Postdoctoral Training in Neuropsychology
Objective and Overview:

The purpose of the Pediatric Neuropsychology Training Program is to provide training and education in neuropsychological assessment and intervention within the context of a scientist-practitioner framework. There is a strong tradition of integrated clinical care and empirical investigation at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital that offers substantive research opportunities for fellows who intend to pursue academic health care careers. Clinical experiences will be afforded by clinics within the Department of Psychology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital as well as neighboring hospitals. Research opportunities will be coordinated by the fellow’s primary St. Jude mentor. Didactics are available at St. Jude as well as through the Memphis VAMC and the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center.

Training Experience:

This is a two-year, full-time fellowship position with an intended start date of August, 2018. The second year is dependent upon successful completion of the first year. Experiences are designed to meet INS-Division 40, Houston Conference and ABPP Diploma in Clinical Neuropsychology preparation guidelines. The fellowship program is an APPIC (Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers) member. It is anticipated that 50-60% of the trainee’s time will be spent in the delivery of clinical services, 10-20% in educational/didactic activities and 30-40% dedicated to research. These percentages are negotiable based on the fellow’s interests and training needs. The program is designed to have a greater emphasis on clinical service during the first year and research investigation during the second year.

Clinical Experience:

The primary populations served by St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital include pediatric oncology, sickle cell disease and other hematological disorders, HIV/AIDS, rare genetic disorders (e.g., neurofibromatosis, Hurler syndrome), and neurological insults associated with immunocompromised status (e.g., posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome). These clinical populations present with a wide-range of cognitive difficulties (focal and diffuse neurological insult related to primary diagnosis and/or treatment) including problems with attention, executive functioning, memory, language, visuospatial reasoning and psychosocial adjustment that will afford fellows with broad-based training. St. Jude serves populations ranging in age from birth through young adulthood. The fellow also has the opportunity to participate in a minor rotation at a local neurological institute and a children’s hospital with board certified pediatric neuropsychologists (ABPP-CN) assessing individuals presenting with traditional developmental disorders (e.g., learning disability/ADHD) and/or general medical conditions (e.g., TBI, epilepsy). Opportunities for adult and forensic assessments are also available through local hospitals for the interested trainee.

Fellows will gain experience in comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations that include the following skills: medical record review (including access to repeat neuroimaging), clinical interviewing to ascertain pertinent historical information, administration and interpretation of neuropsychological instruments, case conceptualization, provision of feedback to patients and their families, comprehensive report writing, consultation with health care professionals and development of recommendations that seek to ameliorate the impact of brain dysfunction on academic and social functioning. Fellows participate in school re-entry planning and IEP development, often in coordination with the St. Jude School Program. Fellows are encouraged to participate in brief bedside assessments of inpatients to monitor recovery following acute neurologic events (e.g., methotrexate neurotoxicity, stroke) or neurosurgical interventions (e.g., posterior fossa syndrome). Opportunities exist to participate in the selection and administration of brief therapeutic interventions for inpatients and outpatients to address issues related to neurocognitive impact of disease on academic, behavioral, adaptive, and psychosocial functioning; treatment adherence; coping and adjustment. Given the nature of primary populations served at St. Jude, and provision of care
irrespective of ability to pay, there is high potential for serial
evaluation of individual patients affording the ability to monitor
change over time (including transition to adulthood) and
evaluate the efficacy of intervention-based recommendations.

Fellows will gain experience working within an interdisciplinary
framework that involves regular interactions with team
members including physicians, nurses, psychologists, social
workers, special educators, occupational and physical
therapists, speech/language pathologists, nutritionists, child
life specialists and chaplains. Supervision of clinical trainees
(i.e., psychology fellows, interns, and graduate students) is
ecouraged, particularly during the second year.

It is anticipated that fellows will participate in approximately
two comprehensive clinical evaluations per week during their
first year and one comprehensive clinical evaluation per week
during their second year. These decisions will be based on
their level of interest and involvement in providing therapeutic
interventions and conducting independent research.

Fellows will receive two or more hours of individual
supervision weekly to address assessment planning, case
conceptualization, interpretation of evaluation findings, relevant
research topics and report writing. Group supervision is offered
with other psychology fellows on an ongoing basis. Supervision
will be provided by licensed clinical neuropsychologists and
psychologists. Fellows will receive regular feedback regarding
their performance with written feedback provided every three
months.

Research Experience:
The majority of St. Jude patients are enrolled on research
protocols with significant interplay between clinical care and
clinical investigation that both fosters cutting-edge medical
care and clinically-driven research. Research initiatives in the
Department of Psychology include: cognitive rehabilitation
and neurocognitive effects of childhood cancer and sickle
cell disease; psychosocial and complementary interventions
for distress reduction, coping and adaptive style and health
promotion (smoking prevention/cessation and adherence)
in children with cancer, sickle cell disease and HIV/AIDS.
The focus of research in the Department is on discovering
mechanisms of brain damage and cognitive rehabilitation
with the goal of better defining the neurobiological, cognitive
and social consequences of childhood brain damage as well
as evaluating the efficacy of pharmacological and behavioral
interventions designed to improve patients’ quality of life.
Details of research at St. Jude are available online at:
www.stjude.org/sci-rpt.

Fellows are required to participate in and/or develop a research
project within the field of neuropsychology. The research
area of focus for the trainee beginning fellowship in 2018 will
be neurobehavioral functioning and intervention in children
with brain tumors. St. Jude is unique in the availability of
biostatisticians to assist with study design, statistical analysis
and presentation of statistical findings.

It is expected that fellows will gain experience in critical review
of empirical studies, research design, statistical analysis
and dissemination of findings through presentations and
publications. Opportunities for mentored journal reviews and
grant writing are also available.

There are ample opportunities available within pediatric
oncology to facilitate tailoring of research projects to a given
trainee’s interests.

Didactic Experience:
Didactic opportunities include seminars in neuropsychology,
neuroanatomy, medical psychology and clinical psychology;
brain cuttings; rounds in psychology, hematology, neuro-
oncology and neuroradiology; and multidisciplinary seminars,
staff meetings and conferences. Weekly fellow didactics
include journal club, case presentations, demonstration of new
assessment techniques, and discussion of research-related
topics.

To foster a developmental lifespan perspective, training in adult
and geriatric neuropsychology is integrated into the didactic
curriculum.
Administrative Structure:
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is an internationally recognized leader in research for children with catastrophic illness, including cancer, sickle cell disease, HIV/AIDS and genetic disorders. For ten consecutive years, St. Jude was named as one of the top institutions in the Best Places to Work in Academia. St. Jude is the only Children’s Cancer Center funded by the National Institute of Health and all services are provided to families without reference to their ability to pay. Additional information about the institution can be obtained at: www.stjude.org

The Neuropsychology Training Program is housed within the Department of Psychology, which includes: 8 faculty psychologists (2 neuropsychologist), 7 staff psychologists (2 neuropsychologist), 4-6 pediatric psychology fellows, 2-3 neuropsychology fellows, 10 clinical research associates and 4 psychological examiners. There is also a board certified neuropsychologist (ABPP-CN) in the Department of Epidemiology and Cancer Control who may be involved in postdoctoral training. The St. Jude Psychology Clinic serves, on average, 1,000 children annually.

Within St. Jude, collaborations with neuro-oncology, hematology, diagnostic imaging, infectious disease, pain service, bone marrow transplant, school program, rehabilitation, speech, social work, child life and chaplain services are strong. Most faculty within Psychology also have appointments at the nearby University of Memphis and University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center that facilitate outside collaboration.

More information about the Department of Psychology is available online at http://www.stjude.org

Benefits:
Benefits are attractive, including 3 weeks paid vacation, 2 personal days, 8 holidays, a generous professional development account, relocation assistance, paid leave to attend conferences, a free on-campus gym, and medical, dental and vision coverage. The stipend is highly competitive and consistent with NIH guidelines (For 2017: $49,935 year one; $51,435 year two). St. Jude has a Clinical Education and Training Office (CETO) that offers many services for our fellows including weekly journal clubs, an annual retreat and annual poster sessions.

Qualification of Applicants:
Completion of an APA/CPA-accredited doctoral program in clinical psychology, clinical neuropsychology, pediatric psychology or school psychology is preferred. All applicants should have clinical experience and training in working with children. Prior training, coursework and experience in neuropsychology are strongly preferred, including knowledge of neuroanatomy and brain-behavior relationships. Candidates must have defended their dissertation prior to commencement of the fellowship.

We will be participating in the APPCN Resident Matching Program. Details can be obtained at the APPCN website (http://www.appcn.org). The Program Code Number for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is 8633.

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is an equal opportunity employer.

Application Procedure:
Applicants are asked to send the following materials by January 2, 2018:

- A cover letter indicating interest in this program that summarizes relevant training experiences, professional interests, fellowship goals and career plans
- Copy of current Curriculum Vita
- Two recent neuropsychological reports (pediatric preferred) conducted and written by the applicant with all identifying patient information removed
- Three letters of recommendation from psychologists or neuropsychologists familiar with the applicant’s clinical work and/or training
- Official graduate transcript
- Copies of relevant reprints/preprints
Send application materials to:

Heather Conklin, Ph.D.
Chief, Neuropsychology Section
Department of Psychology
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital
262 Danny Thomas Place, Mail Stop 740
Memphis, TN 38105-3678

Interviews will be conducted at the meeting of the International Neuropsychological Society in Washington, DC, February 13-17, 2018. If unable to attend this meeting, on-site interviews may be possible. In-person interviews are required. An on-line application will need to be completed at www.stjude.org/academic-programs

E-mail inquiries to heather.conklin@stjude.org
Dr. Conklin joined the faculty in the Psychology Department at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in 2005 following a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology at the Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She provides neuropsychological assessment and consultation for children with cancer, brain tumors, sickle cell disease and other hematological disorders, HIV/AIDS, and rare genetic disorders. Dr. Conklin is the Training Director for the Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Fellowship at St. Jude and is integrally involved in training and supervision of trainees, as well as program development and oversight. Dr. Conklin spends a significant portion of her time engaged in clinical investigations. The overarching goal of her research program is to mitigate cognitive deficits following treatment for childhood cancer. Towards this end, primary research aims include improving specification of cognitive deficits following treatment, identifying neurodevelopmental changes associated with specific treatment modalities, delineating risk/resiliency factors with respect to cognitive outcomes, and developing empirically valid interventions that ameliorate cognitive late effects.
DARCY RACHES, Ph.D.

University of Houston, 2009

Internship Program:
Texas Children’s Hospital/Baylor College of Medicine

Fellowship Program:
Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Licensed Psychologist, Tennessee (Clinical)
Clinical Staff Neuropsychologist, Department of Psychology at St Jude Children’s Research Hospital

Dr. Raches joined the Department of Psychology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in 2012 following a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology at the Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She provides neuropsychological assessment and consultation for children with cancer, brain tumors, sickle cell disease and other hematological disorders, HIV/AIDS, and rare genetic disorders. Additionally, Dr. Raches works closely with the rehabilitation team at St. Jude. In this capacity she provides brief assessments, tracks cognitive progress and provides cognitive rehabilitation for children who have experienced an acute neurological insult related to their hematological/oncological diagnosis and/or treatment, particularly posterior fossa syndrome and stroke.

LISA M. JACOLA, Ph.D.

University of Cincinnati, 2012

Internship Program:
University of Chicago/Comer’s Children’s Hospital

Fellowship Program:
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

Licensed Psychologist, Tennessee (Clinical)
Pediatric Neuropsychologist and Assistant Faculty Member
Department of Psychology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

Dr. Jacola joined the faculty in the Department of Psychology in 2014 following a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology. She provides comprehensive neuropsychological assessment and consultation for children with cancer, sickle cell disease and other hematological disorders, and rare genetic disorders. Dr. Jacola spends a substantial portion of time engaged in clinical investigation. Her current projects are focused in two areas: (1) using neuropsychological assessment and functional neuroimaging to improve specification of neurobehavioral function in children treated for cancer and (2) implementing cognitive intervention to ameliorate neurocognitive late effects in children treated for acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL).

ANDREW E. MOLNAR, JR., Ph.D.

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 2012

Internship Program:
Texas Children’s Hospital/Baylor College of Medicine

Fellowship Program:
St. Louis Children’s Hospital/Washington University School of Medicine

Licensed Psychologist, Tennessee (Clinical)
Clinical Staff Neuropsychologist, Department of Psychology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

Dr. Molnar joined the Department of Psychology at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in 2014 following a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology at St. Louis Children’s Hospital/Washington University School of Medicine. He provides neuropsychological assessment services for youth and young adults with a history of cancer and cancer treatment, brain tumors, sickle cell disease, HIV/AIDS, genetic disorders, and other pediatric catastrophic diseases. He also has specialized interest in assessing preschool-age children across medical populations. Additionally, he works closely with the St. Jude School Program, supporting hospital-to-home and school re-entry practices to support the St. Jude patients and their families.