

STEFANIA VICTORITA VACARU

New York University Abu Dhabi, Department of Psychology, United Arab Emirates
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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

New York University Abu Dhabi (UAE) Postdoctoral fellow Department of Psychology <i>Representations of Early Experiences Lab, Prof. Dr. T. Waters</i>	2023-present
Radboud University Medical Center (NL) Postdoctoral fellow Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behavior <i>Developmental Psychobiology Lab, Prof. Dr. C. de Weerth</i>	2021-2023
NYU Langone, New York (US) Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry <i>Infant Brain and Behavior Lab, Dr. C. Filippi</i>	June 2025
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (NL) External Postdoctoral Researcher Faculty of Behavioral and Movement Sciences, Clinical Child and Family Studies <i>Affect-us Lab, Prof. Dr. P. Sterkenburg & Prof. Dr. C. Schuengel</i>	2022-2025
UC Davis, Davis (US) Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher Department of Psychology <i>Social Environment and Stress Lab, Prof. Dr. C. Hostinar</i>	Aug-Dec 2022

EDUCATION

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (NL) Certified University Lecturer (BKO – Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs)	2023-2024
Radboud University, Nijmegen (NL) Ph.D, Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behavior Thesis title: To affiliate or not to affiliate: Investigating facial mimicry in early development <i>Advisor: Prof. Dr. S. Hunnius</i>	2017-2021
Western University, London, Ontario (CA) Visiting Ph.D, Brain & Mind Institute Cognitive Development and Neuroimaging Lab <i>Advisor: Prof. Dr. B. Morton</i>	2019
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (NL) M.Sc, Clinical and Developmental Psychopathology Thesis: Self-concept in institutionalized children with disturbed attachment in South Africa <i>Advisors: Prof. Dr. P. Sterkenburg & Prof. Dr. C. Schuengel</i>	2013-2015

Università degli Studi di Torino (IT) 2009-2012
 B.Sc, Psychology
 Thesis: A literature review on neural plasticity in epileptic children undergoing hemispherectomy
 Advisor: Prof. Dr. N. Modona

RESEARCH GRANTS

Global NYU Postdoc Collaboration Grant \$ 4,500, 2024
 Visiting Postdoctoral Fellowship to support a research residency at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, hosted by Dr. Filippi, to gain in-depth expertise in infant neuroimaging (MRI) to examine early markers of psychopathology [PI]

NYU Research Catalyst Grant \$ 12,945, 2023
 Title: *Neurobiological Signatures of Attachment: Implications for Interpersonal Behavior and Stress Regulation.*

Project: Investigates how early caregiving experiences shape interpersonal behavior and stress regulation through neurobiological mechanisms. Its interdisciplinary design integrates developmental and cognitive psychology with neurobiology to elucidate how attachment processes are embedded in psychophysiological functioning [co-PI]

Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences Van Der Gaag € 5,400, 2022
 Title: *A Cross-Cultural Investigation into the Biology of Stress in Children: Hair Cortisol Concentrations in the Netherlands and the US*

Project: Investigates cross-cultural differences in children's stress physiology by examining hair cortisol concentrations as a biomarker of cumulative HPA axis activity in Dutch and U.S. samples. The project explores how broader cultural context and early caregiving environments jointly shape biological stress regulation, providing insight into the developmental embedding of early experiences [PI]

International Society for Developmental Psychobiology, Columbia in the City \$ 3,800, 2022
 Title: *Neurobiological Mechanisms Underlying the Effects of Attachment on Development Across Species*

Project: Organize a symposium exploring cross-species mechanisms linking attachment processes to neurobiological and developmental outcomes, emphasizing comparative perspectives on stress regulation and socio-emotional functioning [co-PI]

Travel Grants

NYUAD, Graduate Programs and Postdoctoral Office, Abu Dhabi (UAE) \$ 800, 2025
 Radboud University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nijmegen (NL) € 1,500*2, 2017 & 2018

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

Donders Institute (NL)-BMI London, Ontario (CA) **Exchange Trainee Program** – Erasmus+ 2021
Best presentation Award at the Donders Discussions, RU (NL) 2019
Best Pitch and Innovation Award at the Neuroscience Symposium, EPFL (Lausanne, CH) 2018

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- Vacaru, S.V.**, Eckermann, H., Graat, G., & de Weerth, C. (2025). A healthy start: the contribution of caregiving quality to child physical health from 0-14 years. *Current Psychology*. [10.1007/s12144-025-08350-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-08350-5)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Waters, T.E.A., & Hunnius, S. (2025). Attachment is in the eye of the beholder: a pupillometry study on emotion processing. *Scientific Reports*. [10.1038/s41598-025-92347-4](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-92347-4)
- Gravesteyn B.Y., **Vacaru, S.V.**, et al. (2025), Choosing for a homebirth during COVID-19 lockdown in the Netherlands, who and why: a national prospective study. *Midwifery*. [10.1016/j.midw.2025.104361](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2025.104361)
- Rheinheimer, N., **Vacaru, S.V.**, & de Weerth, C. (2025). The effect of outdoor walking and maternal proximity on infant and maternal physiological and behavioral outcomes. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* [10.1016/j.jenvp.2025.102527](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2025.102527)
- Brett, B. E., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Beijers, R., & de Weerth, C. (2024). Infant colic and HPA axis development across childhood. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*. [10.1016/j.psyneuen.2024.106965](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2024.106965)
- Rheinheimer, N., **Vacaru, S.V.**, van Immerseel, J.C., Kühn, S., & de Weerth, C. (2024). Infant care: predictors of outdoor walking, infant carrying, and infant outdoor sleeping. *International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health*, 21(6), 694. [10.3390/ijerph21060694](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21060694)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Lau, L.P., Frederiks, K., Sterkenburg, P.S., & Barakova, E. (2024). Selecting optimal wearables for measuring physiological arousal in robot-delivered mindfulness-based exercises. *Advanced Robotics*. [10.1080/01691864.2024.2369797](https://doi.org/10.1080/01691864.2024.2369797)
- Rutkowska, J.M., Ghilardi, T., **Vacaru, S.V.**, van Schaik, J.E., Meyer, M., Hunnius, S., & Oostenveld, R. (2024). Optimal processing of surface facial EMG to identify emotional expressions: A data-driven approach. *Behavior Research Methods*. [10.3758/s13428-024-02421-4](https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-024-02421-4)
- Putnam, S.P., Sehic, E., ...Gartstein, M.A., & Lira Luttgies, B. (2024). The global temperament project: parent-reported temperament in infants, toddlers, and children from 59 nations. *Developmental Psychology*. [10.1037/dev0001732](https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001732)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, van Schaik, J.E., Spiess, L., & Hunnius, S. (2024). No evidence for modulation of facial mimicry by attachment tendencies in adulthood: An EMG investigation. *The Journal of Social Psychology*. [10.1080/00224545.2021.1973946](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2021.1973946)
- Vacaru, S. V.**, Brett, B. E., Eckermann, H., & de Weerth, C. (2023). Determinants of maternal breast milk cortisol increase: Examining dispositional and situational factors. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 158, 106385.
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Parenteau, A., Yi, S., Silvers, J., Hostinar, C., & de Weerth, C. (2023). Adolescents' hair cortisol concentrations during COVID-19: Evidence from two longitudinal studies in the Netherlands and the United States. *Developmental Psychobiology*. [10.1002/dev.22438](https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.22438)
- Vacaru, S. V.**, Scatolin, S., van den Heuvel, M., Beijers, R., & de Weerth, C. (2023). Breastfeeding and room-sharing during COVID-19 and the role of perinatal healthcare support. *Early Human Development*. [10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2023.105812](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2023.105812)
- Willemsen, Y., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Beijers, R., & de Weerth, C. (2023). Are adolescent nutritional behaviors predicted by a history of maternal caregiving and child inhibitory control? *Appetite*. [10.1016/j.appet.2023.107020](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2023.107020)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, van Wingerden, E., Holstege, L., & Sterkenburg, P.S. (2023). Hey Google! Intelligent personal assistants and well-being in the context of disability during COVID-19. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*. [10.1111/jir.13064](https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.13064)

- Willems, L. D., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Hokke, H., Sterkenburg, P.S. (2022). A scoping literature review on compassion-focused therapy for individuals with intellectual disability. *OBM Integrative & Complementary Medicine*. [10.21926/obm.icm.2203037](https://doi.org/10.21926/obm.icm.2203037)
- Schröer, L., Çetin, D., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Addabbo, M., van Schaik, J.E., & Hunnius, S. (2022). Infants' sensitivity to emotional expressions in actions: The contributions of parental expressivity and motor experience. *Infant Behavior & Development*. [10.1016/j.infbeh.2022.101751](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2022.101751)
- Bruinhof, N., **Vacaru, S.V.**, van den Heuvel, M.I., de Weerth, C., & Beijers, R. (2022). Prenatal hair cortisol concentrations during the COVID-19 outbreak: Associations with maternal psychological stress and infant temperament. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*. [10.1016/j.psyneuen.2022.105863](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2022.105863)
- van den Heuvel, M.I., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Boekhorst, M.G., Cloin, M., van Bakel, H., Riem, M.M., ... & Beijers, R. (2022). Parents of young infants report poor mental health and more insensitive parenting during the first COVID-19 lockdown. *BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth*. [10.1186/s12884-022-04618-x](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-022-04618-x)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Beijers, R., & de Weerth, C. (2022). Internalizing symptoms and family functioning predict adolescent depressive symptoms during COVID-19: A longitudinal community sample. *PlosOne*. [10.1371/journal.pone.0264962](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0264962)
- Vacaru, V. S.**, Alfaro, A.U., Hoffman, N., Wittich, W., Stern, M.,...& Sterkenburg, P.S. (2022). Applicability of a novel attunement instrument and its relationship to parental sensitivity in infants with and without visual impairments. *Frontiers in Psychology*. [10.3389/fpsyg.2022.872114](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.872114)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Ma, S., van Schie, H.T., & Hunnius, S. (2022). Eating in Synch: An investigation of parent-infant behavior coordination during feeding interactions. *Infant Behavior & Development*. [10.1016/j.infbeh.2021.101669](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2021.101669)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Beijers, R., Browne, P.D., Cloin, M., van Bakel, H., van den Heuvel, M.I., de Weerth, C. (2021). The risk and protective factors of heightened prenatal anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 lockdown. *Scientific Reports*. [10.1038/s41598-021-99662-6](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-99662-6)
- Alfaro, A.U., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Wittich, W., & Sterkenburg, P.S. (2021). Identifying when children with visual impairment share attention. *Infant Behavior & Development*. [10.1016/j.infbeh.2021.101585](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2021.101585)
- Lievensse, P., **Vacaru S.V.**, Kruithof, Y., Bronzewijker, N., Doeve, M., & Sterkenburg, P.S. (2021). A serious game intervention to enhance social-emotional and behavioral development in children with visual impairments. A parallel RCT. *Child: Care, Health & Development*. [10.1016/j.dhjo.2020.101017](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2020.101017)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, van Schaik, J.E., de Water, E., & Hunnius, S. (2020). Five-year-olds' facial mimicry following social ostracism is modulated by attachment security. *PlosOne*. [10.1371/journal.pone.0240680](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0240680)
- Addabbo, M., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Meyer, M., & Hunnius, S. (2020). 'Something in the way you move': Infants are sensitive to emotions conveyed in action kinematics. *Developmental Science*. [10.1111/desc.12873](https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.12873)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, van Schaik, J.E., & Hunnius, S. (2019). The modulation of facial mimicry by attachment tendencies and their underlying affiliation motives in 3-year-olds: An EMG Study. *PlosOne*. [10.1371/journal.pone.0218676](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0218676)
- Lievensse, P., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Liber, J., Bonnet, M., & Sterkenburg, P.S. (2019). 'Stop bullying now!' The effectiveness of a serious game for teachers in promoting autonomy-supporting strategies for disabled adults. An RCT. *Disability & Health Journal*. [10.1016/j.dhjo.2018.11.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2018.11.013)
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Sterkenburg, P.S., & Schuengel, C. (2018). Self-concept in institutionalized children with disturbed attachment: The role of exploratory behaviors. *Child: Care, Health & Development*. [10.1111/cch.12521](https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12521)
- Sterkenburg, P.S., & **Vacaru, S.V.** (2018). The effectiveness of a serious game to enhance empathy for care workers for people with disabilities: An RCT. *Disability & Health Journal*. [10.1016/j.dhjo.2018.03.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2018.03.003)

UNDER REVIEW

- Vacaru, S. V.**, Zhu, V. L., Giridas, G., Spiess, L., Mazrina, A., & Waters, T. E. A. (under review, *Developmental Psychobiology*). Empirical evidence for the developmental origins of autonomic stress regulation: An attachment account
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Puertas-Gonzales, J., Willemsen, Y., Houtman, T., Klein, P., Gordon, G., & de Weerth, C. (under review, *Developmental Science*). Adolescents' risk-taking behaviors, curiosity, and early attachment security
- Zhu, V., Waters, T. E. A., Dugan, K. A., Gu, Y., Filetti, C., Magro, S. W., Nivison, M. D., **Vacaru, V. S.**, McGue, M., Krueger, R. F., & Roisman, G. I. (under review, *Developmental Psychology*). The origins of secure base script knowledge in older adult twins: Evidence for moderating genetic and substantial nonshared environmental effects
- Dugan, K.A., Kunkel, J.J., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Fraley, C., Waters, T.E.A., McGue, M., Krueger, R.F., & Roisman, G.I. (under review, *Journal of Personality*). Genetic and environmental contributions to the associations between attachment styles and mental and physical health
- Frederiks, K., **Vacaru, S.V.**, Lau, L., Barakova, E., Sterkenburg, P.S. (under review, *International Journal of Social Robotics*). Psychophysiological stress reduction through robot-guided mindfulness for people with (visual and) intellectual disabilities: An RCT
- Zohra, Z., van Lenthe, F. J., Beeres, D. J., Boderie, N. W., Beijers, R., **Vacaru, S.V.**, de Weerth, C., van den Heuvel, M. I., & Been, J. V. (under review, *PlosOne*). Inequities in employment conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic among expectant and new parents in the Netherlands: The role of gender and socioeconomic status
- Vacaru, S.V.**, van Schaik, J. E., & Hunnius, S. (under review, *Cognition & Emotion*). Responding to others' affective states with emotionally congruent facial responses. A developmental investigation
- Buist-Brink, P., **Vacaru, S.V.**, & Sterkenburg, P.S. (under review, *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*). Effectiveness of m-learning HiSense Taxi App for service providers for users with disabilities: A randomized controlled trial

PREREGISTRATIONS & MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

- Vacaru, S.V.**, Zhu, V., Barriault, S., Waters, T.E.A. (*in preparation*). A developmental meta-analytic review of early attachment relationships supporting physiological stress regulation, *OSF*
- Vacaru, S. V.**, Massera, A., Xing, J., Waters, T. E. A., Fox, N., & Filippi, C. (*in preparation*). Early neural susceptibility: Maternal anxiety and infant brain connectivity interact to shape the pathway from early temperamental risk to childhood psychopathology
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Zhu, V., Dugan, K., Filetti, C., Gu, Y., Magro, S., Nivison, M., McGue, M., Krueger, R. F., Waters, T. E. A., & Roisman, G. I. (*in preparation*). Genetic and environmental contributions to the association between secure base script knowledge and indicators of psychosocial adjustment and physical health in older adults
- Vacaru, S.V.**, Mazrina, A., Waters, T.E.A., Schuengel, C., Sterkenburg, P.S. (*in preparation*). The effects of parents' attachment representations on stress co-regulation of children with disabilities
- Parenteau, A., **Vacaru, S.V.**, de Weerth, C., Raschle, N. M., Lustermsans, H., & Dimanova, P., Hostinar, C. (*in preparation*). In sync, we learn! A meta-analysis of biobehavioral synchrony's effects on cognition. *OSF*
- Furlanetto, L., **Vacaru, S.V.**, van den Bosch, S. M., Meyer, M., Hunnius, S., & Poli, F. (*in preparation*). Do you enjoy learning? Investigating emotional responses to learning progress using facial electromyography

Vacaru, S.V., Meesker, M., Mazrina, A., Yang, R., Hurks, P., Sterkenburg, P.S. (*in preparation*). Testing the psychometric validity of the Self-compassion self-report scale in a Dutch population with(out) neurodevelopmental delays

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NYU Langone Health (US, 2025). “Early Life Experiences & Psychobiological Development“, Host: Dr. Filippi

Department of Clinical Child and Family Studies, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (NL, 2025). “The biological embedding of early relationships: attachment-predicted physiological profiles“, Host: Prof. Dr. Schuengel

Center for Mind and Brain, UC Davis (US, 2022). “The cradle of social development in (a)typical development: empirical insights“, Host: Prof. Dr. Hostinar

Intimacy Convention, hosted by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (NL, 2022). “Attachment and Interpersonal Relationships in Early Development.” *Keynote*

Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NYU Langone Health (US, 2021). “The Role of Parent–Child Interactions in Child Social Development“, Host: Prof. Dr. Thomason

Department of Psychology, University of Montreal (CA, 2019). “Serious Games Design: Development and Effectiveness in Children with Disabilities“, Host: Prof. Dr. Wittich

Center for Infant Cognition, University of British Columbia (CA, 2019). “Social Facial Mimicry, Empathy, and Moral Development“, Host: Prof. Dr. Hamlin

Munich Center for Neurosciences, Brain, and Mind, Ludwig Maximilian University (DE, 2019). “Experimental Investigations of Facial Electromyography in Young Children“, Host: Prof. Dr. Markus Paulus

Research Institute of Child Development and Education, University of Amsterdam (NL, 2018). “Social Facial Mimicry“, Host: Dr. Colonnesi

Department of Psychology, Harvard University (US, 2018). “The Development of Social Facial Mimicry“, Host: Prof. Dr. Spelke

CONFERENCE TALKS & SYMPOSIA

A healthy start: Examining the contribution of caregiving quality to child physical health from birth to 14 Years, **Oral presentation** at *International Congress on Infant Studies*, Glasgow, UK, Jul 8-11, 2024

State-of-the-Art and Future Directions of (Infant) Facial Electromyography, **Oral presentation** at *International Congress on Infant Studies*, Glasgow, UK, Jul 8-11, 2024

In sync, we learn! A meta-analysis of biobehavioral synchrony's effects on cognition, **Oral presentation** at *Dutch Society for Developmental Studies*, Tilburg, NL, May 30-31, 2024

International evidence for the enduring impact of sensitive caregiving on child development and family dynamics, **Symposium organizer** at *International Attachment Conference*, Rouen, FR, Jul 15-17, 2024

From secure base to positive risks: The interplay between attachment and curiosity across 14 years, **Oral presentation** at *International Attachment Conference*, Rouen, FR, Jul 15-17, 2024

Self-compassion: In dire need of assessment tools across the broader spectrum of cognitive functioning, **Poster presentation** at *International Attachment Conference*, Rouen, FR, Jul 15-17, 2024

Determinants of maternal breastmilk cortisol increase: prenatal dispositional and postnatal situational factors” **Oral presentation** at *Society for Research in Child Development*, Salt Lake City, US, Mar 23-25, 2023

Neurobiological mechanisms underlying the effects of attachment on development across species, **Symposium organizer** at *International Society for Developmental Psychobiology*, San Diego, US, Nov 9-11, 2023

- The effects of COVID-19 on prospective and new parents and their offspring, **Symposium organizer** at *International Congress on Infant Studies*, Ottawa, CA, Jul 7-10, 2022
- Attunement in parent-infants with visual impairments, **Poster presentation** at *International Low Vision Conference*, Dublin, UK, Jul 5-8, 2022
- Parent-infant attunement in infants with and without visual impairments, **Poster presentation** at *World Health Association on Infant Mental Health*, Brisbane, Australia, Jun 23-27, 2021 (online)
- Empathy and the development of social-emotional mimicry, **Oral presentation** at *Dutch Society for Developmental Studies*, Wageningen, NL, May 18-19, 2021 (online)
- The impact of COVID-19 in pregnant women, fathers, and their offspring, **Symposium organizer** at *Society for Research in Child Development*, Apr 7-9, 2021 (online)
- On the links between social facial mimicry, empathy, and moral development, **Oral presentation** at *International Attachment Conference*, Vancouver, CA, July 18-20, 2019
- Facial electromyography in young children and its relation to attachment and cognitive control, **Oral Presentation** at *International Congress on Infant Studies*, Philadelphia, US, Jun 30- Jul 3, 2018
- Developmental social mimicry and empathy across childhood and adulthood, **Poster presentation** at *Jean Piaget Society*, Amsterdam, NL, May 31- Jun 2, 2018
- Why we mimic: exploring the role of attachment and empathy, **Oral presentation** at *Dutch Society for Developmental Studies*, Wageningen, NL, May 15-16, 2018
- Adult attachment modulates pupil size and facial mimicry, **Oral presentation** at *Society for Affective Science*, Los Angeles, US, Apr 26-28, 2018
- A protocol for assessing facial mimicry, **Poster presentation** at *Conference on Infant and Early Child Development*, Lancaster, UK, Aug 25-27, 2016

TEACHING & MENTORING

Course design & Coordination

The attachment nest: interdisciplinary understanding of attachment and human development

3 EC, (post)graduate level

Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam (NL)

2023, 2024

Course evaluation: 4.6/5

Lectures

Developmental Psychobiology, 2025

Course: Developmental Psychology (undergraduate level)

Prof. Dr. Waters, *NYU Abu Dhabi, (UAE)*

Interpersonal synchrony, 2021

Course: Developmental Psychobiology (graduate level),

Prof. Dr. de Weerth, *Radboud University Medical Center, Nijmegen (NL)*

The development of social relations from an attachment perspective, 2019

Course: Social Relations (graduate level)

Prof. Dr. Lansu, *Faculty of Social Sciences, Radboud University (NL)*

Human attachment and socio-affective development, 2019

Course: Cognitive Neuroscience (undergraduate level)

Prof. Dr. Fabbri, *University of Groningen (NL)*

Seminars & Workshop

NYU Abu Dhabi (UAE)

Python-based cardiac & electrodermal data processing: 1-week module, 2024

Autonomic signal pre-processing, data quality, and experimental setups: regular meetings, 2024–2025

Leipzig University, Leipzig (DE)

Building an EMG Lab: Recordings and Signal Processing: 1-week module, 2021

Radboud University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nijmegen (NL)

Academic Skills for Psychologists, undergraduate level, 1 semester, 2021

Development and Mental Health: Psychopathology from a Lifespan Perspective, undergraduate level, 1 semester/year, 2018–2021

Research Project, undergraduate level, 1 semester, 2018–2021

General Introduction to Psychology, undergraduate level, 1 semester/year, 2016–2021

Perception, Action, and Development, undergraduate level, 1 semester/year, 2016–2021

Academic and Professional Skills, undergraduate level, 1 semester/year, 2016–2017

Individual Supervision

PhD candidates

Nicole Rheinheimer, Cognitive Neuroscience Dep., RU Medical Center: Development of regulation from infancy to adolescence – The role of early caregiving ([link to dissertation](#): 5 first-author peer-reviewed papers, 2025), with Prof. Dr. C. de Weerth

Lucia Willems, Clinical Child and Family Studies, VU Amsterdam: Emotion regulation capacities and compassion in young adults (2023), with Prof. Dr. P. Sterkenburg, lead author on *OBM* (2022)

Master's thesis

Aicha Mazrina, M.Sc in Psychobiology at the University of Amsterdam: Parents' attachment representations and affect co-regulation of their children with disabilities, 2024-2025, co-author on *Developmental Psychobiology* manuscript under review

Georgia Graat, MSc, Biomedical Sciences at RU: Caregiving determinants of physical health throughout the first 14 years of life, 2022-2023, co-author on *Current Psychology* (2025)

Roosmarijn Kockelkoren, MSc in Biomedical Sciences at RU: Biological aging and sleep disturbances throughout childhood. A longitudinal study, 2021-2022, [OSF](#)

Nina Bruinhof, MSc in Behavioral Sciences at RU: Prenatal hair cortisol during the COVID-19 crisis: associations with psychological Stress and infant temperament, 2020-2021, lead author on *PNEC* (2022)

Sofia Weidle Scatolin, MSc in Behavioral Sciences at RU: Breastfeeding during COVID-19, 2020-2021, co-author on *Early Human Development* (2023)

Maja Kapitler, Ma, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia): Can facial emotional expressions be contagious? Evidence from pupil dilation and electrical facial muscle activity, 2017-2018

Bachelor's thesis

Yearly 3-4 theses supervision at RU Nijmegen and VU Amsterdam (NL)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Stakeholders' iterative workshop on Participatory Research to Amplify Community-Led Early Childhood Development (ECD) Practices in Zanzibar, in collaboration with NYUAD and Zanzibar Research Center for Socio-Economic and Policy Analysis, 2025

Donders Institute [Press release](#), 2025: Early maternal sensitivity linked to better children's physical health

Ouders van nu, 2022 [article](#): Dit is waarom je je baby ál jouw emoties moet laten zien

Interview RadboudUMC Press release & *Metronieuws* (2021) article on the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women's mental health

Vroeg, 2021 article: Zorg (en) in tijden van Corona

De Psycholoog, 2021, feature of my dissertation

Interview RadboudUMC, 2020: The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents and babies

Kamerbrief van Ministry of Health, Well-being, and Sports report on Vacaru et al., 2019

Radboud Science Open Day for children with experimental demonstrations (2016)

Attachment training for professional caregivers at Children's Home (South Africa, 2015)

Workshops on safe sexual behaviors in adolescents, Tembisa (South Africa, 2015)

LEADERSHIP

Scientific advisor of Non-profit organization Sumood, 2025

Project manager, COVID-19 and Perinatal Experiences, EU consortium, 2020-2024

Co-chair of the Radboud Postdoc Initiative, RU Medical Center (NL), 2021-2023

Board member of the Educational Committee, RU (NL), 2016-2020

Ph.D chair & treasurer of the PhD Council, Donders Institute, RU (NL), 2017-2020

Board member of the Educational Committee, VU Amsterdam (NL), 2013-2015

JOURNAL REVIEWING

Child: Care, Health and Development; Psychoneuroendocrinology; Scientific Reports

MEMBERSHIPS IN ASSOCIATIONS

Society for Research in Child Development

International Society for Developmental Psychobiology

Dutch Society for Developmental Studies

International Society on Infant Studies

The Society for Emotion and Attachment Studies

Cognitive Development Society