

This project is funded from the Research Experiences for Undergraduate (REU) Sites program in the SBE Directorate. Currently, the majority of developmental research is conducted by and focused on monolingual, white individuals from middle-to-high income households. To address the critical need to expand developmental theories to incorporate underserved and underrepresented populations this project will train students from these understudied populations to become researchers who can provide rich and needed perspectives on developmental science. Through participation in the University of Texas at Dallas's year-long REU, 30 students (10 per year) from historically underrepresented groups will learn the necessary tools to conduct high-quality research with real-world applications with families that are challenging-to-study, vulnerable, and underrepresented in the developmental science literature. Thus, the project will advance the field of developmental science by increasing diversity in both the researchers and the children who are researched.

Students will be drawn primarily from the Dallas/Ft Worth area, which compared to other similarly large cities in the U.S., has few research intensive 4-year institutions of higher learning, and few opportunities for students to gain high quality, first-hand research experiences. At least 50% of the students will be enrolled at one of Dallas College system's 7 community campuses, and the remaining students will be enrolled at The University of Texas at Dallas. A large number of historically underrepresented college students attend the local community colleges and UTD. In the fall, students will acquire skills needed for culturally-responsive research by taking an active role in the *Play With Me* program. *Play With Me*, a unique and important aspect of this REU's research experience, is a free 12-week parent/child (ages 0-3 years) community-based outreach program created by UTD developmental scientists and specialists based on playful-learning research and directed by developmental specialists of UTD's Center for Children and Families. With mentorship from UTD faculty, students will formulate new theoretically-driven research questions within ongoing data sets influenced by their *Play With Me* experience. In the spring, a faculty mentor team will guide students as they collect and analyze data from families recruited from *Play With Me*. In the summer, students will learn to disseminate findings to academic (journals, conferences) and non-academic (newsletters, community outreach) audiences. Fellows will also participate in brownbag discussions on professional development, including how to identify and apply to graduate schools, prepare for the GRE, and identify academic career options.

The students will receive stipends based on 10 hours per week participation across 42 weeks of the year-long program. Local mileage travel allowances are also provided, and support for domestic travel to professional conferences will be available on a competitive basis.