

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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NAME: Urqueta Alfaro, Andrea

eRA COMMONS USER NAME: URQUETAALFARO

POSITION TITLE: Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Envision Research Institute

EDUCATION/TRAINING:

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile Santiago, Chile	U.S. Equivalency of B.A. & M.A.	06/1998	Psychology
San Francisco State University San Francisco, CA	M.A. & Preliminary Education Specialist Credential	01/2007	Special Education, emphasis in Visual Impairments
University of California Berkeley, CA	Ph.D	05/2015	Psychology, emphasis in Child Development
Envision Research Institute Wichita, KS	Postdoctoral Research Fellow		Development of children who are Blind/Visually Impaired

A. Personal Statement

The overall goal of my research is to characterize the developmental patterns of infants who have visual impairments, and to relate them to these infants' varied levels of visual abilities. More specifically, I research early cognitive and social milestones that are related to positive developmental outcomes in sighted infants, yet are poorly understood in those with visual impairments. My current study investigates whether and how mouthing objects provides children with visual impairment with critical information about objects, even at ages at which sighted peers show decreased mouthing (Urqueta, Walker, Lee, Lei. *Do BVI adults use the mouth to perceive properties of objects?* Accepted for presentation at the 2017 Envision Conference). The results of my research will aid caregivers and professionals in differentiating between "atypical" behaviors that are indeed normative and instrumental for these infants, and those that signal developmental difficulties that warrant special intervention. My graduate studies on child development and visual impairments qualifies me to conduct this research. My 6 years of work as a child development specialist for visually impaired infants with the Blind Babies Foundation (CA, USA), qualifies me to translate my research results into intervention practices.

B. Positions and Honors**Positions and Employment**

1995-1998	Teacher Assistant, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Psychology Dept, Santiago, Chile
1997-1998	Research Assistant, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Psychology Dept, Santiago, Chile
1998-1998	Psychology Intern, "Manantial" Therapeutic Center for Children with Developmental Disabilities, Santiago, Chile
2000-2001	Program Team Member, Initial Teacher Training and Strengthening Program, Division of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Santiago, Chile
2002-2008	Vision Impairment Specialist, Blind Babies Foundation, Oakland, CA
2008-2014	Graduate Student Instructor, University of California at Berkeley, Psychology Dept, Berkeley, CA
2012-2012	Lecturer, San Francisco State University, College of Education

- 2008-2015 Graduate Student Researcher, Psychology Department & School of Optometry Clinical Research Center, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
2016- Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Envision Research Institute, Wichita, KS

Awards and Honors

- 1997 Excellent Academic Achievement Scholarship, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
1998 Anita Reutter Scholarship, Psychology Department, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
2004 Dorothy Misbach Scholarship, College of Education, San Francisco State University
2005 Dorothy Misbach Scholarship, College of Education, San Francisco State University
2005 Chris Larsen Scholarship, College of Education, San Francisco State University
2006 Dorothy Misbach Scholarship, College of Education, San Francisco State University
2006 Dorothy B. Lucas Scholarship, College of Education, San Francisco State University
2012 Conference Travel Grant, Psychology Department, University of California at Berkeley
2014 Travel Grant, Graduate Division, University of California at Berkeley
2014 Conference Travel Grant, University of California at San Diego

Professional Activities

- 1994-1994 Executive Secretary, Psychology Students Association, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
2001-2001 Team Member First Seminar in Psychology and Handicap, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile
2008-2010 Graduate Assembly Psychology Delegate, University of California at Berkeley
2009-2010 External Affairs Vice-President Chief of Staff, Graduate Assembly, University of California at Berkeley
2010-2011 Member Chancellor's Task Force on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community, University of California at Berkeley
2011-2012 Project Coordinator/Trainer, Professional Exchange Program, Blind Babies Foundation, US & Arabic Society for Rehabilitation, Bethlehem, Palestinian Territories
2012-2012 Presenter, Congreso Familiar (conference for Spanish-speaking families of children with disabilities), Hayward, CA
2011-2015 Member Standing Committee Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community, University of California at Berkeley
2012- Member Red Iberoamericana de Apego (Inter-American Attachment Network)

Invited Lectures

- "The Development of Infants with Visual Impairments", Psychology Department, University of California at Berkeley, Fall 2008.
"Intersubjectivity in Infancy", Psychology Department, University of California at Berkeley, Spring 2011.
"Joint Engagement in Infants with Visual Impairments: Study Design and Data Collection", School of Education, University of San Francisco, SF, CA, Fall 2013.
"Introduction to attachment theory", Psychology Department, University of California at Berkeley, Spring 2013.
"Joint Engagement in Infants with Visual Impairments: Initial Results", College of Education, University of San Francisco, SF, CA, Fall 2014.
"Impact of visual impairment in child development", Grand Rounds, Kansas University School of Medicine, Wichita, KS, Fall, 2016.
"Joint Engagement in Infants with Visual Impairment and its Relationship to Infants' Visual Measurements", Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Austin, TX, Spring 2017.
"Social Cognition and Visual Impairment", Wichita State University Psychology Department, Wichita, KS, invited to present in October, 2017.

C. Contributions to Science

1. Developmental Patterns of Joint Engagement in Visually Impaired Infants

Even though the coordination of attention between a social partner and an external focus of shared interest, (i.e., joint engagement) is associated with positive developmental outcomes in sighted children, very few studies had researched its development in infants with visual impairments. Furthermore,

atypicalities in joint engagement had been reported in visually impaired infants. This, in the absence of an understanding of joint engagement's typical development in visually impaired infants, places them at risk for being misdiagnosed as autistic. In my graduate work I collected a rare and hard to obtain dataset consisting of 51 hours of visually impaired infant/caregiver videotaped interactions. Behavioral video analysis showed that all visually impaired infants participated in joint engagement and that the percentage of time they did so significantly increased between the younger and older group tested. These findings contributed to the characterization of joint engagement development in this understudied population by demonstrating that joint engagement is evident in these infants by the end of the first year of life, and that its prevalence increases significantly by roughly 18 months of age.

- a. Urqueta, A., Morash, V., Lei, D., Orel-Bixler, D. Joint Engagement in infants with visual impairments and its relationship to infants' visual measurements. Presented at the 2017 Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Conference, Austin, TX, USA.
- b. Urqueta, A., Morash, V., Lei, D., Orel-Bixler, D. (2016). Joint engagement in infants with visual impairment and its relationship to infants' visual levels. (Under Review).
- c. Urqueta, A. (2015). Joint engagement and attachment patterns in infants with visual impairments (Doctoral dissertation).

2. Infants' contrast sensitivity levels predict visually impaired infants' joint engagement

Research most often describes VI infants' visual levels only in terms of their reductions in visual acuity. It is known however that contrast sensitivity is relevant for infants' early experiences that are conducive to joint engagement such as space navigation and face discrimination. In my doctoral work, statistical modeling showed that contrast sensitivity, as measured with the preferential looking paradigm, predicted joint engagement. This finding suggested that contrast sensitivity has a role in visually impaired infants' ability to coordinate attention between a social partner and an external focus. This finding also highlighted the need for researchers to consider infants' contrast sensitivity levels, beyond their visual acuity impairments.

- a. Urqueta, A., Morash, V., Lei, D., Orel-Bixler, D. Joint Engagement in infants with visual impairments and its relationship to infants' visual measurements. Presented at the 2017 Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Conference, Austin, TX, USA.
- b. Urqueta, A., Morash, V., Lei, D., Orel-Bixler, D. (2016). Joint engagement in infants with visual impairment and its relationship to infants' visual levels. (Under Review).
- c. Urqueta, A. (2015). Joint engagement and attachment patterns in infants with visual impairments (Doctoral dissertation).

3. Applicability of the Strange Situation Paradigm for Attachment Assessment in Visually Impaired Infants

The Strange Situation Paradigm had been extensively used in sighted children to characterize attachment, that is, infants' ability to identify and seek proximity to the caregiver most likely to protect them. Infant-caregiver visual interactions played an important role in the theoretical understanding of attachment development, yet no published study had applied the Strange Situation Paradigm (a procedure designed for typically sighted children) to assess attachment in infants with visual impairments without additional disabilities. In my doctoral work, I adapted the Strange Situation protocol to provide infants with non-visual cues of the procedure's critical events for the triggering of attachment behavior. Results showed that all but 1 of the tested visually impaired infants demonstrated attachment behavior. This indicated that, with additional non-visual cues, the Strange Situation Paradigm can be used to assess the quality of attachment in visually impaired infants.

- a. Urqueta, A., Meinz, P. J., Morash, V., Lei, D., Kronberg, J., Lara, D., Jian, S., Moore, M. (2016). Attachment patterns in infants with visual impairments based on the Strange Situation Paradigm. (Under Review).
- b. Urqueta, A. (2015). Joint engagement and attachment patterns in infants with visual impairments (Doctoral dissertation).
- c. Urqueta, A., Meinz, P. J., Morash, V., Orel-Bixler, D. (2014). Strange situation paradigm applied to infants with visual impairments and their caregivers: Initial results. Poster presented at the Inter-American Attachment Conference. Attachment Theory: A Humanistic Approach for Cross-Cultural Practice & Research, San Diego, USA.
- d. Urqueta, A., & Orel-Bixler, D. (2012). Attachment patterns in children who have visual impairments. Poster presentation at the Second International Conference Red Iberoamericana de Apego (Ibero-American Attachment Network), Santiago, Chile.

4. Attachment Patterns Distribution in Infants with Visual Impairments

Research had found that in sighted infants who had not been socially deprived in early development, most attachment patterns were “secure”. Studies had also shown that “secure” attachment was linked to better social skills and emotional regulation. In contrast, “insecure” attachment had been related to anxiety disorders and hostile/aggressive behavior. Despite the developmental significance of the security of attachment, and the role that early infant-caregiver visual interaction was given in theories of attachment, no published study had reported attachment pattern distribution in visually impaired infants without additional disabilities. My doctoral work applied a modified version of the Strange Situation Paradigm to assess the quality of attachment in 20 infants with visual impairments (without other disabilities). Results showed that most attachment patterns in the sample were “secure”. This provided evidence that the distribution of attachment patterns in visually impaired infants is comparable to that of sighted peers.

- a. Urqueta, A., Meinz, P. J., Morash, V., Lei, D., Kronberg, J., Lara, D., Jian, S., Moore, M. (2016). Attachment patterns in infants with visual impairments based on the Strange Situation Paradigm. (Under Review).
- b. Urqueta, A. (2015). Joint engagement and attachment patterns in infants with visual impairments (Doctoral dissertation).
- c. Urqueta, A., Meinz, P. J., Morash, V., Orel-Bixler, D. (2014). Strange situation paradigm applied to infants with visual impairments and their caregivers: Initial results. Poster presented at the Inter-American Attachment Conference. Attachment Theory: A Humanistic Approach for Cross-Cultural Practice & Research, San Diego, USA.
- d. Urqueta, A., & Orel-Bixler, D. (2012). Attachment patterns in children who have visual impairments. Poster presentation at the Second International Conference Red Iberoamericana de Apego (Ibero-American Attachment Network), Santiago, Chile.

****complete list of published work available on Google Scholar***

D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

Ongoing Research Support

Envision Research Fellowship 02/01/2016-Present
“Coordinated Joint Engagement, Attachment, and Haptic Development in Infants with Visual Impairments”
The goal of this research is to characterize early emotional, cognitive and haptic development in visually impaired infants, in relationship to these infants’ visual acuity and contrast sensitivity levels.
Role: PI

Completed Research Support

Soroptimist Founder Region Fellowship, Soroptimist International	08/01/2014-12/31/2014
Fellowship, Psychology Department, University of California, Berkeley	08/01/2014-12/31/2014
Summer Grant, Graduate Division, University of California, Berkeley	06/01/2014-07/31/2014
Research Assistantship for the Humanities, Committee on Research, University of California, Berkeley	08/01/2013-12/31/2013