

Precious Elam

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EDUCATION

Columbia University, Teachers College

New York, NY

Master of Arts in Developmental Psychology

September 2020 - June 2022

- Focus: Early childhood development, parent-child interaction, poverty & neurodevelopment, emotion regulation, school-based intervention
- M.A. Capstone: "Are Early Childhood Educators Prepared to Support Traumatized Students from Multicultural Backgrounds?: A Review" (2022) - see Scholarly Work.

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Los Angeles, CA

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

September 2012 - June 2016

- Education Abroad: Portuguese Language Intensive Program, Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Coordinator

New York, NY

Neuropsychology & Education Lab (NEED Lab), Columbia University

January 2022 – August 2025

Supervisor: Dr. Kimberly Noble

Baby's First Years (BFY) - Randomized Control Trial

May 2022 – February 2024

- Contributed to the first RCT examining whether poverty reduction - through unconditional monthly cash transfers to low-income mothers - directly influences children's early brain development, family well-being, and parent-child interaction quality.
- As part of a coding team of 6, independently coded 1,500+ parent-child interaction videos using validated observational coding systems, analyzing caregiver warmth, responsiveness, cognitive stimulation, and developmentally supportive parenting behaviors across diverse low-income families.
- Developed and implemented a coding protocol that reduced team coding time by 30%, improving data consistency and synthesis efficiency across a large-scale longitudinal dataset.
- Managed participant outreach, survey administration, and task tracking for 50+ participants, maintaining 100% on-time task completion.

BUDDY Study

February 2024 – August 2025

Building Understanding of Developmental Differences Across Years

- Supported longitudinal data collection for a NICHD-funded study following ~200 children from birth through age 4.5, examining how socioeconomic experiences shape brain function, language, and memory development in early childhood.
- Managed participant outreach, survey administration, and follow-up communications to ensure timely completion of study protocols across an active family cohort.
- Conducted data quality checks and maintained participant records across multiple study waves, supporting the integrity of longitudinal data collection.
- Engaged families from underserved communities to support study participation and retention - a critical component of longitudinal developmental research with this population.

Graduate Research Assistant - Educational Intervention Fadeout Meta-Analysis

New York, NY

Supervisor: Dr. Tyler Watts, Teachers College, Columbia University

January 2022 – May 2022

- Contributed to a large-scale meta-analysis examining the durability of educational intervention effects across 86 RCTs comprising 56,662 child participants across social-emotional and cognitive outcome domains.
- Cleaned and managed data across 86 randomized controlled trials; conducted discrepancy checking and double-coding on 1,500+ data points to establish inter-rater reliability.
- Conducted data reliability checks using a meta-regression framework analyzing 450 outcomes across post-test and follow-up timepoints.

Acknowledged contributor: Watts, T.W., Hart, E.R., & Bailey, D.H. "How General is Educational Intervention Fadeout? A Meta-Analysis of Educational RCTs with Follow-Up." (2024)

Research Assistant - Middle School & High School Diversity Project

UCLA Dept. of Psychology | Drs. Sandra Graham & Jaana Juvonen

Los Angeles, CA

September 2015 – June 2016

- Contributed to a longitudinal study examining the psychosocial benefits of racial and ethnic diversity in urban middle and high schools, with emphasis on adolescent mental health, intergroup attitudes, and school adaptation.
- Administered surveys, conducted structured interviews, and ran observational studies in middle and high school settings; cleaned and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data in SPSS and Stata.
- Synthesized findings into literature reviews and research summaries communicating implications for school policy and adolescent mental health.

APPLIED RESEARCH & PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Student Disability Specialist

The Preuss School UC San Diego

San Diego, CA

January 2026 – Present

- Provide individualized academic and learning support to students with diverse learning needs in a college-preparatory school serving exclusively first-generation, low-income youth.
- Implement structured behavioral and academic interventions; observe and document student learning patterns and behavioral responses to inform individualized support strategies and intervention planning.

Kindergarten Classroom Instructor

Scoot Education / San Diego Unified School District

San Diego, CA

November 2025 – Present

- Provide classroom instruction for Kindergarten students, maintaining developmentally appropriate learning environments grounded in early childhood development principles.
- Support social-emotional learning by modeling and reinforcing emotion recognition, self-regulation, empathy, and prosocial behavior; implement scaffolded strategies supporting executive functioning development including attention, impulse control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility.
- Observe, document, and respond to behavioral and emotional patterns using trauma-informed and developmentally sensitive classroom approaches.

Freelance UX Researcher - Children's Technology & Educational Media

Independent Practice

Remote

August 2024 – Present

- Applied developmental science and human-centered research methods - including usability testing, participatory design, and behavioral observation - to research technology and educational-media products serving children, adolescents, and families.
- Designed and facilitated in-person research with child participants to evaluate an animated educational series; used behavioral observation and age-appropriate group methods - rather than self-report - to assess engagement and comprehension in young viewers.
- Served as Lead UX Researcher for FeelWell (Psyflo), an AI-driven mental health platform for middle and high school students; established a Youth Advisory Board for ongoing youth-centered co-design and produced a safety-informed product roadmap prioritizing adolescent well-being.
- Applied developmental science to content strategy for children's media and edtech clients, translating research on child development and family needs into program frameworks and practitioner resources.

Senior Program Manager

New York Urban League

New York, NY

September 2023 – December 2025

- Applied developmental psychology and trauma-informed principles to program design, student support, and staff training for a school-based after-school program serving 100+ low-income, first-generation high school students.
- Launched, designed, and led flagship student initiatives including an annual Mental Health Fair and HBCU College Tour - building each from the ground up to support college access, mental health awareness, and identity development among historically marginalized youth.
- Created and analyzed 30+ surveys and conducted 15 in-depth interviews to assess participant satisfaction and program effectiveness; applied findings to continuously redesign programming, producing a 70% increase in student engagement.
- Recruited, supervised, and coached staff and MSW interns through structured onboarding, performance evaluations, and professional development; facilitated 500+ hours of programming focused on mental health, identity development, and college readiness.
- Cultivated relationships with families, school leadership, and community organizations to strengthen student engagement, academic persistence, and postsecondary outcomes.

Program & Research Analyst

Center for Educational Improvement

Remote

January 2022 – February 2023

- Analyzed trauma-informed and social-emotional learning programs across K-12 settings, providing evidence-based recommendations that informed educator professional development and school climate improvements.
- Designed surveys and applied data-driven insights to evaluate and improve S-CCATE, a validated school culture and climate assessment tool used by partner schools.
- Developed practitioner-facing curriculum resources and implementation guides promoting trauma-informed care and social-emotional skill development in early childhood and K-12 settings.
- Collaborated across a team of 5 to translate developmental and education science into actionable frameworks for school-wide SEL implementation.

Family Coordinator & Child Development Specialist

College Sitters & Tutors

San Diego, CA

January 2019 – March 2020

- Managed a diverse caseload of family accounts, providing individualized developmental support, enrichment programming, and behavioral guidance for children ages 5 months-12 years.
- Conducted informal developmental observations and designed age-appropriate activities targeting cognitive, language, social-emotional, and motor development milestones for each child.
- Partnered with parents and caregivers to assess child developmental needs, share observational findings, and co-design routines reinforcing healthy development and parent-child interaction dynamics.

Assistant Director & Summer Program Coordinator

Upward Bound / Wahupa Educational Services (TRiO)

San Diego, CA

October 2016 – October 2018

- Managed federally funded TRiO college access programming serving 80+ first-generation, low-income high school students through academic advising, college application support, student counseling and mentorship, and postsecondary readiness.
- Designed and led a 6-week intensive summer academic program, supervising tutors, academic advisors, and summer staff across workshops, enrichment activities, and college campus experiences.
- Planned and facilitated 30+ programs focused on mental health, personal development, and self-exploration; maintained individualized student caseloads through personalized advising and well-being support.

SCHOLARLY WORK

Watts, T.W., Hart, E.R., & Bailey, D.H. (2024). "How General is Educational Intervention Fadeout? A Meta-Analysis of Educational RCTs with Follow-Up." Teachers College, Columbia University / Boston College / UC Irvine.

Acknowledged contributor.

Elam, P. (2022). "Are Early Childhood Educators Prepared to Support Traumatized Students from Multicultural Backgrounds?: A Review." M.A. Capstone Project, M.A. in Developmental Psychology, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Literature review examining trauma-informed intervention effectiveness in early childhood education, with attention to multicultural competency, educator preparedness, and equitable access to support for children of color in under-resourced schools.

RESEARCH METHODS & SKILLS

- **Behavioral observation & coding:** 1,500+ parent-child interaction videos; validated coding systems; inter-rater reliability
- **Longitudinal developmental research:** multi-wave studies (BUDDY, BFY, Diversity Project)
- **Randomized controlled trial research:** behavioral coding, data management & quality assurance (Baby's First Years)
- **Meta-analysis & systematic review:** data extraction, discrepancy checking & reliability coding across RCTs
- **Survey & qualitative research:** survey design/administration, semi-structured interviews, focus groups & thematic analysis
- **Statistical software: SPSS, Stata:** Research tools: Dovetail, Miro, Figma, Asana, Google Workspace

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Early childhood adversity & developmental psychopathology | Parent-child processes & emotion regulation | Resilience & developmental outcomes | Prevention & intervention | Development among underserved children and families