

Emily Sumner | Curriculum Vitae

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Research Interests

Judgment & decision making	Cognitive development
Risk taking	Curiosity
Decision making under uncertainty	Exploration-exploitation

Academic Appointments

Postdoctoral Researcher

University of California, Berkeley,
PIs: Alison Gopnik & Celeste Kidd

2020 – Present

Education

PhD., Cognitive Sciences

University of California, Irvine,
Advisor: Barbara Sarnecka. GPA: 3.95. Public Impact Fellow.

2015 – 2020

M.A., Psychology

University of California, Irvine,
GPA: 3.95

2015 – 2018

B.A., Brain & Cognitive Sciences

University of Rochester,
GPA: 3.79, cum laude, high distinctions in Brain & Cognitive Sciences, highest honors in research, Dean's List 7/7 eligible semesters. Thesis Advisor: Celeste Kidd

2012 – 2015

Fellowships and Grants

Associate Dean's Fellowship

University of California, Irvine,
Fellowship awarded for academic excellence.
Fellowship amount: \$12,795

2020

Falmagne Research Award

University of California, Irvine,
Awarded to one advanced student in the department of Cognitive Sciences. Funded project titled, "The Exploration Advantage: Elevated exploration during childhood leads children to learn things that adults don't."
Fellowship amount: \$3,000

2019

Graduate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship

University of California, Irvine,
Fellowship awarded for academic merit.
Fellowship amount: \$11,795

2019 - 2020

PI on Undergraduate Research Opportunity Grants

University of California, Irvine,
Served as the PI on grants with 15 undergraduates to support research on decision making during childhood
Total grant amount: \$24,000

2015 - 2019

Public Impact Fellowship

University of California, Irvine,

2019

Fellowship awarded for academic excellence and research that influences the public.

Fellowship amount: \$1,000

Fellowship in Honor of Christian Werner

University of California, Irvine,

2018

Fellowship awarded for exceptional merit within the School of Social Sciences.

Fellowship amount: \$12,795

Merit Fellowship

University of California, Irvine,

2015 – 2020

3 Fellowship quarters awarded upon admission.

Fellowship amount: \$36,000

John I. Yellott Scholar Award

University of California, Irvine,

2016

Awarded to one student in the department of Cognitive Sciences during their first two years of graduate studies. Funded project titled, "Click at your own risk: Investigating individual differences in risk propensity among preschoolers."

Fellowship amount: \$3,000

Bilski-Mayer Fellowship

University of Rochester,

2014

Funded summer research project on decision making and statistical learning.

Fellowship amount: \$5,000

Publications

- **Sumner, E.**, Steyvers, M., & Sarnecka, BW. It's about the Treasure, not the Hunt. Children are more explorative on an explore-exploit tasks than adults are. Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Sciences Society (2019)
- **Sumner, E.**, DeAngelis, E., Hyatt, M., Goodman, N., & Kidd, C. (2019) PLoS ONE 14(6): e0217207. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0217207>
- **Sumner, E.**, DeAngelis, E., Hyatt, M., Goodman, N., & Kidd, C. (2015) Toddlers Always Get the Last Word: Recency biases in early verbal behavior. Proceedings of the 37th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society.

Manuscripts under review

- **Sumner, E.**, Li, A., Hayes, B., Perfors, A., Navarro, D., & Sarnecka, BW. The Exploration Advantage: Children's instinct to explore allows them to find information that adults miss. (Revision submitted at Psychological Science, preprint here)
- Thomas, AJ., **Sumner, E.**, & Sarnecka, BW. Children expect leaders to oust intruders, to refrain from aggression, but do not expect leaders to be generally more prosocial. (Under review. preprint here)
- **Sumner, E.**, Lee, MD, & Sarnecka, BW. Spin at Your Own Risk: Preschoolers Differ in How they Approach Risky Decisions. (Under review.)
- Thomas, AJ., Mitchel, V., **Sumner, E.**, Terrizzi, B., Piff, B., & Sarnecka, BW. Children are sensitive to decision-making arrangements and prefer groups with less concentrated power. (Under review)

Forthcoming manuscripts.....

- **Sumner, E.**, Lin, G., Sheen, A., Melcon, R., & Jaeggi, SM. Shima: A Virtual Reality Measure of Risk Taking (In prep)
- **Sumner, E.**, Steyvers, M., Kidd, C., & Sarnecka, BW. Children are more explorative on explore-exploit tasks than adults. (In Prep)
- **Sumner, E.**, Stokes, R., Mistry, PK., Jaeggi, S., & Sarnecka, BW. Preschooler-friendly touchscreen games to measure risk propensity and executive function. (In prep, email for preprint)
- **Sumner, E.**, Lomeli, A., Lee, M., & Sarnecka, BW. Too risky for you, but not for me: individual differences in preschooler's decision-making strategies for themselves and others (in prep)

Conference Presentations

Talks.....

- **Sumner, E.**(2019) A hands-on tutorial on Bayesian Statistics for Developmental Psychologists. Cognitive Development Society. Louisville, KY. Talk.
- **Sumner, E.**, Lin, G., Sheen, A., Melcon, R., and Jaeggi, SM.(2019) Shima: A Virtual Reality Measure of Risk Taking. Connected Learning Summit. Irvine, CA. Talk.
- **Sumner, E.**, Steyvers, M., & Sarnecka, BW.(2019)It's not about the Treasure, it's the Hunt: Children are more explorative on an explore-exploit task than adults. Society of Philosophy and Psychology. San Diego, CA. Talk.
- Thomas, AJ, **Sumner, E.** & Sarnecka, BW (2019) Children Expect Leaders to Kick out Intruders, and Not to be Bullies. Society of Research and Child Development. Baltimore, MD. Talk.
- **Sumner, E.** & Sarnecka, BW (2018) The Development of Decision Making and Exploration in Early Childhood. Symposium on Cognition and Language Development. Irvine, CA. Talk.
- **Sumner, E.** (2018) Children Have to Make Their Own Mistakes: Exploration in childhood. Irvine, CA. Talk.
- **Sumner, E.**, Stokes, R., Mistry, PK., Jaeggi, S., & Sarnecka, BW (2017) Measuring Risk Propensity in Young Children. Digital Media Preconference at the Cognitive Development Society. Portland, Oregon. Talk.
- **Sumner, E.**, Melcon, R., Lin, G., Cooper., M., & Kent., H. (2017) Shima: A Virtual Reality Measure of Risk Propensity. Games for Change Festival, New York, NY. Talk
- **Sumner, E.**, DeAngelis, E., Hyatt, M., Goodman, N., & Kidd, C. (2015) Toddlers Always Get the Last Word: Recency biases in early verbal behavior. 37th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Pasadena, CA. Talk.

Posters.....

- **Sumner, E.**, Steyvers, M., & Sarnecka, BW.(2019) It's not about the Treasure, it's the Hunt: Children are more explorative on an explore-exploit task than adults. 41st Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Sciences Society. Montreal, Canada. Poster.
- **Sumner, E.**, Steyvers, M & Sarnecka, BW (2018) Children Know What is Best, but Explore More: A mismatch between actions and preferences. Explore-Exploit Preconference Workshop at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Sciences Society. Madison, WI. Poster.
- **Sumner, E.**, Lee, M., & Sarnecka, BW (2017) Spin at your own risk: individual differences in preschooler's decision-making strategies. Annual Meeting of the Society of Judgement and Decision

Making. Vancouver, Canada. Poster.

- **Sumner, E.**, Stokes, R., Mistry, PK., Jaeggi, S., & Sarnecka, BW (2017) Measuring Risk Propensity in Young Children. 58th Annual Meeting of the Psychonomics Society. Vancouver, Canada. Poster.
- **Sumner, E.**, Lee, M., & Sarnecka, BW (2017) Spin at your own risk: individual differences in preschooler's decision-making strategies. Biannual Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society. Portland, OR. Poster.
- **Sumner, E.**, Stokes, R., Mistry, PK., Jaeggi, S., & Sarnecka, BW (2017) Developing Touchscreen Games to Measure Risk Propensity in Younger Children. Annual Meeting of the Engaged Learning Network at the Games for Change Festival, New York, NY. Poster.
- **Sumner, E.**, Lee, M., & Sarnecka, BW. (2016) Investigating Individual Differences in Risk-Taking Preferences Among Preschoolers. 57th Annual Meeting of the Psychonomics Society, Boston, MA. Poster.

Invited Talks

- UC San Diego, Developmental Psychology Brown Bag, October 2019
- UC Berkeley, Gopnik Lab, March 2019
- UC Berkeley, Kidd and Piantadosi Lab, March 2019

Awards and Honors

Society of Philosophy and Psychology Diversity Travel Award

Society of Philosophy and Psychology,

2019

Awarded to support travel to the 45th Annual Meeting of the Society of Philosophy and Psychology

Graduate Student Travel Award

University of California, Irvine,

2016, 2017

Awarded to travel and present at the Annual Meeting of the Psychonomics Society in 2016, and the Society for Judgment and Decision Making in 2017.

Virtual Reality Brain Jam Hackathon Winner

Games for Change,

2017

Won a competitive, internationally attended hackathon for creating a virtual reality measure of risk propensity in 48 hours. Collaborated with video game programmers and competed against 12 other teams.

Dean's Prize for Undergraduate Research

University of Rochester,

2014

Awarded by the Office of Undergraduate Research for outstanding research during undergraduate.

Community Connections Award

University of Rochester,

2014

Awarded by the Department of Gender Studies for founding UR SEGway, a sexual violence prevention group on campus.

Psi Chi Membership

University of Rochester,

2013 – Present

Member of the international honor's society for psychology

Golden Key International Honor Society Membership

University of Rochester,

2014 – Present

Work Experience

Science Writer

NPR: The Loh Down on Science

Science writer for the NPR and KPCC radio show, the Loh Down on Science. Have also written and reported five episodes for the special pandemic edition.

Irvine, CA

2020–Present

Graduate Student Liaison

University of California, Irvine

Liaison between the faculty members and graduate students of the Department of Cognitive Sciences.

Irvine, CA

2018–2020

Graduate Student Mentor

University of California, Irvine

Mentoring 15+ students in independent research projects and helping them apply for funding. Have received a total of \$24,000 of research funding.

Irvine, CA

2015–2020

User Experience Research Consultant

HelloFresh

Remote consultant for HelloFresh, an international meal kit subscription service. Duties consist of performing statistical analysis, conducting usability tests, and working with an international team.

Berlin, DE

2018 – 2019

Teaching Assistant

University of California, Irvine

Teaching assistant for Introduction to Psychology, Psychology of Influence, Abnormal Psychology, and Industrial Organizational Psychology. Responsible for developing lessons and leading three weekly discussion sections.

Irvine, CA

2016 – 2019

Teaching Assistant

University of Rochester

Teaching Assistant for Language Development course. Assisted in answering student questions, test creation, and grading.

Rochester, NY

2015

Undergraduate Researcher

Rochester Baby Lab

Assisted with running participants and lab administration.

Rochester, NY

2015

Naturalist

Drumlin Farm Day Camp

Curriculum development and teaching 3- to 10-year-old day camp students farming, biology and nature in the outdoors.

Lincoln, MA

Summers 2011 – 2013, 2015

Technical Skills

R, \LaTeX , HTML, UNITY, JAGS, JASP, SPSS and Photoshop.

Professional Affiliations

Society of Judgment and Decision Making

Cognitive Development Society

Psychonomics Society

Cognitive Science Society

Ad hoc reviewer

Judgment and Decision Making

Biological Psychiatry

Cognitive Science Society

Supervised undergraduate research assistants

Kimia Akhavian*❖✧, Mayra Alaniz*, Joanna Baires Amayra*, Khayla Carsola, Fatima Charara, Kelsy Chou*, Pontea Doroudian, Jarrett Ebersberger, Vanoosheh Ferdousian, Kelly Fogarty, Emily Garcia*, Judith Charlene Gallardo❖, Amy Giang*, Denise Giardina▲, Mikayla Hand*, Eden Harder*✧, Heaven Howse*▲, Jocelyn Hsieh, Stephanie Ingram Amanda Jamison, Jalen Jones, Daria Lasc, Gabby Lomeli*, Fatima Pineda*▲, Jonah Przybyszewski, Diana Mansuryan*, Jaryn-Anthony "Tomo" Mendoza, Julissa Navas✧, Silvia Navarro Hernandez★✧, Hoang Quan Nguyen*★▲, Ana Maria Ortiz, Madison Salcedo*, Angelica Sheen*, Justine Skaar, Tina Singh*, Maria Trucios*, Melissa Reynoso, Yvonne Vo*▲, and Shirley Wang*.

*assisted students in successfully applying for funding for their research

★ won the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research

✧ Pursuing a PhD

❖ Working as a lab or project manager

▲ Pursuing a master's degree

Supervised independent undergraduate research projects

Madison Salcedo: "The Benefits of Heightened Exploration During Childhood" (2019)

Diana Mansuryan: "Exploring the Benefits of Childhood Autonomy" (2019)

Emily Garcia: "Inattentional Blindness Throughout the Lifespan" (2019)

Julissa Navas: "Advantages of Cognitive Flexibility During Childhood" (2018)

Fatima Pineda: "The Value of Information to Children" (2018)

Hoang Quan Nguyen: "Assessing Executive Function in Preschoolers" (2018)

Kelsy Chou: "Creating Virtual Reality Measures of Risk Propensity" (2018)

Eden Harder: "The Development of Exploration-Exploitation Strategies" (2017)

Amy Giang & Shirley Wang: "Measuring risk propensity in preschoolers" (2017)

Eden Harder: "Delay discounting: A measure of risk propensity or working memory?" (2017)

Gabby Lomeli: "How affect influence risky propensity preferences in preschoolers" (2016 - 17)

Mayra Alaniz: "Investigating the conceptual development of probability" (2016)

Yvonne Vo: "Development of executive functions in foster children" (2016)

Kimia Akhavian: "Development of gender differences in STEM" (2015-2016)

Guest Lectures

Language Development, University of Rochester (2015)

Cognition and Learning in Educational Settings, UCI (2016)

Abnormal Psychology, UCI (2017)

Developmental Psychology, UCI (2018)

Select Press Coverage

- April 20, 2020. "The Loh Down on Science Crew Launches Special Pandemic Edition on Earth Day" UCI News
- July 25, 2019. "Toddlers May Not Give A Totally Honest Answer When You Ask This Kind Of Question, Study Finds" Romper
- July 24, 2019. "Toddlers can't truly answer this or that questions" Futurity
- July 20, 2019. "Scientists Might Have Found The Ideal Way to Get Your Toddler to Do What You Want" Science Alert
- July 17, 2019. "Drs. Oz & Roizen: Coming in second might get your kids to eat more vegetables" Union Leader
- July 17, 2019. "Here's a trick to help your toddler make healthy choices" Houston Chronicle
- July 15, 2019. "Why Your Toddler Gets Mad When You Give Them What They Wanted" Lifehacker
- July 10, 2019. "Toddlers tend to opt for the last thing in a set, so craft your questions carefully." Science News.
- July 7, 2019. "Der letzte Eindruck zählt" Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany)
- July 6, 2019. "Here is how you can make your kids like vegetables and healthy food" Ary News (Pakistan)
- July 1, 2019. "The 'Recency Effect' Is Especially Pronounced In Children – An Important Finding For Researchers And Parents." The British Psychological Society

- June 16, 2019. "If Asked the Right Way, Toddlers Will Choose Broccoli Over Cake, UCI-Led Study Finds" Sierra Sun Times
- June 15, 2019. "Se perguntado da maneira certa, as crianças vão escolher brócolis em vez de bolo, diz estudo" Crescer (Portugal)
- June 14, 2019. "Verdure come seconda opzione, trucco perché bimbi le mangino" Alto Adige (Italy).
- June 14, 2019. "Ciastko czy brokuły? Wybór dziecka zależy od tego, jak zadasz pytanie Więcej" Radio Zet (Poland)
- June 13, 2019. "UCI Study: Kids Pick Broccoli Over Cake – If Asked The Right Way" Microsoft News.
- June 13, 2019. "How to make your kid like broccoli" University of California
- June 13, 2019. "If asked the right way, toddlers will choose broccoli over cake, study finds" Medical Xpress.
- June 13, 2019. "If Asked The Right Way, Toddlers Will Choose Broccoli Over Cake" Science Blog
- June 13, 2019. "If asked properly, toddlers will pick broccoli over the cake, finds the study" Tocuz (Ireland)
- June 12, 2019. "If asked the right way, toddlers will choose broccoli over cake" Newswise
- June 12, 2019. "If asked the right way, toddlers will choose broccoli over cake" UCI News
- November 28, 2018. "Making a Difference. Social Sciences Graduate Students named Public Impact Fellows" School of Social Sciences, UCI
- July 12, 2012. "Ring Tones: The bells of the carillon are pealing with renewed vigor as the University's Carillon Society brings a new generation of students to the keyboard." Rochester Review