental and Psychological Outcomes in Congenital Heart Disease: A research agenda and recommendations from the Cardiac Neurodevelopmental Outcome Collaborative. *Cardiology in The Young*, 31 (6): 876 - 887.

Sharkey CM, Mullins LL, Clawson AH, Gioia AR, Hawkins MAW, Chaney JM, Walsh KW, Hardy KK (2021) Assessing neuropsychological phenotypes of pediatric brain tumor survivors. *Psycho-Oncology*; doi: [10.1002/pon.5692](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.5692).

Strang, J. F., Wallace, G. L., Michaelson, J. J., Fischbach, A. L., Thomas, T. R., Jack, A., ... & Yang, J. S. (2023). The Gender Self-Report: A multidimensional gender characterization tool for gender-diverse and cisgender youth and adults. *American Psychologist*. DOI [10.1037/amp0001117](https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0001117)
Walsh KS, del Castillo A, Kennedy T, Karim AI, & Semerjian C (2020). A review of psychological, social, and behavioral functions in the RASopathies. *Journal of Pediatric Neuropsychology*, 6, 131-142. doi: [10.1007/s40817-020-00088-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40817-020-00088-1)

Vaidya CJ, You X., Mostofsky S, Pereira F, Berl MM & Kenworthy, L (2020) Data-driven identification of subtypes of executive function across typical development, ADHD, and ASD. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 61(1):51–61.



Faculty at Children's National have authored multiple assessment tools, a research-based treatment program for children with autism spectrum disorders, and several apps for concussion recognition and response.