

Molly Helt, PhD
Assistant Professor
Departments of Psychology & Neuroscience
Life Sciences Center
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EDUCATION

University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (2014)

Neuropsychology certificate

Developmental and Child Psychology certificate

Dissertation: *Facial feedback and laughter contagion in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*

M.S. in Psychology (2008)

Masters Thesis: *Contagious Yawning in Typical and Autistic Development*

Smith College, Northampton, MA

B.A. in Psychology (2006)

Undergraduate Thesis: *Neural basis of stereotype-induced shifts in women's mental rotation performance*

CURRENT POSITION

2014 – present

Assistant Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience

Trinity College, Hartford, CT

Courses:

Developmental Psychopathology

Developmental Neuroscience

Senior Seminar: The Social Self

Clinical Psychology

Current Issues in Neuroscience

First year seminar: Psychology of Happiness

Principles of Neuroscience (team taught)

Neuroscience Methods (team taught)

PUBLICATIONS (*denotes Trinity student author)

Dai, Y., Thomas, R., Brennan, L., **Helt, M.S.**, Barton, M., Dumont-Mathieu, T., & Fein,

- D.A. (in press). Teaching Skills to Toddlers: Development and Acceptability of an Online Program for Caregivers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Submitted to the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*.
- Helt M.S.**, de Marchena AB, *Schineller ME, *Kirk AI, *Scheub RJ, *Sorensen TM. Contagious itching is heightened in children with autism spectrum disorders. *Developmental Science*. 2020;00:e13024. <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13024>
- Helt, M.S.**, Fein, D. A., & *Vargas, J. (2019). Emotional contagion in children with autism spectrum disorder varies with stimulus familiarity and task instructions. *Development and Psychopathology*, 32 (1), 383-393.
- Fein, D. A. & **Helt, M.S.** (2017). Facilitating Autism Research. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, 23, 903–915.
- Helt, M.S.** & Fein, D. A. (2016). Facial Feedback and Social Input: Effects on Laughter in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 46, 83-94.
- Orinstein, A., Tyson, K., Suh, J., Troyb, E., **Helt, M.**, Rosenthal, M., Barton, M., Eigsti, I.M., Kelley, E.A., Naigles, L.R., Schultz, R.T., Stevens, M., & Fein, D.A. (2015). Psychiatric Symptoms in Youth with a History of Autism and Optimal Outcome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45, 3703-3714.
- Orinstein, A., **Helt, M.**, Troyb, E., Tyson, K.E., Barton, M. Eigsti, I.M., Naigles, L., & Fein, D.A. (2014). Intervention for Optimal Outcome in Children and Adolescents with a History of Autism. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, 35, 247-256.
- Tyson, K. E., Kelley, E., Fein, D., Orinstein, A., Troyb, E., Barton, M., Eigsti, I. M., Naigles, L., Schultz, R. T., Stevens, M., **Helt, M.**, & Rosenthal, M. (2014). Language and verbal memory in individuals with a history of autism spectrum disorders who have achieved optimal outcomes. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44, 648-663.
- Troyb, E., Orinstein, A., Tyson, K., **Helt, M.**, Eigsti, I.E., Stevens, M., Fein, D. (2013). Academic Abilities in Children and Adolescents with a History of Autism Spectrum Disorders Who Have Achieved Optimal Outcomes. *Autism*, 18, 233-243.
- Fein, D., Barton, M., Eigsti, I., Kelley, E., Naigles, L., Schultz, R.T., Stevens, M., **Helt, M.**, Orinstein, A., Mosenthal, M., Troyb, E. and Tyson, K. (2013) Optimal Outcome in Individuals with a History of Autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 54, 195–205.
- Marsh, K.L., Isenhower, R.W., Richardson, M.J., **Helt, M.**, Verbalis, A.D., Schmidt, R.

- C. & Fein, D.A. (2013). Autism and Social Disconnection in Interpersonal Rocking. *Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience*, 7, 4-17.
- Isenhower, R.W., Marsh, K.L., Richardson, M.J., **Helt, M.**, Schmidt, R. C. & Fein, D.A. (2012). Rhythmic Bimanual Coordination is Impaired in Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 6, 25-31.
- Helt, M.**, Eigsti, I. M., Snyder, P.J., & Fein, D.A. (2010). Contagious Yawning in Autistic and Typical Development. *Child Development*, 81, 1620-1631.
- Helt, M.**, Kelly, E., Boorstein, H., Pandey, J., Herbert, M., Kinsbourne, M., & Fein, D.A. (2008). Can Children with Autism Recover? If so, how? *Neuropsychology Reviews*, 18, 339-366.
- Wraga, M., **Helt, M.**, Jacobs, E., & Sullivan, K. (2007). Neural Basis of Stereotyped-Induced Shifts in Women's Mental Rotation Performance, *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 2, 12-19.
- DiBartolo, P.M, **Helt, M.** (2007). Theoretical Models of Affectionate versus Affectionless Control in Anxious Families: A Critical Examination Based on Observations of Parent-Child Interactions, *Clinical Child Family Psychology Review*, 10, 253-274.
- Wraga, M., Duncan, L., Jacobs, E., **Helt, M.**, & Church, J. (2007). Stereotype susceptibility narrows the gender gap in imagined self-rotation performance *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 14, 184.

Book Chapters

- Kinsbourne, M., & **Helt, M.** (2010). Entrainment, Mimicry, & Interpersonal Synchrony. In Fein, D.A., (Ed) Neuropsychology of Autism, (339-365), Oxford University Press.

Books

- Fein, D., **Helt, M.**, Brennan, L., & Barton, M. (2015). *The Activity Kit for Babies and Toddlers at Risk: How to Use Everyday Routines to Build Social and Communication Skills*. Guilford Press: New York.

Submitted

- Helt M.S.**, *Scheub RJ, *Sorensen TM, Nakhle, M., & Luddy, A.K. Patterns of contagion differ between adults with autistic versus psychopathic traits. *Frontiers in Psychology*.

In Progress

Helt, M.S., *Guay, M., Twachtman-Bassett, J., M.S., Dumont-Mathieu, T., Kalsner, L., Huedo-Medina, T.B., & Eigsti, I-M. (2020, April 21). Differences in repetitive and stereotyped behaviors and interests in females with ASD. Registered report retrieved from osf.io/q57jc

Selected professional presentations (*denotes Trinity student author)

Scheub RJ*, Luddy, AK*, Nakhle, M*, Little-Gill SC*, & **Helt MS.** (February 2020). “Empathy Traits are Associated with Higher Arousal to the Positive Emotions of Others and Lower Arousal to the Negative Emotions of Others” International Neuropsychological Society; Denver, CO.

Sorenson TM*, Scheub RJ*, Durkin, M. *, & **Helt MS.** (February 2019). “Eye gaze mediates diminished contagion in participants with ASD, but not psychopathic, traits” International Neuropsychological Society; NY, NY.

Helt, M.S., Kirk, A. *, & Sorenson, T. * (May, 2018). Contagious Itching is heightened amongst children with ASD. Poster presented to *International Meeting for Autism Research*; Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Helt, M., Bunker, S. *, Bocobo, G. *, & Lasky, E. * (May, 2017). Maternal Estrogen Exposure May Be Linked to Autism Risk 2017 Poster presented to *International Meeting for Autism Research, San Francisco, CA.*

Helt, M. (November, 2016). Addicted to Repetition? Reconceptualizing Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Invited lecture, *Connecticut Neuropsychological Society*, Trinity College, Hartford, CT.

Helt, M. & Fein, D.A. (March, 2015). Contagious Behaviors in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Poster presented to *Society for Research in Child Development*, Philadelphia, PA.

GRANTS

NIMH R01MH112687-01A1, 2018-2022, *Optimal Outcomes in ASD: Adult Functioning, Predictors, and Mechanisms*. PIs: Inge-Marie Eigsti & Deborah Fein. **Role: Consultant.** \$3,394,718 total costs (450K annual direct costs)

NIMH R34MH091208, *Teaching Skills to Toddlers: A Program for Caregivers*. PI: Deborah Fein. **Role: Consultant.** \$1,400,000 total costs.

SELECTED COLLEGE SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

2020-2021

Mellon Inclusion Grant Recipient

2020-	Faculty Supervisor, Active Minds
2020-	Fresh Check Planning Committee
2020	Covid-19 Emergency Planning Committee
2019-	Course Evaluations Committee
2017-2020	Academic Affairs Committee, Chair (Jan – Dec 2019, Co-chair, Jan 2020-present)
2019-2020	Writing Fellow
2018-	SARC Advisory Committee
2018-2019	Center for Teaching and Learning Fellow
2016-2017	Trinity College, Co-Chair Psychology Club
2014-2016	Trinity College, Graduate Student Council
2014-2016	Trinity College, Accreditation Committee
2014-2016	CCAN planning committee

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

2020-	Our team made our parent training website widely available to parents and providers during the covid-19 emergency.
2010-2018	Board Member, Connecticut Families for Effective Autism Treatment

AD HOC REVIEWER

Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry
Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders
Journal of Experimental Child Psychology
Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders
Autism
Neuropsychology
Brain and Cognition
Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry
Autism Research
Molecular Autism

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2007-present	American Psychological Association
2007-present	International Society for Autism Research

PROFESSIONAL HONORS

2016	American Journal of Nursing, Book of the Year Award, Child Health (Book: Activity Kit for Babies and Toddlers At-Risk: How to use everyday routines to build social and communication skills)
2010-2012	<i>Predoctoral fellow</i> , Autism Speaks. Award amount: 63,700.
2008	Autism Speaks, 10 most important autism publications of 2008

(Article: "Can Children with Autism Recover? If so, how?")

2007 International Society for Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection paper of the year (Article: "Theoretical Models of Affectionate versus Affectionless Control")

2006 *Magna Cum Laude, Departmental Honors, Dean's List, Smith College*

2004-2006 *Ada Comstock scholar*. Award amount: \$83,000