



Children's National™

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/clinical psychology that is assessment focused, with 1-2 mixed assessment/therapy options in the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD)**. 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. CASD provides expertise in neuropsychological and/or diagnostic assessment and intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) of all ages and abilities.

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 17 faculty neuropsychologists, 6 pediatric

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.

Clinical Training Tracks/Opportunities:

Assessment: (15-20 externs total)

- General Neuropsychology
- Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery & Education (SCORE)
- Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD)

Assessment & Intervention: (1 extern each)

- Gender, Autism, and Neurodiversity Program (CASD and Gender Development Program)
- Rapid Multidisciplinary Diagnostic Assessment & Intervention (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 in the Rockville office. Students can also access monthly trainings through the Psychology Department on

practicing with Latinx families and providing psychological services in Spanish.

Sample Neuropsychology Seminar Topics

Functional Neuroanatomy

Pediatric Epilepsy

Cultural & Linguistic Considerations

Executive Function Intervention

Neurocognitive Issues in Brain Tumors

Introduction to Forensic Neuropsychology

Although the externship focuses on clinical activities, there are also many opportunities to participate in *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 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. SCORE externs and CASD externs involved in mixed assessment/therapy have two clinic days, with supervision and didactics interspersed.

General Pediatric 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 in neuropsychology.**

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

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

Pediatric Neuropsychology/ Concussion and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (SCORE) (~2-4 externs)

This track provides a foundation of training in general pediatric neuropsychology through experiences working with children who have sustained mild traumatic brain injuries (TBI)/ concussion. 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 Park (DC), Rockville, Annapolis, PG County/Lanham, Silver Spring, Salisbury.

Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD) - (6-8 externs)

include the 3 rotations listed below; Externs may be exposed to one or more depending on availability and match to supervisor. Participation in the rotations may include ASD Diagnostic evaluations (e.g., exposure to, and potential training in administration of the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2).

- **Neuropsychological Evaluation rotation.** Training and experience providing comprehensive neuropsychological and diagnostic evaluations for school-age children-young adults suspected of being on the spectrum. Assessment experiences include a broad range of neuropsychological assessment tools and standard autism diagnostic measures, report writing, providing feedback, and consultation with families. **This rotation is best suited for advanced students with prior evaluation experiences.**
- **Preschool Evaluation rotation:** Trainees will gain experience and facility in assessment of preschool age children with or suspected of having ASD. These half-day evaluations include cognitive (e.g., WPPSI-IV or DAS-II) and pre-academic testing (e.g., Bracken) and often diagnostic evaluation with the ADOS-2. **This rotation is best suited for students with experience with young children.**
- **Evaluation in context of limited language rotation:** The trainee will gain experience and facility in assessment of children and adolescents with (or suspected of having) Autism Spectrum Disorder and limited language skills and/or cognitive impairment. These half-day evaluations include cognitive testing, often involving nonverbal IQ measures (e.g., CTONI-2) or out of age level testing (e.g., Mullen, DAS-II), and diagnostic evaluation with the ADOS-2. **This rotation is best suited for students with experience in developmental disabilities.**

CASD externs involved in assessment learn about cognitive-behavioral treatment approaches (e.g., interventions for anxiety, executive functions, and social cognition/skills). We anticipate that we will continue to offer both in-office and telehealth services in the future, to varying degrees for the different rotations.

Possible Locations: Rockville (all rotations), Friendship Heights (no neuropsychology services), PG County/Lanham (Neuropsychology evaluation only); Takoma Park (DC)

Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders (CASD) - mixed assessment/intervention (1 extern each)

- **CASD Gender, Autism and Neurodiversity:** Children's National has the first subspecialty program to support the many youth at the intersection of neurodiversity and gender diversity (e.g., autistic transgender youth). Training focuses on consultation and evaluation with autistic/neurodivergent young people who are transgender, gender diverse, and/or gender exploring. The extern will gain experience in the characterization of neurodiversity, the characterization of gender diversity and gender incongruence, and in psychotherapeutic techniques for supporting gender discernment and neurodiversity-related needs. In addition to training through CASD, the extern will work with the broader transgender medical team (endocrinology, gynecology, adolescent health, psychiatry). Intensive training in the Standards of Care 8 through the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) will be provided. Research opportunities are also available.
- **Combined Rapid Multidisciplinary Diagnostic Evaluations and Intervention:** Training is provided in brief, focused evaluations with developmental pediatricians, that allows for same-day recommendations to families of children under 5 using gold standard diagnostic measures (e.g., Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 [ADOS-2]), questionnaires, and clinical interviews. Externs will also participate in outpatient psychotherapy with children/adolescents with ASD and gain experience with cognitive-behavioral treatments and parent training. Externs may have the opportunity to co-lead a psychotherapy group. Therapy services are being held in person and via telehealth currently.

Additional experiences available to all CASD externs (depending on their schedule) include: weekly multidisciplinary team evaluation discussions, case conferences, and didactic seminars with our clinical psychologists, child psychiatrists, speech and language pathologists. In addition, students participating in assessment placements may have opportunities to participate in group and individual therapy.

Possible Locations: Rockville (all rotations), Friendship Heights (no neuropsychology services), Takoma Park (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, have completed coursework in assessment, have had prior externship experience with testing, and direct clinical experience with children.

Some CASD rotations are appropriate for doctoral students with less assessment training or experience, but draw on the student's broader *prior clinical training and experience*. These rotations include Preschool Evaluations, Evaluations of individuals with limited language, and the Combined Rapid Multidisciplinary Diagnostic Evaluations and Intervention track. 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 rotations 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/neuropsychologyexternship>

You will be asked to complete an Application Form online and to 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.* You may apply to one or all tracks with the same application. **All materials are DUE January 31, 2023, but may be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received.** Interviews will be conducted in February and March.

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 given 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:

Vanessa Mpengo

vmpengo2@childrensnational.org

Program Coordinator, Neuropsychology
Children's National Hospital

About Children's National Hospital

Children's National Hospital, based in Washington, D.C., celebrates more than 150 years of pediatric care, research and commitment to community. Volunteers opened the hospital in 1870 with 12 beds for children displaced after the Civil War. Today, 150 years stronger, [Children's National is ranked #5 in the nation by US News & World Report](#). We're #1 for newborns in the United States and the best pediatric hospital for neurology and neurosurgery in the Mid-Atlantic.

The atrium of Children's National – main hospital campus



Children's National Faculty

	<p>Madison Berl, PhD, ABPP-CN Neuropsychologist Division Research Director Interests: Epilepsy, neuroimaging, plasticity of cognitive functions MBerl@childrensnational.org; 202-476-2545</p>
	<p>Angela Bollich, PhD Neuropsychologist Interests: ASD evaluation and treatment for individuals from school age through adulthood; executive function; language development ABollich@childrensnational.org; 301-297-4036</p>
	<p>Gerard Gioia, PhD Neuropsychologist Director, SCORE Clinic Interests: Concussion/ mild TBI, executive function, psychometric development GGioia@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5430</p>
	<p>Kristina Hardy, PhD Neuropsychologist/ Adjunct Supervisor Interests: Pediatric oncology, Neurofibromatosis, ADHD, executive function intervention</p>
	<p>Serene Habayeb, PhD Clinical Psychologist Interests: ASD evaluation & treatment, cultural issues, community integration of clinical services for ASD shabayeb@childrensnational.org</p>
	<p>Anne Inge, PhD Clinical Psychologist Interests: Diagnostic, neurodevelopmental, and neurocognitive assessment of ASD AInge@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5438</p>
	<p>Laura Kenealy, PhD, ABPP-CN Neuropsychologist Training Director; Director, Executive Function Clinic. Interests: ADHD, executive function, learning disorders, training in neuropsychology. LKenealy@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5439</p>
	<p>Lauren Kenworthy, PhD Neuropsychologist Director, Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders Interests: Non-social ASD phenotypes, genotypes, and treatment LKenwort@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5441</p>

	<p>Hayley Loblein, PhD Neuropsychologist Interests: epilepsy, anxiety and cognitive function in medical disorders. HLoblein@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5429</p>
	<p>Julie Newman, PhD, ABPP-CN Neuropsychologist Assistant Training Director Interests: concussion, executive function, cognitive outcomes in childhood cancer, learning issues in medically complex children, performance validity. JNewman@childrensnational.org; 240-568-7017</p>
	<p>Deborah Potvin, PhD, ABPP-CN Neuropsychologist Interests: Autism Spectrum Disorders, early diagnosis of ASD, preschool assessment DPotvin@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5450</p>
	<p>Cara Pugliese, PhD Clinical Psychologist Interests: Autism Spectrum Disorders, transition to adulthood, evidence based intervention research CPuglies@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5424</p>
	<p>Srishti Rau, PhD Neuropsychologist Interests: Autism Spectrum Disorder and its prevalence in medically complex children SrRau@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5434</p>
	<p>Marissa Miller, PsyD Clinical Psychologist Interests: Diagnostic and neurodevelopmental assessment of ASD; neurodiversity and neurodivergence; executive functioning psychoeducation and intervention MMiller4@childrensnational.org; 202-715-5438</p>
	<p>Ashley Muskett, PhD Clinical Psychologist Interests: Anxiety, assessment, and treatment of non-speaking and partially verbal youth, crisis care for Autistic youth. Amuskett@childrensnational.org; (202) 729-3300</p>
	<p>Allison Ratto, PhD Clinical Psychologist Interests: Autism Spectrum Disorders, developmental evaluations, cultural factors in assessment; Spanish-language assessment ARatto@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5596</p>
	<p>Rod Salgado, PhD Clinical Psychologist Interests: Autism Spectrum Disorders, equity in diagnostics and service delivery, Spanish-language assessment. RSalgado@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5430</p>

	<p>Jacqueline Sanz, PhD, ABPP-CN Neuropsychologist Interests: Congenital heart disease, genetic and metabolic syndromes; Spanish-language assessment JSanz@childrensnational.org; 202-476-5506</p>
	<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>Yuri Shishido, PhD Neuropsychologist Interests: Role and measurement of executive functioning in low functioning and medically complex youth. YShishido@childrensnational.org; 301-545-1618</p>
	<p>John Strang, PsyD Neuropsychologist. Director, Gender, Autism & Neurodiversity Interests: Transgender/ gender diverse youth assessment/ research, Autism Spectrum Disorders, transition to adulthood JStrang@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5447</p>
	<p>Christopher Vaughan, PsyD Neuropsychologist Assistant Director, SCORE program Interests: Concussion, test/ measure development, executive functioning CVaughan@childrensnational.org; 301-765-5433</p>
	<p>Karin Walsh, PsyD Neuropsychologist Interests: Hematology/Oncology (neuro-oncology), Neurofibromatosis Type 1, anxiety and cognition KWalsh@childrensnational.org; 202-476-3923</p>

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)

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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

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.

Strang JF, Chen D, Nelson E. et al. (2021) Transgender Youth Executive Functioning: Relationships with Anxiety Symptoms, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Gender-Affirming Medical Treatment Status. *Child Psychiatry Hum Dev*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-021-01195-6>

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

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.

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, Didehbari 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)