

2022 Yale Child Study Center Psychology Fellows



Saja (Sah-jah) Almusawi (al-moo-sah-wee), MA, is the first-year Trauma Psychology Fellow at the Yale Child Study Center. She is a Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology at the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM). Saja received her B.A. in psychology from the University of Michigan-Dearborn with high distinction. She worked as a research assistant in the Interpersonal Relationships, Emotions, and Personality Lab at the University of Michigan, and as a behavior technician at Centria Healthcare, providing direct client care to children in an institutional and home setting. During her graduate training, Saja provided outpatient therapeutic and assessment services to children, adolescents, and adults at the UDM Clinic and Oakland University Counseling Center, working with patients from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and varying levels of psychopathology and distress. She furthered her training at Hawthorn Center, an inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric facility, where she conducted individual therapy, comprehensive psychological assessments, and facilitated several therapy groups. Saja received specialized training in psychological assessments, personality assessment and functioning, psychodynamic therapy, and received certification in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. An active member of the Arab-Muslim community throughout Metro Detroit, Saja is currently involved with several organizations working to identify critical mental and emotional needs of Arabs in North America. Saja's research investigates the applicability of well-established psychological theories in the realms of family and trauma, and whether they converge or diverge based upon racial, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. She aims to further contribute to research on parenting in ethnic and immigrant populations, as well as child development.



Danielle (Dan-yell) "Dani" Novick (No-vick), MS, is the first-year Young Child Psychology Fellow at the Yale Child Study Center. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD). Dani completed her undergraduate studies in Psychology and Neuroscience at UMD. After graduation, Dani spent 2 years as a research coordinator at UMD coordinating an NIH-funded R01 grant examining early interventions for preschoolers at risk for later anxiety and their parents. During her graduate training, Dani received specialized training in the assessment and treatment of youth with autism spectrum disorders as well as interventions for pediatric chronic pain through Children's National Hospital in Washington, DC. She also co-facilitated groups for neurodiverse and gender-diverse youth in the Gender and Autism Program at Children's National. She is certified in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) and has received training in adaptations of PCIT for children with anxiety and emotion dysregulation.



Teal Raffaele, MA is the first-year Autism Fellow at the Yale Child Study Center. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the Catholic University of America. Prior to pursuing her doctorate, Teal earned her master's degree in psychology from the College of William & Mary and worked as the Research Associate and Program Coordinator for the Autism Program at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Throughout her doctoral training, she has held clinical positions at Children's National Hospital and the Kennedy Krieger Institute, where she focused her training on neuropsychological and neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessment. She also has experience providing evidence-based individual, group, and parenting interventions to patients and families from a wide range of backgrounds and presentations. Her research interests include the development of more personalized intervention recommendations through investigations into the relationship between cognitive processes and clinical outcomes within the context of neurodevelopmental diagnoses, as well as evaluating how best to support neurodiverse individuals as they transition to adulthood. Beyond her clinical and research experiences, she has worked with individuals in the neurodevelopmental community through collaborations with college student disability support services as well as neurodiversity and autism advocacy groups.



Cara (Care-uh) Tomaso (Tuh-mahso), MA, is the first-year Peds Fellow at the Yale Child Study Center and a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She completed her undergraduate studies at Smith College, where she majored in psychology and applied statistics and became interested in health behaviors and substance use among adolescents. As a graduate student in UNL's Pediatric Health Lab, her research and clinical interests focused on executive function and the role of cognitive development in shaping children's physical and mental health outcomes. Her Master's thesis investigated how preschool sleep problems affect executive function development in childhood. She also received an NRSA Fellowship from NIH to fund her dissertation, which used neuroimaging to examine adolescents' executive function abilities as correlates of activity in regulatory- and reward-regions of the brain while viewing food images. Clinically, she has worked in a variety of medical and community-based settings, including a pediatric rehabilitation hospital, a child advocacy center, and outpatient clinics. Anchored in biopsychosocial and systems-based perspectives, she most enjoys working with children and families as they adjust to challenging medical diagnoses and collaborating with interdisciplinary care teams to optimize children's medical care.