Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Science

The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California, Davis invites applications for 2 to 3 qualified Junior Specialists focusing on Language Development in Individuals with FXS, DS, or ASD in the lab of Leonard Abbeduto, Ph.D., and Angela John Thurman, Ph.D.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The incumbent for this position will be involved in several projects focused on characterizing, measuring, and treating the language impairments of children, adolescents, and young adults with fragile X syndrome (FXS), Down syndrome (DS), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). At the core of all the research we do is the collection and analysis of audio-recorded samples of spoken language from children, adolescents, and adults with neurodevelopmental disorders collected under well-controlled conditions. The procedures for collecting these samples, which we call Expressive Language Sampling (ELS), are being widely disseminated and are increasingly being used by other researchers and clinicians around the United States. Learning how to transcribe and analyze these samples is thus a valuable research experience and will help prepare the incumbent with skills needed for a variety of further academic pursuits as well as for participating in the preparation of reports for our lab for presentation at scientist conferences and publication.

Under the direction of the PIs, the incumbent will learn to transcribe and analyze audio-recorded samples of spoken language according to standard child language conventions using specialized software. The incumbent will also work with the PIs and other lab staff to organize and track transcription activities, as well as learn to score transcriptions to determine fidelity and agreement across transcribers in the lab. The incumbent will learn to work with other transcribers to reach consensus on problematic transcription and coding issues that arise and will collaborate with other lab members to help update transcription and coding manuals. They will learn to perform behavioral coding of transcripts and of video-recorded interactions using specialized software and work with other members of the lab in activities needed to prepare data for analysis for reports, presentations, and publications, including data checks for accuracy and data entry. As the incumbent works with the PIs on conceptualizing and preparing reports for presentation and publication, they will learn techniques for statistical analysis and presentation of data. . In addition, the incumbent will attend weekly lab meetings and, in collaboration with the PIs, help to prepare manuscripts and presentations.

General responsibilities include:

I. RESEARCH ACTIVITY

- Learn to use SALT and other specialized software to transcribe and code audio/video-recorded language samples obtained from study participants. These samples are the core data for the scientific presentation and publication of the lab.
- Learn to use specialized software to code behavioral data obtained during lab visits using coding systems for characterizing social and communicative behaviors. These data are used to supplement language transcriptions in the presentations and publications of the lab.
- Meet with the PIs and other transcribers and coders in the lab on a regular basis to ensure consistency of transcription and coding and to reach consensus on and challenging transcription/coding decisions.
- Work with other lab members to accurately enter and track information about transcription and coding activities and progress
- Update transcription and coding manuals for the lab as needed
- Assist with data processing, data checking, data management, and statistical analysis in SPSS and other software programs

II. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND ACTIVITY

- Attend weekly lab meetings and bi-weekly transcription meetings.

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- Prepare presentations for conferences and the community in collaboration with the PIs by participating in weekly lab discussions and meeting on an individual basis with the PIs to develop ideas and plans for data analysis and to review drafts of presentations and manuscripts.
- As needed, assist PI with preparation of grant applications including conducting literature searches and analyses of pilot data
- Contribute to writing manuscripts for publication, including assisting with data cleaning, literature reviews, and synthesis of information for dissemination of research findings to the public, with these contributions determined by the agenda of the lab and the particular interests of the incumbent.
- Develop research questions in collaboration with the PIs through weekly lab discussions and individual meetings and by preparing written drafts of questions for feedback, as well as perform analyses of data collected as part of the research study to be presented at internal and/or professional conferences, with authorship possible depending on the level of contribution.
- Attend research presentations at the MIND Institute, including biweekly Research Seminar Series talks and Monthly Distinguished Lecture Series presentations , which are critical for learning about the research enterprise and about the clinical populations being studied in the lab.

III. UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC SERVICE
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with, and provide outreach presentations to, community and neurodevelopmental disorder and advocacy agencies (e.g., Down Syndrome Information Alliance of Sacramento), schools, and service providers for participant recruitment purposes.
- Participate in MIND Institute committees and meetings around research ethics and quality control, sharing information learned with other lab members.

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS
- Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Human Development, Linguistics, Communicative Disorders, Special Education, or a related field by September 2017 with a minimum of 1 year of experience in behavioral science research or working directly with children with neurodevelopmental disorders
- Experience in data entry or data management
- Excellent written skills to communicate effectively with the public, participants, and other team members in an academic setting

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
- Experience managing multiple tasks simultaneously
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a team
- Demonstrated ability to work in a fast-paced setting with composure, courtesy, and professional attitude
- Demonstrated ability to perform detail-oriented tasks with a high degree of accuracy
- Excellent verbal communication skills to effectively interact with the community and research participants and to train undergraduate research assistants

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:
- Experience in transcription of audio-recorded language samples
- Experience in coding of behavioral observational data
- Ability to participate in discussion of research results and contribute to manuscript preparation, including literature reviews, data cleaning activities, and synthesis of information
- Excellent interpersonal manner
- Experience with basic Microsoft applications such as Word and Excel

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POSITION AVAILABLE/CLOSING DATE:
This position is open effective 7/28/2017 with an initial review date of 8/11/2017. The posting will remain open until 6/30/2018 or until filled.

TERM OF APPOINTMENT:
This is a one-to-two year appointment at 50%-75% effort.

TO APPLY:
For full consideration, applications must be received by 7/28/2017; however, the position will remain open until filled through 6/30/2018 or until filled. To apply, please go to the following link: https://recruit.ucdavis.edu/apply/JPF01740

Applicants should submit cover letter, CV or resume, and contact information for at least 3-5 references. Documents/materials must be submitted as PDF files.

QUESTIONS:
Please direct questions to Angela John Thurman, PhD, ajthurman@ucdavis.edu

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age or protected veteran status. For the complete University of California nondiscrimination and affirmative action policy see: http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/NondiscrimAffirmAct.

Under Federal law, the University of California may employ only individuals who are legally able to work in the United States as established by providing documents as specified in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Certain UCSC positions funded by federal contracts or sub-contracts require the selected candidate to pass an E-Verify check. More information is available http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify.

UC Davis is a smoke & tobacco-free campus (http://breathefree.ucdavis.edu/).

If you need accommodation due to a disability, please contact the recruiting department.