

My commitment to supporting diversity is evident in my teaching, mentorship, research, and service. Particularly, my training in Human Development and Family Studies frames both how I approach mentoring students from diverse backgrounds, but also how I center my course materials and research mentorship within the context of diverse individuals and families. As a teacher, my goal is to foster inclusive environments that engage students as a community of learners—comprised of individuals with varying experiences, needs, and abilities. I therefore celebrate unique perspectives and cultivate learning opportunities that allow students to demonstrate their own individual strengths while also learning from the strengths of their peers. In addition to providing an equitable and safe learning environment for students, I am also dedicated to mentoring a generation of scholars who will conduct research ethically, contextualize their knowledge of child development within diversity (e.g., educational, health, and socioeconomic inequities), and use this knowledge to go forth and combat disparities in their communities and beyond.

Teaching and Mentorship

Through my roles at Purdue University, the University of New Haven, and Yale University, I taught and mentored students from a variety of underrepresented and non-traditional backgrounds, including first-generation college students, students who were parents and/or working full-time jobs, students living in rural communities, students with chronic illness, students with neurodevelopmental diversity, and students within the LGBTQIA+ community. My interactions with and experiences learning from these students and mentees continue to make me a better scholar, and I am constantly evaluating my instructional and mentorship approaches to understand where I need to adapt, offer flexibility, and be better at hearing even the quietest voices in the room.

My role as a teaching assistant for multilevel modeling (a graduate-level course) was also helpful in preparing me to teach and work with students who speak English as a second language. The Graduate School at Purdue is particularly diverse, and this course attracted students from programs across the university—ranging from Engineering Education to Sociology. I learned and practiced new ways to adapt my teaching methods to diverse learners during one-on-one tutoring sessions, and through digital and written teaching modalities. Across my courses, examples of supporting the diverse needs of my students have included: creating modified course documents/calendars to help students stay on track and better manage the course materials, setting-up modified attendance agreements with students (and the Disability Resource Center), scheduling recurring weekly meetings to teach individual content or check-in on course progress and needs, and modifying online activities to more accessible formats for students in remote locations or who do not perform well via online modalities. Along with flexibility and adaptability, I seek to ensure that my office and learning environments continue to serve as welcoming spaces, devoted to the safety and belonging of *all* students. I continuously seek out new opportunities to better educate myself on how to create more inclusive, safe classroom and lab spaces, such as taking trainings/workshops through the LGBTQ center at Purdue (e.g., Safe Zone Training and Trans Inclusion training).

Research and Service

My programmatic research further embodies my commitment to underserved families and families raising children with autism spectrum disorder and at-risk development. I am also dedicated to understanding disparities in pediatric sleep health to better serve and tailor intervention approaches across diverse groups of children and families. Through this research, I have the unique opportunity and responsibility to teach undergraduates about neurodiversity, as well as to train students in inclusive and sensitive approaches to interacting with children and families.

Finally, I am also committed to making student research experiences more accessible and providing opportunities to fund, recognize, and promote student research—particularly for individuals from underrepresented and minority backgrounds. As a member of the Student and Early Career Council for the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) over the past four years, I co-developed the first SRCD biennial poster competition to recognize outstanding presentations by undergraduate and graduate student first authors. This program was launched in 2019 and included recognition at the Biennial Meeting and a free 1-year membership to SRCD (a fee which prohibits many students from becoming or remaining members while a student). I also worked on committees to create new modalities for students to present their research at SRCD conferences, as well as understand ways to increase student submission acceptance and attendance at Biennial meetings. As another example, I also created video materials for the 2021 SRCD Biennial Meeting to help first time student attendees navigate the virtual conference and get the most out of their scientific experience. I am further committed to making research opportunities more accessible at the university level, and I would continue to engage in and create similar service opportunities as an Assistant Professor at Niagara University.

Overall, I am dedicated to eliminating barriers to progress and addressing the unique needs and strengths of diverse groups in my classrooms, research lab, department/university, community, and profession. As issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion change over time, I am committed to continually educating myself and adapting my teaching, research, and service as informed by the concerns of marginalized groups and the evolving needs of my students and colleagues. And, most importantly, I am committed to following through with these values and goals, while always striving to reflect, re-evaluate, and improve my knowledge and practices in order to better serve my students and the communities impacted by my work.