**2021/2022 Summer Research Project Description**

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| **Project title:** | **Talking with Children: Investigating how children, parents, and peers use language to discuss mental states** |
| **Positions available:** | **One (1) position available** |
| **Project duration and delivery** | * *20-25 hours a week minimum* * *Eight (8) weeks* * *On-site attendance is required for the duration of this project* |
| **Description:** | Theory of mind (ToM) is the ability to understand one’s own and others’ mental states and how these mental states motivate behaviour. This is a critical social cognitive achievement that impacts on a child’s social skills and peer relationships, among other things. Previous research indicates that language-based interactions in a child’s daily environment contribute to ToM development. Specifically, the frequency and quality of mental state language that children are exposed to, predict individual differences in ToM development.  This project aims to investigate through a systematic literature review and meta-analysis, whether and how gender affects mental state language use. Further, we will experimentally investigate parents’ use of mental state language in different eliciting contexts.  The summer scholar will assist with:   * literature review * recruitment of children and their parents * in-person testing in the School of Psychology’s Early Cognitive Development Centre * data management (e.g., data coding, data preparation) |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | The scholar will gain hands-on experience with meta-analytic review techniques, data analysis, data collection, and recruitment skills in the field of developmental psychology. |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to applications from students with a background in psychology who are in 3rd-4th year. It is ideal for applicants who have an interest in developmental and/or social psychology, specifically, social cognition, mental state language, and gender development. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Professor Virginia Slaughter |
| **Further info:** | Please contact Professor Virginia Slaughter if you have any questions about this research project ([vps@psy.uq.edu.au](mailto:vps@psy.uq.edu.au)). The secondary supervisor for this project is PhD candidate Callyn Farrell.  The project will take place at St Lucia Campus. |
| **Will you be collaborating with an external organisation on this project (for example NGO, government agency or private industry)?** | N/A |