**2022/2023 Summer Research Project Description**

Please use this template to create a description of each research project, eligibility requirements and expected deliverables. Project details can then be uploaded to each faculty, school, institute, and centre webpage prior to the launch of the program.

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| **Project title:** | Theory of Mind Development in Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing |
| **Project duration, hours of engagement & delivery mode** | 8 weeks during Summer Vacation.  Hours of engagement must be between 28-32hrs per week (approx 4 days per week)  Some tasks can be undertaken off-campus however the scholar will be required to attend campus for some activities |
| **Description:** | **Project Details:**  Theory of Mind (ToM) is the ability to represent one’s own and others’ mental states. The development of ToM understanding is a foundational for children’s social development. Research has demonstrated a strong link between ToM and language development, such that delayed or disordered language hinders the development of ToM.  *Study 1:* Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HoH) and exposed to sign language from D/HoH parents develop ToM typically, yet D/HoH children born to hearing parents experience difficulty accessing verbal language input and demonstrate ToM delay (Peterson, Wellman & Slaughter, 2012; Peterson & Wellman, 2009).  This study will examine whether exposure to early intervention mitigates ToM delays for children who are D/HoH. This is imperative given that advancements in hearing technology (e.g., cochlear implants) and improved access to early intervention.  *Study 2:* Maternal mental state language is associated with ToM development in children who are typically developing. Specifically, mothers who mention and explain desires, thoughts and emotions have children who demonstrate more advanced ToM understanding. Currently, there is limited evidence regarding the nature of maternal mental state language to children with a range of neurodevelopmental disorders.  This study will examine the nature of maternal mental state language to children with neurodevelopmental disorders and its relationship with ToM development.  Through these studies we aim to better understand diversity in ToM development and inform interventions for children who experience social skills difficulties. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | Applicants may have opportunity to undertake the following tasks:   * Review of relevant literature * Strategic literature searching * Completion of transcripts from video/audio files * Data coding * Data entry * There may be some opportunity for testing |
| **Suitable for:** | * Students with an interest in Developmental Psychology. * This project is open to applications from students enrolled within the School of Psychology, UQ. * Working with Children Blue Card is desirable |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr 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 |