**2021 Summer Research Project Description**

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| **Project title:** | **Mental State Language and Theory of Mind** |
| **Positions available:** | **1** |
| **Project duration and delivery** | * Approx. 25hours per week * 8-10 weeks (negotiable) * Mix of remote and in-person |
| **Description:** | ToM is the ability to attribute mental states (e.g., desires, knowledge, beliefs and emotions) to oneself and others. ToM development is cultivated by a range of socio-cultural factors, in particular, exposure to rich mental state discourse early in life. Specifically, the frequency and quality of mental state language at home consistently explains individual differences in ToM development (Slaughter & Peterson, 2012).  **Project 1:** To date, a large body of evidence investigates mental state language use and its relationship with socio-cognitive developmental outcomes. However, the methods used to elicit, code and analyse mental state language vary notably across studies. This project will undertake a systematic review methodology to develop a mental state language coding manual.  **Project 2:** Recent research highlights substantial deficits in ToM development for children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). Nonetheless, research investigating maternal mental state language use in this population is surprisingly sparse. This study aims to investigate naturalistic maternal mental state language use and its relationship with ToM outcomes for children with DLD. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | Scholars will gain experience in research design, transcription and analytic techniques in developmental research. |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to applications from 1st – 3rd year students enrolled within the School of Psychology, UQ. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Aisling Mulvihill |
| **Further info:** | Should potential applicants have questions about the scholarship, they are welcome to contact Aisling Mulvihill via email ([a.mulvihill@uq.edu.au](mailto:a.mulvihill@uq.edu.au)) prior to submitting an application. |
| **Will you be collaborating with an external organisation on this project (for example NGO, government agency or private industry)?** | No external collaboration expected at this point. |