

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### HEATHER A. YARGER

Licensed Clinical Psychologist in State of Maryland  
James Madison University  
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Harrisonburg, VA 22807  
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#### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

2025 – Present **James Madison University**, Harrisonburg, VA  
Assistant Professor (tenure-track)  
Department of Psychology  
Director, Psychophysiology, Autism, Anxiety, and NeuroDevelopmental Adaptation Lab (PAANDA Lab)

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#### EDUCATION

2018 – 2021 **University of Maryland (UMD)**, College Park, MD  
Developmental Social Cognitive Neuroscience Lab  
Postdoctoral Associate

2012 – 2018 **University of Delaware**, Newark, DE  
Ph.D., Clinical Psychology (August 2018)  
M.A., Psychology (May 2015)  
APA and PCSAS Accredited

2017 – 2018 **Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine**  
Behavioral Psychology Department, Baltimore, MD  
APA Accredited Pre-doctoral Clinical Internship

2005 – 2009 **The Pennsylvania State University**, University Park, PA  
B.S., Psychology  
Minor, Human Development and Family Studies

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#### AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2022 Philip Merrill Presidential Scholars Faculty Mentor Award (Mentee: Kuburat Oladiran)  
2019 University of Maryland Postdoctoral Conference Support Award  
2017, 2013 University of Delaware Professional Development Award  
2017, 2015 University of Delaware Dr. Evelyn M. Fiorito Travel Award  
Summer 2016 University of Delaware Teaching Assistant Fellow  
2015 – 2016 University of Delaware Teaching Fellow  
2011 International Society for Autism Research Student Travel Award  
2008/2009 Tracy Winfree McCourtney Scholarship  
2008 Summer International Abroad Grant-in-Aid Scholarship  
2007/2008 Catherine Shultz Rein Trustee Scholarship  
2007 – 2009 Pennsylvania State University Dean's List

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#### FUNDED GRANTS

Principal Investigator **NIMH/NIH: 1K08MH133879-01**  
4/2024 – 3/2028 *Assessing Anxiety in Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder: The Role of*  
\$779,721 *Autonomic Activity as a Biomarker (ADORA Study)*

Principal Investigator 07/2025 – 06/2027	<b>1L60MH141732-01 Health Disparities Research-Extramural NIH LRP</b>
Co-Investigator 2025 – 2026 \$34,399	<b>UMD Artificial Intelligence Interdisciplinary Institute at Maryland (AIM) – Research Seed Award Program</b> <i>AI-driven Development of Neurodiversity Affirming Practices for Teachers and Clinicians (ADAPT)</i>
Principal Investigator 7/24 – 6/25 \$2,500	<b>UMD Broadening Participation through diverse sampling</b>
Principal Investigator 1/22 – 12/22 \$71,695.10	<b>UMD Brain and Behavior Institute Seed Grant</b> <i>Respiratory sinus arrhythmia as a biomarker of anxiety in adolescents with autism spectrum disorder.</i>
Principal Investigator 07/21 – 06/23 \$2,500	<b>UMD Broadening Participation through diverse sampling</b>
Co-Investigator 07/21 – 06/23 \$30,000	<b>UMD Broadening Participation through community engaged research</b>

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## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

**Note: Name change occurred in June 2013 from Heather A. Close to Heather A. Yarger.**

\*Indicates mentored undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, or Master's student.

**Yarger, H.A.**, Straske, D., Fitter, M., Cassidy, J., & Redcay, E. (2025). Relations among parents' attachment, parenting quality, and autistic and non-autistic children's social-emotional functioning. *Attachment & Human Development*. doi:10.1080/14616734.2025.2530933

Jones, D. R., **Yarger, H. A.**, & Redcay, E. (2025). The Critical Need for Research Examining Mental Health Risk and Protective Factors in Black Autistic Youth. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, S0890-8567(25)00305-3. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2025.06.010>

McNaughton, K., Dziura, S., Lemay, E., **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (2025). *Neural similarity and interaction success in autistic and non-autistic adolescents*. Embargoed pre-registration: <https://osf.io/g6mv4>; *Scientific Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-91176-9>

**Yarger, H.A.**, Sarkar, M.\*, Harrington, E., & Redcay, E. (2024). Autonomic activity in individuals with autism and anxiety symptoms: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Review Journal of Autism and Developmental Disabilities*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40489-024-00449-y>

McNaughton, K.A., Moss, A.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (2024). Smiling synchronization predicts interaction enjoyment in peer dyads of autistic and neurotypical youth. *Autism*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13623613241238269>

**Yarger, H.A.**, Shariq, D., Hickey, A.\*, Giacobbe, E.\*, Dziura, S., & Redcay, E. (2023). Examining adolescents' mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10720734/>

Dziura, S. L., McNaughton, K. A., Giacobbe, E.\*, **Yarger, H. A.**, Hickey, A. C.\*, Shariq, D., & Redcay, E. (2023). Neural sensitivity to social reward predicts links between social behavior and loneliness in

youth during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Developmental Psychobiology*, 65, e22413. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.22413>

McNaughton, K.A., Kirby, L.A., Warnell, K.R., Alkire, D., Merchant, J.S., Moraczewski, D., **Yarger, H.A.**, Thurm, A., & Redcay, E. (2023). Neural sensitivity to social-interactive reward predicts future enjoyment of peer interaction in autism and typical development. *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcn.2023.101197>

Alkire, D., McNaughton, K.A., **Yarger, H.A.**, Shariq, D., & Redcay, E. (2022). Theory of mind in naturalistic conversations between autistic and typically developing children and adolescents. *Autism: the international journal of research and practice*, 13623613221103699. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613221103699>

**Yarger, H. A.** (2022). Anxiety–Amygdala Associations: Novel Insights from the First Longitudinal Study of Autistic Youth with Distinct Anxiety. *Biological Psychiatry*, 91(11), e41-e43. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2022.03.016>

Lyons-Ruth, K. & **Yarger, H.A.** (2022). Developmental Costs Associated with Early Maternal Withdrawal. *Child Development Perspectives*, 16, 10 – 17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12442>

**Yarger, H.A.**, Nordahl, C.W., & Redcay, E. (2022). Associations between amygdala volumes and anxiety symptoms in children with autism spectrum disorder. *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsc.2021.10.010>

**Yarger, H.A.**, Lind, T., Raby, L., Zajac, L., Wallin, A., & Dozier, M. (2021). Intervening with Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up to reduce behavior problems among children adopted internationally: Evidence from a randomized controlled trial. *Child Maltreatment*. doi:10.1177/10775595211010975

**Yarger, H.A.** & Redcay, E. (2020). A conceptual model of risk and protective factors associated with internalizing symptoms in autism spectrum disorder: A scoping review, synthesis, and call for more research. *Development and Psychopathology*, 32(4) 1254-1272. doi:10.1017/S095457942000084X

Lind, T., Raby, K.L., Goldstein, A., Bernard, K., Caron, E., **Yarger, H.A.**, Wallin, A., & Dozier, M. (2020). Improving social-emotional competence in internationally adopted children with the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up intervention. *Development and Psychopathology*. doi: 10.1017/S0954579420000255

Pumariega, A.J., Good, K., Posner, K., Millsaps, U., Romig, B., Stavarski, D., Rice, R., Gehret, M., Riley, k., Wasser, T., Walsh, G., & **Yarger, H.A.** (2020). Systematic Suicide Screening in a General Hospital Setting: Process and Initial Results. *World Journal of Social Psychiatry*. doi: 10.4103/WSP.WSP\_26\_19

Hoye, J., Cheishvili, D., **Yarger, H.A.**, Roth, T., Szyf, M., & Dozier, M. (2019). Preliminary indications that the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up Intervention alters DNA methylation in maltreated children. *Development and Psychopathology*, 1-9. doi:10.1017/S0954579419001421

**Yarger H.A.**, Bronfman, E., Carlson, E., Dozier, M. (2019). Intervening with Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up to decrease disrupted parenting behavior and attachment disorganization: The role of parental withdrawal. *Development and Psychopathology*, 1–10. doi:10.1017/S0954579419000786

**Yarger, H.A.**, Bernard, K., Caron, E., Wallin, A., & Dozier, M. (2019). Enhancing parenting quality for young children adopted internationally: Results of a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 1 – 13. doi:10.1080/15374416.2018.1547972

Lind, T., Bernard, K., **Yarger, H.A.**, & Dozier, M. (2019). Promoting compliance in children referred to child protective services: A randomized clinical trial. *Child Development*, 1 – 14. doi:10.1111/cdev.13207

Raby, K. L., Freedman, E., **Yarger, H.A.**, Lind, T., & Dozier, M. (2018). Enhancing the language development of toddlers in foster care by promoting parents' sensitivity: results from a randomized controlled trial. *Developmental Science*, 22(2), 1 – 9. doi:10.1111/desc.12753

Caron, E., Roben, C.K.P., **Yarger, H.A.**, & Dozier, M. (2018). Novel methods for screening clinicians: Contributions from the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up intervention. *Prevention Science*, 19(7), 894-903. doi:10.1007/s11121-018-0894-5

Raby, K.L., **Yarger, H.A.**, Lind, T., Fraley, R. C., Leerkes, E., & Dozier, M. (2017). Attachment states of mind among internationally adoptive and foster parents. *Development and Psychopathology*, 29(2), 365-378. doi:10.1017/S0954579417000049

**Yarger, H.A.**, Hoyer, J.R., & Dozier, M. (2016). Trajectories of change in attachment and biobehavioral catch-up among high-risk mothers: A randomized clinical trial. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 37(5), 525-536. doi:10.1002/imhj.21585

Grassetti, S.N., Herres, J., Williamson, A.A., **Yarger, H.A.**, Layne, C.M., & Kobak, R. (2014). Narrative focus moderates symptoms change trajectories in group treatment for traumatized and bereaved adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 44(6), 933-941. doi:10.1080/15374416.2014.913249

Stacy, M. E., Zablotsky, B., **Yarger, H.A.**, Zimmerman, A., Makia, B., & Lee, L. C. (2013). Sex differences in co-occurring conditions of children with autism spectrum disorders. *Autism*, 18(8), 965-974. doi:10.1177/1362361313505719

**Close, H.A.**, Lee, L.-C., Kaufmann, C. N., & Zimmerman, A. W. (2012). Co-occurring conditions and change in diagnosis in autism spectrum disorders. *Pediatrics*, 129(2), 305-16. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-1717

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## MENTORED UNDERGRADUATE POSTERS & PRESENTATIONS

\*Indicates mentored undergraduate or post-baccalaureate student

Gyimah, D.\*, Thomas, S.B. & **Yarger, H.A.** (April, 2025). *Intersectionality of Race, Autism, and Anxiety in Marginalized Youth*. Poster presented to the 2025 UMD Undergraduate Research Fair.

Resnick, R.\* & **Yarger, H.A.** (April, 2025). *Discrepancies between parent- and child-reported anxiety in adolescents*. Poster presented to the 2025 UMD Department of Psychology Research Fair.

Resnick, R.\* & **Yarger, H.A.** (April, 2025). *Discrepancies between parent- and child-reported anxiety in adolescents*. Poster presented to the 2025 UMD Undergraduate Research Fair.

Vargas-Rosario, A. M.\* & **Yarger, H. A.**, & Redcay, E. (October, 2024). *Alexithymia and Negative Affect in Autistic and Nonautistic Adolescents*. Poster accepted to the 2024 32<sup>nd</sup> Puerto Rico Neuroscience Conference.

Vargas-Rosario, A. M.\* & **Yarger, H. A.**, & Redcay, E. (October, 2024). *Alexithymia and Negative Affect in Autistic and Nonautistic Adolescents*. Poster accepted to the 2024 10th Behavioral Health Student Research Symposium of Southern Puerto Rico at Ponce Health Sciences University.

Vargas-Rosario, A. M.\* & **Yarger, H. A.** (July, 2024). *Alexithymia and Negative Affect in Autistic and Nonautistic Adolescents*. Poster presented to the 2024 University of Maryland Summer Research Initiative Culminating Event.

McDowell, J.\*, Redcay, E., & **Yarger, H.A.** (Nov., 2023). *Associations between Emotion Regulation Coping strategies and Heart Rate Variability in Autistic Versus Nonautistic Adolescents*. Oral presentation accepted to the 2023 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists.

McDowell, J.\*, Redcay, E., & **Yarger, H.A.** (July, 2023). *Associations between Emotion Regulation Coping strategies and Heart Rate Variability in Autistic Versus Nonautistic Adolescents*. Poster and 1-minute blitz presented to the 2023 University of Maryland Summer Research Initiative Culminating Event.

Sarkar, M.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, Harrington, E., & Redcay, R. (April, 2023). *Autonomic activity in youth with anxiety and autism: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. Poster presented to the 2023 UMD Neuroscience Research Fair.

Sarkar, M.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, Harrington, E., & Redcay, R. (April, 2023). *Autonomic activity in youth with anxiety and autism: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. Poster presented to the 2023 UMD Undergraduate Research Fair.

Oladiran, O.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (April, 2023). *The effect of intersectionality of race and autism on children*. Poster presented to the 2023 UMD Psychology Terp Research Fair. Awarded the People's Choice Award.

Bitman, A.\*, Shenge, V.A., **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (April, 2023). *Examining the relationship between self and parent-reported anxiety symptoms in adolescents with and without autism spectrum disorder*. Poster presented to the 2023 UMD Psychology Terp Research Fair.

Sarlak, D.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, Munshell, P., & Redcay, E. (April, 2023). *The effect of number of friends on anxious/depressed symptoms in autistic and non-autistic youth*. Poster presented to the 2023 UMD Psychology Terp Research Fair.

Hudnall, F.\*, Munshell, P., **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (Nov, 2022). *"And how did that make you feel?": Associations between adolescents' social experiences and mood during the covid-19 pandemic*. Paper presented to the 2022 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists. Received award for "Outstanding Presentation."

Hudnall, F.\*, Munshell, P., **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (2022). *"And how did that make you feel?": Associations between adolescents' social experiences and mood during the covid-19 pandemic*. Poster and 1-minute blitz presented to the 2022 University of Maryland Summer Research Initiative Culminating Event.

Kiely, M.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, Merchant, J., & Redcay, E. (2020). *Amygdala volume and social reward in children with and without autism spectrum disorder*. Poster presented at the 2020 University of Maryland Undergraduate Research Day.

Bloomer, B.\*, Shariq, D.\*, Alkire, D., **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (2020). *Parental mental state talk and associations with children's mentalizing ability in children with and without autism spectrum disorder*. Poster presented at the 2020 University of Maryland Psychology Undergraduate Research Day.

Sapoznik, M.\*, Reiter, M.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, & Redcay, E. (2020). *Mental state talk associations between parents and children in families with autism spectrum disorder and typical development*. Poster presented at the 2020 University of Maryland Psychology Undergraduate Research Day.

Freedman, E.\*, Sanders, M.\*, Tobin, K.\*, **Yarger, H.A.**, & Dozier, M. (2015). *Investigating moderators of change in positive regard among high-risk birth parents*. Poster presented at the 2015 University of Delaware Undergraduate Research Day.

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## SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

**Service**

August 2025 – Present	James Madison University, Institutional Review Board Member
January 2023 – Present	<i>Infant and Child Development</i> , Editorial Board Member
June 2023 – Present	<i>Child Development</i> , Consulting Editor
July 2025	NIH Autism Data Science Initiative (ADSI) Study Section Reviewer
July 2022 – June 2025	UMD Institutional Review Board, Member
2018 – 2025	University of Maryland Autism Research Consortium, Member

**Professional Memberships**

American Psychological Association  
 Biological Psychiatry  
 Flux Congress  
 International Society for Autism Research  
 Maryland Psychological Association  
 Society for Research and Child Development  
 Society for Prevention Research

**Ad Hoc Reviewer**

*Autism*  
*British Journal of Developmental Psychology*  
*Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*  
*Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*  
*Child Abuse & Neglect*  
*Children*  
*Children and Youth Services*  
*Child Development*  
*New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*  
*Journal of Child and Family Studies*  
*Journal of Family Psychology*  
*The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*  
*Journal of Neuroscience Research*  
*The Journal of Primary Prevention*  
*Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*