

Summer Internship Opportunity UNC Undergraduate Student With UNC Children's Healthy Weight Research Group

The UNC Children's Healthy Weight Research Group (CHWRG) is offering a research internship* for a UNC student (rising Senior 2023-24) from an historically underrepresented racial or ethnic group, or a 1st generation college student. CHWRG conducts innovative obesity prevention research designed to improve child diet and physical activity, the development of a healthy weight, and social-emotional health of children and their caregivers. New work focuses on promoting physical activity in older adults.

Description: The purpose of the internship is to provide hands-on research experience for an undergraduate student who may be interested in a career in public health. During the internship, students will have the opportunity to participate as a team member in conducting community research, have 1-on-1 experiences with staff at various stages of the research process, and engage in learning experiences connected to the work we do.

The internship is somewhat flexible but is expected to last 8-12 weeks between mid-May and early August. Hours/week could range between 20-30 hours/week. The pay range is \$16-\$18 per hour. Hours to be completed through a mix of at office (office located at the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention) and at home work (hybrid) or fully remote depending on the research interest and student living situation.

Application: To apply please send an email to reganb@email.unc.edu with each of the following (as attachment(s)).

- Short statement/letter (-300 words) about why this is of interest to you
- Note hybrid or fully remote preference and why
- Resume or CV
- Names and contact information for 2-3 references

Deadline for application is May 1, 2023

* In 2019, the National Institutes for Health (NIH) noted a gap in diversity in the extramural workforce.

Examples of Summer Research Opportunities available for interested candidates:

Supporting Physical Activity in Senior Living Settings. Candidates can participate in a systematic review of the senior adult physical activity literature, the development of intervention content, and pilot intervention planning. Additionally, there may be opportunities for qualitative research activities, including interviews and/or focus groups, conducted with professionals who work in or support work in senior living facilities (e.g., assisted living, retirement communities, etc.). The purpose of this research is the development of a set of multi-level “evidence-based practices” appropriate for implementation in senior living settings (programs, practices and policies). Outcomes from this qualitative research will be validation of facility-level practices that could facilitate and support physical activity opportunities for seniors.

Social-Emotional Learning in Early Care and Education Settings. The purpose of this research activity is the identification and validation of strategies to positively affect the social emotional learning of children enrolled in child care settings (e.g., child care centers). Activities include matching existing evidence-based practices with multi-level strategies that could be incorporated into the child care experience and engage with representatives of the child care community to assess feasibility and acceptability of these activities. Additionally, there may be opportunities to engage in the creation of social emotional educational content for use by child care providers.

Motor Skill Development in Early Care and Education Settings. The purpose of this research activity is the identification and validation of strategies to positively affect the motor skill development of children enrolled in child care settings (e.g., child care centers). Activities include the synthesis of findings from literature and authoritative guideline reviews assessing practices supporting motor skill development in young children. Candidates will work with team members and experts in the field to develop a comprehensive set of evidence-based practices promoting motor skill development in child care settings.

Weight-Related Health Promotion for Child Care Staff. This research activity involves assisting in the development of weight management content that will be used as part of a digital weight management effort provided to individuals who work in child care settings. Candidates will engage with members of the child care profession to review candidate materials for understanding and suitability.

Go NAPSACC – A National Dissemination Model for Healthy Promotion in Child Care Settings. This research activity involves evaluation of a national dissemination effort to improve the environmental quality of early care and education (ECE) settings, commonly called “child care”. Our team is currently involved in testing an enhanced model within the state of Kentucky as well as looking at implementation data before and after COVID. Data obtained within KY and NC from direct observation of foods provided and consumed at ECE as well as physical activity levels of children (measured with accelerometers) will allow interested students opportunities to develop research questions using these data sources.

Health Promotion Strategies for Families with a Young Child with Intellectual Disability Disorder (IDD). Our team is in the early stages of formative research with families who have a young child (between 2-8 y) with IDD, such as Down Syndrome or Autism Spectrum Disorder. Research activities in this area are being conducted over the summer and we would welcome a summer student to join the team. Opportunities include qualitative data collection with families, creation of evidence-based health promotion content, and identification of specific resources to support child diet and physical activity promotion.

In each of these areas listed above, the summer student would be encouraged to select an area of interest and, with assistance from the research team, identify a specific research project to conduct during their summer internship.