

UB SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT LAB

SUMMER/FALL 2017

The PEERS Project

About the PEERS Project

Our ongoing NSF (National Science Foundation) funded project examines how preschoolers' personality, empathy, emotion regulation, and prior behavior influence their aggressive and prosocial behavior. This past year we have collected teacher and research assistant reports of children's behavior as well observed children's behaviors in the classroom and on the playground. We have also had a number of families come into our lab for one short visit in which social development data is collected from both a parent and child. During the early fall we will be continuing these short lab visits (email devlab@buffalo.edu to sign up!) as well.



Still accepting
appointments
for this fall!

Visit our Website at
[ubwp.buffalo.edu/
socialdevlab/](http://ubwp.buffalo.edu/socialdevlab/)

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Early Findings from PEERS— A Promising Start!

Some early findings from the PEERS project were presented to the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Conference in April. Using physiological data collected during our family lab visits (i.e., heart rate, breathing, and sweat), we found that increased reactivity (i.e., more sweat) to an empathetic video was linked to less prosocial or helping behaviors at school. We also found that physiological reactivity (again, sweat) to a social exclusion video was associated with less reactive relational aggression (i.e., social exclusion after a slight) at school. These findings highlight how physiological signs are associated with real-life social behaviors and could be used in examining differences in individual development.

Preliminary findings from our PEERS study also contributed to a SRCD presentation in Austin, TX and a paper on bullying behaviors that was submitted for a special issue at the *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. We found that there are unique properties of relational bullying compared to relational aggression when predicting children's social behavior. These findings highlight how behaviors that look similar, such as bullying and aggression, may predict different social outcomes.

We hope to expand upon these early findings by continuing to run sessions in our lab and collecting more data from schools in the fall. We hope these findings contribute to our understanding of preschooler's social development.

After two years the Social Development Lab will be saying good-bye to our project coordinator, Lauren Mutignani, who will be starting a PhD program in clinical psychology at the University of Arkansas this fall. We wish Lauren well!

We thank you for your ongoing support and participation!

Staff members:

Director:

Dr. Jamie Ostrov

Professional staff:

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