Sarah Stolp Shepherd

Education

University of California, Berkeley
PhD, Developmental Psychology, Advisor: Celeste Kidd — May 2026 (expected)

BA, Cognitive Science — 2021
Dean's List, College of Letters & Sciences

University of Otago, New Zealand
Study abroad — 2020–2021
Awarded Council Commendation for Exceptional Performance — 2020

Publications

Shepherd, S., & Kidd, C. (2024). Visual engagement is not synonymous with learning in young children. *In Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science* Society (Vol. 46).

Shepherd, S., Smith, G., Lambert, M., Mitchell, M., & Kidd, C. (in prep) Representations of uncertainty in biological intelligences and AI .

Shepherd, S., Völter, C., & Kidd, C. (in prep) Goldilocks effect of visual attention in dogs.

Recent Presentations

Shepherd, S. & Kidd, C. Visual engagement as a predictor of learning. Poster presented at 13th Annual Budapest CEU Conference on Cognitive Development; Jan 5 – 7, 2023, Budapest, Hungary.

Shepherd, S. Investigating the limits of visual engagement as a predictor of learning in young children. Presentation at UC Berkeley Developmental Psychology Colloquium; Oct 28, 2023, Berkeley, CA.

Shepherd, S. Attention & learning in young children. Presentation at NSF advisory board meeting; December 5, 2023, Berkeley, CA.

Shepherd, S. Overstimulating media & the attention economy. Invited lecture, Methods in Cognitive Development, UC Berkeley; Feb 26, 2024, Berkeley, CA.

Shepherd, S. & Kidd, C. (2024) Visual engagement is not synonymous with learning in young children. Poster presented at 46th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society; July 26, 2024, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Research Experience

Graduate Student Researcher, Doctoral Candidate | Kidd Lab, UC Berkeley 2021 – current
Project: Visual Engagement & Learning

- Conceptualized, designed, and executed a novel eye-tracking study with young children
- Demonstrated that visual attention does not predict learning in young children and in fact may predict learning deficits.

- Implemented eye-tracking study with 3- to 6-year-old participants, overseeing a team of 12 research assistants.
- Analyzed and visualized eye-tracking data using R.

Project: “Doggy-locks”: drivers of attention across species
- Coordinated international collaboration with Clever Dog Lab in Vienna to employ an infant eye-tracking paradigm with dogs.
- Investigated uncertainty as driver of attention across species using eye-tracking and computational modeling

Project: Uncertainty signaling across species
- Led collaboration of experts from disparate disciplines to better understand signals of uncertainty in a wide variety of species and artificial intelligences.

Harvard University
Computational Cognitive Models of Learning & Development Workshop May 15–19, 2023

- Presented Bayesian model predicting believability of speaker statements based on novel behavioral data.

Undergraduate Research Assistant 2019–2021

Project: Pseudoscientific Beliefs
- Contributions acknowledged in Marti, L., & Kidd, C. (2021). "Fringe" beliefs aren't fringe. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, 43.

Teaching Experience & Service

Graduate Student Instructor | UC Berkeley Spring 2022, 2023, 2024
- Taught Introduction to Methods in Cognitive Development. Designed course materials, graded, and conducted lab sections for 60+ undergraduate students each semester.

Faculty Graduate Student Committee | UC Berkeley Psychology dept. Fall 2023–present
- Advocate for graduate students in the psychology department. Liaise with faculty to discuss student concerns and find solutions.

Skills

- Proficient in: Python, R
- Experimental design
- Statistical and computational modeling