Marina Umaschi Bers, Ph.D.
The DevTech Research Group led by Prof. Marina Umaschi Bers has several exciting opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students during the upcoming 2018-2019 academic year. DevTech is a research group devoted to designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating technologies for early childhood education. Our projects provide opportunities for students to gain experience working with kids and teachers in PreK to 2 classroom settings, developing curricula, and working with data in a lab setting. Students will be exposed to all aspects of doing applied research. Opportunities are available for volunteer placement, course credit, and paid positions (work-study not required). No previous technology experience is necessary. Please check out the DevTech research website for more information: http://ase.tufts.edu/devtech/

Kathleen A. Camara, Ph.D.
The Tufts Consortium for Research and Evaluation in Arts and Youth Development, directed by Dr. Camara, supports research projects that explore the role of the arts in child and youth development. Based on the premise that participation in the arts is an essential part of child and youth development, the Consortium research focuses on questions related to the positive development and education of children and youth through participation in the arts. Opportunities are available for research assistants to participate in data collection, to engage in qualitative and quantitative data analyses, to prepare reports for conference presentations and publications, and to engage in independent analyses that may lead to theses, capstone papers or dissertations. For additional information about the various projects, see our website. If you are interested in being involved in our studies, please send your resume and a paragraph telling us why you are interested to: kathleen.camara@tufts.edu.

Project 1: YouthBEAT Research and Evaluation. YouthBEAT is a mixed-method research and program evaluation project, funded by the Boston Foundation, Fidelity Corporation, and donors to Berklee College of Music, that focuses on the role of music making in the development of resilience, character, leadership, spirituality and achievement of youth in underserved communities. Data for the project have been gathered from over 800 youths, family members, and teachers from underserved communities in Boston and from national network sites across the U.S. who participate in an outreach program focused on contemporary music for youth ages 9-19. The YouthBEAT research project, now in its 9th year of operation, examines youth perceptions of the role music plays in their lives; explores neighborhood and family contexts for learning; and analyzes the effects of the program in promoting resilience and achievement among urban youth from underserved communities. We are also looking at “best practices” in teaching and the development of specific musical skills and behaviors, such as improvisation, practice and preparation, and how these relate to other areas of achievement. Research assistants participate in data analyses of interviews with
youths, families, teachers, and musicians, and the analyses of observational data on youth music ensembles, theory, and musicianship classes using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Some knowledge of music is helpful, but not required for all research positions. Specific topics for analysis include contextual factors influencing youth development (individual, family, neighborhood and community contexts, including family change and racial and ethnic identity and identification with music that reflects the cultural heritage of youths and their families); youth perceived competence and attributions relating to achievement in four areas of learning and other measures of academic achievement in school, standardized testing, and music performance; character and leadership among youth in contemporary music ensembles, (using videotapes of youths in 52 youth music ensembles); qualitative and quantitative analysis of over 2000 hours of videotaped recordings of teachers working with 75 youth ensembles and over 300 interviews with teachers from national sites to identify teaching strategies and approaches that are used to develop improvisational artistry in music and expressiveness in communication; and a qualitative analysis of how participation in collective music-making is related to the development of mind, purpose and spirituality among youth.

**Project 2: National City Music Network Site Data Collection.** The National Case Study Research and Evaluation of Out-of-School Programs Designed to Foster Child and Youth Development Through Music and Other Arts, funded by the Music Empowers Foundation, is in its 7th year of operation and is designed to evaluate program sites across the U.S. that provide after-school music education and which are part of the Berklee City Music National Network. We are now analyzing data gathered from our research site visits to Chicago, Los Angeles, Memphis, Phoenix, Philadelphia, and Anaheim, CA. and preparing case study reports for each of the sites.

**Project 3: Music Participation and the Development of Children on the Autism Spectrum** This research and program evaluation project is in the process of development in collaboration with the Boston Conservatory of Music at Berklee College. The study is designed to examine social interaction among children and youth who are on the autism spectrum and who participate in a music-learning choral program at Boston Conservatory. Research assistants are needed to assist with the development of research instruments, and to conduct observations of Saturday program classes and interviews with teachers and students. Students with prior experience in working or studying children and youth on the autism spectrum will be selected to work on this project. Some knowledge of music is helpful, but not required.

**Project 4: The Haitian Project: Gawou Ginou Arts Integrated School.** This project starting in Fall 2017, funded by private donors, will involve a program evaluation and consultation with an arts-integrated school in Haiti. Research data will be gathered online and through visits to the Gawou Ginou school in Haiti with a focus on the role of the arts in promoting social, academic, and musical achievement, healing, and cultural identity among children and families who have experienced trauma and loss and survived two national disasters. A case
study report will be developed in collaboration with the school using a community-based participatory evaluation model.

**Project 5: The NOLA Research and Evaluation Project: Homer A. Plessy School, New Orleans.** This project has developed out of the work of Tufts faculty and students who participated in the NOLA community service experience that was held at the Plessy Elementary School during the 2017 spring semester. The project involves a community-based program evaluation and case study of The Plessy School and its arts-integrated curriculum and is funded through a private donor. Participation in the project during the 2017-18 year will include the development of a case study plan with teachers and administrators at the Plessy Elementary School, located in the French Quarter of New Orleans, and will consist of on and off-site collection of data gathered through child, teacher, staff, administrator and parent interviews and questionnaires, as well as on-site observations. Special attention will be paid to the analysis of the integration of arts (music, drama, visual arts, poetry, spoken word, creative writing, and dance) into the curriculum, and its impact on children’s learning and achievement.

**Other Projects:** The Consortium for Research and Evaluation in Youth and Arts Development is also in the process of developing mixed methods and community-based research and evaluation designs and artistic collaborations and productions, using qualitative, quantitative and narrative methods and analyses in projects that include: (1) a collaboration with an arts-integrated school in Kenya; (2) a collaboration with a Memphis music initiative focused on positive youth development; (3) an arts and social justice project designed to promote civic engagement of youth in the U.S.; (4) the creation of a narrative first-person written account of the role of culture, story and faith based on the true story of a survivor of the Rwandan massacre; and (5) a narrative theater project focused on contemporary issues related to social justice.

**Julie Dobrow, Ph.D.**

**Project 1: Children’s Television Project (CTV).** The CTV project is an on-going investigation of the images of race, ethnicity, age, gender and sociolinguistic dimensions of children’s animated programming. In the first two phases of the project our research team watched and coded several episodes of 36 cartoons. Our sample included the top twenty (most viewed) animated shows. Given that the children’s media landscape is vastly different than when we began the project, in the third phase of our research, we are investigating a new selection of media content. The second phase of the project involves interviews with writers, directors, casting directors and actors to find out why they make choices even today that perpetuate stereotypes of gender, race, ethnicity and age. We’re also starting to investigate what cues - linguistic or visual? - children use to determine a cartoon character’s status as hero or villain. We are looking for interested and motivated graduate and undergraduate students to work as researchers on this project. Researchers will engage in many aspects of the project including (1) research design, (2) coding of content, (3) piloting of research protocols, (4) administration of protocols to children in our sample, (5)
production of video tapes, or other research-related work and (6) library
research. Researchers will meet biweekly (every other week) for 90 minutes for
training and discussion. If you are interested in participating in this project,
please contact Prof. Gidney (ext. 7-2213 / Calvin.Gidney@tufts.edu) or Prof.
Dobrow ( ext. 7-4744/ Julie.Dobrow@tufts.edu).

Project 2: I write a blog on children and media issues for The Huffington Post.
I'm always looking for new topics. Graduate or undergraduate students
interested in issues of children and media could assist in background research
on current topics ranging from Disney films to tv shows to issues of social media
use by children.

M. Ann Easterbrooks, Ph.D.
The Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research (TIER) group is comprised of a
team of independent researchers from the departments of Child Study and
Human Development and Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts
University. TIER is committed to conducting high-quality, collaborative evaluation
research that contributes to expanding usable knowledge in fields such as
applied developmental science, policy science, and urban planning, and to
improving policies and programs for children, families, and communities. Along
with Francine Jacobs, Ed.D., and Jayanthi Mistry, Ph.D., I am one of the
founders and Principle Investigators at TIER.

TIER has many applied research and evaluation projects under its umbrella. They
include the Massachusetts Healthy Families Evaluation-2 Early Childhood
project (MHFE2-EC) directed by Professor Ann Easterbrooks, (Dr. Jana
Chaudhuri, Project Director), which has opportunities for students to become
involved in the process of conducting applied research and evaluation. There
are numerous opportunities for students on this project, which focuses on the
evaluation of a statewide family support program that aims to reduce rates of
child abuse and neglect, and promote optimal child development and family well-
being among young families (for more information view website
ase.tufts.edu/tier).

The wider evaluation is a randomized control trial (RCT) of families receiving/not
receiving home visiting and additional services through Healthy Families
Massachusetts. The program evaluation has several parts, including information
gathered from records of service providers, state agencies (e.g., Dept. of
Children and Families, Dept. of Public Health, Dept. of Elementary and
Secondary Education, Dept. of Transitional Assistance) and from interviews and
observations with mothers and their young children in their homes over the
course of two years. MHFE2-EC is a longitudinal follow-up of these families
when children are preschool and kindergarten age. We are collecting additional

Project foci include:
a) resilience in the context of adversity (e.g., trauma, intimate partner violence,
intergenerational history of maltreatment);
b) long-term effects of early home visiting on maternal life course (e.g., educational attainment, depression, utilization of public services) and children’s development (e.g., school readiness, emotion regulation), and maternal and child health;

c) children’s executive functioning (cognitive flexibility, impulse control, memory) related to developmental context (e.g., child maltreatment, family instability);

d) attachment styles of mothers and children, and mother-child interaction.

Student opportunities: conduct phone interviews of participant mothers; assist in data reduction and data analysis; assist in reviews of the literature and report writing for funders; manuscript preparation. Students may have the opportunity to serve as co-authors of publications.

Opportunities for student work include: course credit (CD independent study, directed research) or volunteer; students may be interested in developing a subproject for a thesis or course paper. There may be limited paid opportunities, particularly if students qualify for Work Study funds.

David Henry Feldman, Ph.D.

Project 1: I will be continuing to work on a project on the origins and development of knowledge as it is found in domains of expertise. The goal of the project is to conceptualize knowledge domains as developmental entities and build “signatures” for each, as well as to identify common patterns of development across domains. Opportunities for independent research, thesis or volunteer projects are available.

Project 2: I continue to do research and theory on the development of expertise, creativity, and exceptional talent, including on child prodigies. These areas have proven to be good choices for theses and dissertation research.

Sasha A. Fleary, Ph.D.

The Child Health Equity Research Lab (CHERLab)
The CHERLab is a preventive health lab in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University. The CHERLab aims to understand risk and protective factors for preventive health and mental well-being for children, adolescents, and families at risk for health disparities and inequity. The CHERLab develops interventions that are sensitive to social determinants of health, and promote social justice, and positive youth development.

Project 1: Social Justice for Health: This is an intervention for 9-11-year-olds to teach critical health literacy skills. The intervention culminates in a Photovoice project wherein participants will document health in their community. Tasks include assisting with data collection, teaching intervention sessions, helping with the Photovoice project and community event, data entry.
**Project 2: Health Literacy as Vehicle to Reduce Cancer-Related Behaviors among Adolescents:** The goals of this project are (1) to establish the relationship between health literacy and cancer-related behaviors among adolescents and (2) to develop interventions to reduce cancer-related behaviors in adolescents. We are developing an objective measure of health literacy as a first step to achieving our project goals. Tasks may include assisting with measure development, conducting data collection with adolescents at community sites, and transcribing and coding qualitative data.

**Project 3: Mental Wellbeing and Help-Seeking in Families** The goal of this project is to assess the relationship between mental health literacy, mental help-seeking, and well-being in adults and families. The results of this project will inform future intervention research. Tasks may include data collection, data entry and analysis, and intervention development.

**Project 4: Decision-Making and Dietary Behaviors:** The goal of this project is to learn more about children’s (9 to 12 years-old) decision-making around healthy eating by exploring the relationship between health literacy, food literacy, autonomy, and dietary behaviors. Tasks may include assisting with data collection and data entry.

**Project 5: Caregivers’ Health Literacy and Preventive Health in Families with Young Children:** The goal of this project is to develop and evaluate interventions that improve preventive health behaviors in families with young children. We conducted focus groups with parents in the Medford area to learn more about preventive health for parents and their young children. Based on our findings from the focus group, we will begin to develop a targeted intervention. Tasks may include assisting with intervention development and qualitative data analysis.

**Project 6: Understanding the Role of Media Messages in Health Decisions:** The goal of this project is to develop a measure of media health literacy. To do so, we have completed interviews with Tufts students. Tasks may include assisting with measure development and data collection.

**Project 7: Evaluating the Achieving Whole Health Program:** The goal of this project is to modify the Achieving Whole Health Program to be developmentally appropriate and gender-responsive to the needs of Asian American adolescent goals. The Achieving Whole Health Program was developed to promote mental wellbeing and provide tools for healthy living (mind, body, spirit). The modified intervention will be administered and evaluated in collaboration with youth serving organizations in Boston. Tasks may include assisting with data collection, data entry, and program dissemination.

Students interested in working on the projects described below for course credit or as a volunteer may contact Dr. Fleary at sasha.fleary@tufts.edu.
Parent Health Literacy and Young Children’s Preventive Health
Project Goals: To determine if a customized, community-based intervention can improve caregiver health literacy and preventive health behaviors for caregivers and their children in an urban setting. In a community-based approach, caregivers and community stakeholders provide input on their needs, barriers, and protective factors for health literacy and preventive health behaviors, which is used to create an intervention responsive to the specific needs of the community with strong consideration of their social determinants of health.

Student Opportunities: Assist with measure development, intervention development, pilot testing, data collection and analysis (qualitative and quantitative), and literature reviews; prepare reports for conference presentations and publications.

Health Literacy and Cancer-Related Health Behaviors Among Adolescents
Project Goals: (1) To explore the role of general health literacy on adolescents’ thought processes and decision-making regarding obesogenic behaviors in a school setting; (2) To determine if intervening on health literacy improves adolescents’ obesogenic behaviors.

Student Opportunities: Assist with measure development, intervention development, pilot testing, data collection and analysis (qualitative and quantitative), and literature reviews; prepare reports for conference presentations and publications.

Critical Health Literacy in Adolescents
Project Goals: To improve critical health literacy in adolescents.

Student Opportunities: Assist with pilot testing intervention, data collection and analysis (qualitative and quantitative), and literature reviews; prepare reports for conference presentations and publications.

Family and Youth Resilience in Homelessness
Project Goals: (1) To conduct a program evaluation on a community organization that provides transitional housing for homeless families in Dorchester [to identify aspects of the organizational model, processes, and programming that are most responsible for the organization’s success, as well as aspects that should be improved, from the perspectives of the staff and families they serve]; (2) To identify major contributors to family and youth resiliency during and after homelessness.

Student Opportunities: Assist with literature reviews and data collection and analysis (qualitative and quantitative); prepare reports for conference presentations and publications.

Calvin L. Gidney, Ph.D.
Project 1: Children’s Television Project. (CTV). The CTV project is an on-going investigation of the images of race, ethnicity, age, gender and sociolinguistic dimensions of children’s animated programming. In the first two phases of the project our research team watched and coded several episodes of 36 cartoons. Our sample included well-known shows such as Arthur and The Simpsons as well as more obscure offerings such as Samurai Pizza Cats or C. Bear and Jamal. Given that the children’s media landscape is vastly different than when we began the project, in the third phase of our research, we are investigating a new selection of media content. We’re also starting to investigate what cues - linguistic or visual? - children use to determine a cartoon character’s status as hero or villain. We are looking for interested and motivated graduate or undergraduate students to work as researchers on this project. Researchers will engage in many aspects of the project including (1) research design, (2) coding of content, (3) piloting of research protocols, (4) administration of protocols to children in our sample, (5) production of video tapes, or other research-related work and (6) library research. Researchers will meet biweekly (every other week) for 90 minutes for training and discussion. If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact Prof. Gidney (ext. 7-2213 / Calvin.Gidney@tufts.edu) or Prof. Dobrow (ext. 7-4744/ Julie.Dobrow@tufts.edu).

Sara K. Johnson, Ph. D.
The Development of Identity and Community Engagement (DICE) Lab is focused on integrating applied developmental science and developmental methodology to understand and promote the positive development of adolescents and young adults. Most of our research focuses on contribution behaviors— the actions that young people take to improve their own circumstances and those of their families, communities, and society in general – and the individual and contextual factors that promote and support such behaviors, including 1) identity development, 2) critical reflection about societal inequalities, and 3) role models. Students interested in working on any of the projects listed below should contact Dr. Michelle Weiner, DICE Postdoctoral Fellow, at michelle.weiner@tufts.edu. The majority of positions are for course credit or on a volunteer basis, and students can assist with data collection, cleaning, and analysis as well as with preparing academic publications and conference presentations.

Project 1: Connecting Adolescents’ Beliefs and Behaviors: Intentional Self-Regulation and the Promotion of Character Development (CABB). The CABB study was conducted from 2015 to 2017 in partnership with Jacqueline V. Lerner (Professor of Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology at Boston College) and Richard M. Lerner (Professor of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts). The purpose was to examine the role that moral identity, character role models, and intentional self-regulation skills play in helping adolescents act in ways that are consistent with their values and to contribute positively to themselves, their families, and their communities. CABB was a four-wave mixed methods study with data from students, parents, and teachers or other school staff. We are currently analyzing data collected from surveys and interviews.
Project 2: The Identity and Contribution Study (ICON). The purpose of the ICON Study, conducted during the 2016-2017 academic year, was to investigate how young people think about and consider contribution behaviors as part of their identity development process, and, in turn, how the contribution activities in which they engage influence their identity development. Addressing these questions will provide information that can be used to support young people’s choices to initiate and engagement in meaningful contribution behaviors and sustain this engagement over their transitions into adulthood. We conducted interviews with 30 Tufts undergraduate students about these topics and are currently analyzing the data from those interviews.

Project 3: The ACTION Project: Identity Exploration, Critical Reflection, and Commitments to Social Justice. The ACTION project will begin in Fall 2018. The purpose of this project is to investigate the connections among young adults’ identity exploration, critical reflection, and civic engagement (including actions targeted toward social justice) using quantitative techniques. We will collect questionnaire responses from 400 Tufts students regarding these topics.

Project 4: Pathways to Character Development across the First Three Decades of Life. Integrative data analysis refers to a family of statistical techniques, the development of which was inspired by the proliferation of short-term longitudinal studies about development in various contexts and across the lifespan. On their own, these studies are often limited in their ability to model the processes of interest due to low power or relatively brief time spans in which to model change. However, integrative data analysis techniques, in which researchers link multiple independent data sets, may be useful in building a cumulative science of lifespan human development. This project is one of the first large-scale applications and extensions of IDA techniques. With a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, we are applying IDA to eight data sets on positive youth development collected through the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development.

Richard M. Lerner, Ph.D.
The Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development (IARYD) engages in research framed by relational developmental systems models to describe, explain, and optimize the course to healthy, positive development among diverse children, adolescents, young adults, families, and communities. Richard M. Lerner, Bergstrom Chair in Applied Developmental Science, is the Director of the Institute. Heidi Johnson is the Managing Director of the Institute. The Institute is the home of several research, training, and outreach projects that seek to use theory-predicated developmental research to promote character development and thriving among youth.

Project 1: Duty, Honor, Country: A Study of the Development of Leaders of Character at the United States Military Academy, funded by the Templeton Religion Trust. In this five-year study (2015-2020), funded by the John
Templeton Foundation, we are examining the character and leadership development of cadets at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) at West Point across their four-year training program. We hope to better understand which experiences at USMA are most salient for promoting character and leadership. In turn, we are also examining whether attributes of character and leadership predict performance outcomes among current USMA cadets, as well as in their roles as U.S. Army officers. We will use this information to help USMA maximize its efforts to promote character and leadership, as well as to inform other service academies, universities, and other institutions about best practices in developing leaders of character.

Project 2: Developing Responsible and Fulfilled Christian Adults: Towards a Multi-National Longitudinal Study of the Compassion International Model of Promoting Positive Youth Development among Children Living in Poverty, funded by Compassion International. Across the world there are more than one billion children living in persistent and pervasive poverty, with about 400 million living in extreme poverty. Such marginalization creates an often self-fulfilling trap of hopelessness about their chances to thrive or grow into healthy, fulfilled, and responsible adults. Adding to poverty’s cruel attack on generation after generation of human lives, this waste of human capital has pronounced and burgeoning, dire effects on geopolitics, the world’s economic system, and global peace. The Compassion International (CI) response to this situation is predicated on a holistic approach that integratively and uniquely capitalizes on: 1. A strengths-based approach to youth development reflected in the positive youth development (PYD) model and 2. The documented importance of sustained religious faith as a unique and fundamental asset in the lives of all people and, perhaps especially, youth from the poorest ecological settings. CI's integrative model offers over 1.7 million of the world’s poorest children a developmentally and context-sensitive life journey marked by personal fulfillment (health, well-being, faith, and spiritual richness) and responsibility (to self, family, and civil society, and God). This project will evaluate the CI model in regard to its effectiveness in developing among the world’s poorest youth responsible and fulfilled adults. The project involves a collaboration involving IARYD, CI, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Boston College. We will study the longitudinal development of youth involved in CI’s programs in three nations: one in Central or South America, one in Africa, and one in Asia. In each nation, we will compare the development of CI program participants to youth who are not participating in CI’s programs to identify what works, with what children, in what context, over what time period.

Tama Leventhal, Ph.D.
Project 1: Neighborhood Context and Immigrant Youth’s Development. Neighborhoods historically have played a central role in the lives of immigrant families who typically settle in communities comprised of other immigrant families with a shared language, values, practices, and social ties. However, efforts to explore neighborhood effects on immigrant children’s development remain largely theoretical. In addition, immigrants now live in diverse destinations throughout the US. The primary goal of this project is to investigate how
neighborhood contexts contribute to child development in ways that both promote and inhibit well-being. To address this topic, the project uses data from multiple sources including the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, a multilevel, longitudinal study of children and youth sampled from 80 diverse neighborhoods; the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey, a multilevel, longitudinal study of children and youth sampled from 65 diverse neighborhoods; the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, a nationally representative sample of youth; and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort, a nationally representative sample of children followed from kindergarten through middle school.

Student Opportunities: Assist with data analysis and coding, literature reviews, and manuscript preparation.

**Project 2: Housing and Children’s Healthy Development.** This goal of this new longitudinal data collection effort is to investigate how housing and the social contexts in which it is embedded together affect the development of children from birth through 10 years of age at the study’s inception. The study design combines a housing voucher experiment and a representative population sample in each of the three study sites. Data collection entails numerous innovative measures of housing and child and family well-being.

Student Opportunities: Assist with measure development, pilot testing, and various aspects of data collection.

**Project 3: Preschool, Family, and Community among Mexican Immigrants.** The goal of this project is to identify mechanisms that select children from Mexican immigrant families into preschool and then condition how such enrollment supports their subsequent school readiness. The objective is to elucidate avenues of policy action for increasing Mexican immigrant children’s realization of early educational opportunities. This project is guided by evidence of long-term returns to early intervention and recognizes the complex mixture of challenges and opportunities that Mexican immigrant children present to the U.S. educational system and economy. To meet this objective, this mixed-methods study will use data from three sources: the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), a nationally representative birth cohort; the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, a multilevel, longitudinal study of children from 80 diverse neighborhoods; and data from classroom assessments, parent focus groups, and teacher interviews in ten public preschool programs in Texas.

Student Opportunities: Assist with data analysis and coding, literature reviews, and manuscript preparation.

**Project 4: Residential and Preschool Instability: Links to Young Children’s School Readiness.** The connection between residential mobility and education has received growing policy attention among school-age children. Understanding this connection among young children also has important policy
ramifications for addressing long-term social inequalities in health and well-being. The goal of this project is to illuminate the ways in which residential mobility impinges on children’s early care and education (ECE) experiences and their subsequent development. To address this issue, we will use two longitudinal datasets, one nationally representative (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort) and the other a multicity sample of children born to unmarried parents (Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study), and supplementing them with annual state/district-specific data on the scope and quality of publicly-funded pre-K programs (National Institute for Early Education Research).

Student Opportunities: Assist with data gathering, linking, and analysis, literature reviews, and manuscript preparation.

Christine M. McWayne, Ph.D.

Project 1: Partnerships for Early Childhood Curriculum Development: Readiness through Integrative Science and Engineering (RISE), with Co-PIs Jayanthi Mistry (Tufts), Daryl Greenfield (Psychology, U Miami), Betty Zan (Curriculum & Instruction, University of Northern Iowa), and Kimberly Brenneman (Program Officer, Heising-Simons Foundation). The primary goal of the RISE project is to improve school readiness for dual language learners (DLLs) by strengthening connections between home and school and by fostering positive approaches to learning through hands-on science, technology, and engineering (STE) content. We focus on STE because this knowledge is a marker of later success but is an area of curriculum in which early childhood education falls short. Our target population is low-income, DLL children who are underrepresented in curriculum development efforts despite the fact that they are most at-risk for later school adjustment difficulties. A major focus of RISE is on helping Head Start teachers to access families’ funds of knowledge, because theory and research suggest that building on children’s familiar knowledge and fostering home-school connections improves student outcomes. Over the last five years, the project team has developed an integrative STE curriculum with a strong home-school component, and an overall professional development approach. The development and initial pilot implementation phase of this project was funded by the National Science Foundation and the Brady Education Foundation. We are currently preparing for a large-scale randomized controlled trial in 60+ Head Start classrooms. Participants are educators, children, and families who are part of ABCD Head Start and Children’s Services (ABCD) Head Start programs in Boston, Massachusetts. For more information on the RISE project: http://rise.as.tufts.edu/

Student Opportunities: For the coming academic year, our efforts will be focused upon major data collection and partnership-building in several Head Start sites. Students will have opportunities to observe and participate in Head Start classrooms, interacting directly with children, their families, and their teachers. This could be particularly interesting to students who want to get some hands-on experience in a preschool classroom and working with low-income, DLL children. Students will be trained for conducting naturalistic observations of the classroom,
neighborhood walks, direct child assessments of language and science knowledge, and interviewing parents and teachers. If you choose to stick around over the summer or into the second year of the project, there will be opportunities to be involved with manuscript preparation, presentation at local and national conferences, and grant-writing.

Project 2: Project P.E.A.R.L.S. (Parents Enhancing Academic Readiness through Lessons About Strengths), with Co-PI Jacqueline Mattis (Psychology, U Michigan). This project is in the data analysis and dissemination phases and explores what Black (African American, Black Caribbean, and African immigrant) parents in New York City Head Start programs determined to be supportive parenting. Specifically, we wanted to learn about parents' beliefs, values, goals, and practices with respect to their preschool aged children. We set out to learn from parents through parent conversation groups, individual interviews, and videotaped observations of interactions with their children about their conceptualizations of parenting strengths. The ultimate goal was to develop new tools to assess parenting that are strengths-based and grounded in the beliefs and values represented in parents' communities. As we learn more about positive parenting across communities, we learn more about how we can influence positive outcomes for children, like school readiness and socio/moral development. This project was originally funded by the National Institutes of Health. We are currently seeking funding to continue building on what we have learned, and we are able to provide short-term paid positions.

Student Opportunities: Undergraduate and graduate students may become involved in literature reviews, coding of observational video-taped interactions, helping to develop heuristics for a new observation coding system informed by both parents' conceptualizations and their actual behaviors with their children, and quantitative and qualitative data analyses. This year, we will also be looking specifically at the fathers in our sample, and there will be opportunities to be involved with manuscript preparation, presentation at local and national conferences, and grant-writing. Because we are in the final stages of our planned manuscript submissions, this project could provide data for students looking to conduct a thesis on a topic not central to the original study.

Project 3: Latino Family Involvement in Young, Low-Income DLL Children’s Education, with Co-PI Gigliana Melzi (Applied Psychology, New York University). This collaborative research project examines family engagement practices with Latino families of young children in New York City and Boston Head Start programs. The goal of this study was to identify low-income, Latino parents’ conceptualizations of their engagement with children’s education, learning, and development and then to link these culture-contextualized dimensions of family engagement practices to children’s school readiness in the areas of language development and social-emotional competency. We are currently in the dissemination phase of this work, as well as developing grant proposals for building on what we have initially learned. This project was originally funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well
as the National Institutes of Health (NICHD).

Student Opportunities: Because the work is focused on Latino families, if students are Spanish-speaking that’s a plus, but not a requisite. The project is in the data analytic and dissemination phases, with opportunities mostly for qualitative data analysis, as well as opportunities to be involved with manuscript preparation, presentation at local and national conferences, and grant-writing. Because we are in the final stages of our planned manuscript submissions, this project could provide data for students looking to conduct a thesis on a topic not central to the original study. (definitely hiring for fall 2018 – spring 2019, you must be a confirmed applicant before you can be interviewed)

Lynn Meltzer, Ph.D. (Affiliated)
SMARTS Leadership and Mentoring Program (ResearchILD). The SMARTS Leadership and Mentoring Program is a ground-breaking peer-to-peer mentorship program designed to build a supportive community of student leaders who want to make a change in their school environment. Students are taught research-based executive function strategies that focus on planning, organizing, prioritizing, shifting approaches, and self-monitoring. Students also participate in metacognitive activities to build awareness of their own individualized learning styles. Through a project called the “Initiative for Positive Action and Change” (IPAC), students develop questions about an important problem they observe in their school, hypothesize about why it exists, develop methods for testing their hypothesis, draw conclusions and suggest solutions based on the results of their investigations. The SMARTS program fosters the development of student mentors and leaders who can succeed in school due to their increased motivation, effort, positive self-concept, effective strategy use, persistence and resilience.

After three waves of data collection we are now focusing on further refining our curriculum and implementation of SMARTS in different school systems. Beginning in the fall, we will be assessing program efficacy using quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. We will also be involved in the design and pilot testing of SMARTS Online, an interactive website comprising training materials, video clips of mentors and mentees, photo galleries, and curriculum materials for use by after-school programs and schools.

Student Opportunities: We are looking for qualified graduate students who are interested in gaining experience in any of the following: website design, website programming, quantitative and qualitative data collection, data entry and analysis, curriculum design, program evaluation, and manuscript preparation. A minimum of a six-month commitment is required.

For more information, please see our websites (www.researchild.org and www.ildlex.org) and/or contact Dr. Lynn Meltzer at lmeltzer@ildlex.org or Mimi Ballard at mballard@researchild.org.

Jayanthi Mistry, Ph.D.
Project 1: Navigating Multiple Cultural Worlds and Identities. This ongoing research project is designed to investigate the processes and circumstances under which children gain expertise in navigating between multiple worlds and identities. The underlying assumption is that navigating multiple identities is a critical component of the development of self and identity – especially for children of immigrants and those from underrepresented racial and ethnic communities who experience life as minorities in the U.S.

Student Opportunities: The data set on this project consists of survey data and interview data. There are opportunities for mixed methods analysis of data. I invite students who are interested in assisting with the next steps in interpretive/qualitative analysis. Participation will include designing and implementing a plan of analysis for specific research questions as driven by the overarching research objectives of the study. There are rich possibilities for student theses or directed research projects.

Project 2: Massachusetts Healthy Families Evaluation 2nd Cohort (MHFE2). MHFE-2 is a large-scale, multi-year evaluation study of the MA Healthy Families program being led by Profs. Jacobs, Easterbrooks and Mistry. The study consists of two main components:

- Impact Study: designed as a randomized control trial to evaluate program effects;
- Integrative Study: designed to enable a more concentrated and comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors that influence participants’ trajectories as they transition both to parenthood and adulthood. The Integrative Study uses a mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative data) approach with a sample of 276 participants from the program group and 200 participants from the control group. It is designed as a multi-method study with data gathered through standardized measures, structured survey questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. Data is gathered at three points in time beginning at the start of participants’ enrollment in the HFM program.

Student Opportunities: I am coordinating the analysis of data from an open-ended research interview that is conducted as part of the Integrative Study. We have completed coding of over 400 interviews. Features of participants’ childhood history, their educational history, pregnancy stories, their relationships with family members, and their representations of parenting have been coded using a qualitative analysis program (Atlas-ti). We are now inviting students who are interested in assisting us with the next steps in interpretive/qualitative analysis. Participation will include designing and implementing a plan of analysis for specific research questions as driven by the research objectives of the overarching evaluation study and may include the integration of qualitative data from the research interview, with data collected through surveys/questionnaires and standardized scales, as well as with GIS based data. There are rich possibilities for student theses or directed research projects.

Ellen Pinderhughes, Ph.D.
Project 1: Families and Children in Challenging Circumstances (FaCCC)
The primary goal of the projects in this research program is to contribute an understanding of developmental processes that occur within families whose children are at risk for dysfunctional behavior so that policies, interventions and services can be improved or designed to facilitate optimal child outcomes. Families that include children at-risk face unique challenges as they confront the socialization task of preparing their children to function in developmentally appropriate ways in the larger society. Helping families successfully meet these challenges presents important and interesting clinical and social policy issues. Specific ongoing studies include: research on adoption - a) transracial adoptive families and their experiences, and b) international adoptive parents’ experiences with the adoption process; gay fathers – their pathways to fatherhood and related experiences; and research on at-risk children in biological families which involves hypothesis testing examination with large samples over multiple years.

Project 2: Adoptive Families Activities Project (AFAP): In this project we are studying the activities that adoptive parents provide their adopted children to support their adoptive identity and their racial and/or ethnic identity. We have developed a theoretically-grounded online survey to assess what parents do to provide exposure about adoption (adoption socialization), to provide exposure to the adoptee’s culture-of-origin (cultural socialization) and to help adoptees prepare to deal with stigma (preparation for bias). In addition to surveying 100 adoptive parents, we will interview 30 parents to learn about how they think about their child’s culture and the activities they provide.

Opportunities for Students: (course credit or volunteer) include interviewing parents; developing codes and coding interview data; analyzing quantitative data; preparing conference presentations and assistance in preparing manuscripts and grant applications. If interested, contact Xian Zhang (xian.zhang@tufts.edu), the lead PhD student on this project.

W. George Scarlett, Ph.D.
I am developing several projects focused on issues related to children and youth engaging the ‘natural world’ and becoming earth stewards. One such project is an evaluation of two youth programs at the New England Aquarium, programs to support teens development as ocean stewards. The projects also connect to larger discussions going on in the ecology movement. I welcome anyone interested to join me on these projects. You can contact me at George.Scarlett@tufts.edu or visit my personal website at https://georgescarlettblog.com/.