

**Dr. Beatrice Beebe – Two-Year Volunteer Job Description**  
**Mother-Infant Communication Lab**  
**New York State Psychiatric Institute**  
**Recruiting now for Summer, Fall 2023**

A volunteer position in our lab is ideal for a student who has *graduated from college* and is interested in going to graduate school. It is also ideal for students who are in an MA program who want to be involved in a research internship. My goal is this lab is not only to train students, but also to create a cohesive, mutually supportive, emotionally connected group.

Our Communication Sciences Lab runs a basic research program on mother-infant face-to-face communication, and its associations with maternal depression/anxiety, infant prematurity, mother and infant trauma in the World Trade Center Disaster of September 11, 2001, infant attachment and cognition, and young adult outcomes. We have an NIH R01 grant on prenatal environmental toxins, mother-infant interaction, and epigenetic mechanisms. We are housed in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York State Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI), 1051 Riverside Drive. NYSPI is a joint venture of Columbia University and New York State.

We are currently running this program mostly on Zoom, although we have been opening our lab for four hours on Thursday afternoons depending on the state of the virus.

We run our lab with volunteers. We usually have about 20 volunteers from various schools around the city and beyond. A volunteer position in our lab is ideal for students who are between college and graduate school, who are interested in research experience, and who want to get into a PhD program in Clinical or Developmental Psychology. We also have many applicants who are currently in an MA program. Students will get hands-on experience interacting with subjects, coordinating and observing filmed interactions, and learning from other researchers involved in the study.

**A 2-year commitment is essential**, because we need the continuity. **Our lab runs on Tuesdays from 10am to 6pm and Thursdays from 10am to 6pm. We are looking for people who can give two full days.** Please think carefully about whether this is right for you.

The lab is organized in six teams, and each team has a leader:

- People and Projects (includes managing IRB protocols and administrative/financial assistance to the R01 grant)
- Data/Statistics
- Media (video/audio data)
- Video Microanalysis Coders
- 30yr Follow-Up Study Coordinator
- The R01 grant includes opportunity to participate in mother-infant filming team for the R01 grant, which involves an extra day's commitment

Dr. Beebe holds **teaching sessions for her volunteers** via Zoom (for now) **on the fourth Monday evening of the month, from 6:30-8:15 pm.** This is an opportunity to learn the basic research of the lab, new papers being produced in the lab, and the context of the work in the field. This is a required part of the volunteer program.

We are seeking volunteers. We try to match jobs (listed below) with the talents and interests of each student. Volunteers need an easy temperament, the capacity to handle high stress, a warm and engaging manner with people, good video and audio equipment skills (or able to learn), attention to detail, and the ability to work closely with many other people.

Please see our website:

<https://www.beatricebeebe.com/>

Please see a talk on the internet:

<http://www.aei.org/events/decoding-the-nonverbal-language-of-babies/>

You can watch our documentary film on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-60yYJvztJ8&t=2s>

### **Key Lab Projects**

**NIH R01 grant on prenatal environmental toxins, mother-infant interaction, and epigenetic mechanisms.** We are filming mothers and infants at 4 and 12 months for this study, and the lab is coding the 4-month mother-infant interactions. We are seeking **bilingual Spanish/English students** to help run this project, as well as new lab members who would be interested.

**30-Year Follow Up Study.** We are filming young adults and their mothers who were filmed in our lab three decades ago. The study examines how mother-infant interaction may predict attachment of offspring and mother at 30-year follow-up. Lab assistants working on this study are trained to transcribe the Adult Attachment Interview.

**9/11 Mothers and Young Children Project.** After running, since 2002, a combination treatment/research project for mothers who were pregnant and widowed in the World Trade Center Disaster of September 11, 2001, and their young children, we are now working on the research component of this project.

**Documentary Film.** We are currently creating several short documentary films based on different types of parent-infant communication patterns. We invite parents to play face-to-face with their infant at 4 and 12 months. Following the parent-infant play, Dr. Beebe also plays with the infant briefly. We then film an educational viewing session with Dr. Beebe and the parent. In this session, Dr. Beebe and the parent together view the film that has just been made and discuss what the parent and the infant may be feeling. Although there are many studies that examine parent-infant interaction, little video material is available for educational use. Documentary films about these interactions will be educationally useful for parents, students, and clinicians. All students are invited to observe these sessions in progress. Our first of a series of documentary films was posted on the PEP-Web site (Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing, 2016). We recently opened a YouTube account and posted a new documentary film there. This YouTube channel also has a link to the PEP-Web film.

### **Basic Research Jobs of the Lab**

All volunteers are assigned to a team and participate in our basic research program. Volunteers need to

be able to work independently, to be highly organized, detail-oriented and patient; to have excellent computer skills and to work well with other people. Knowledge of Excel, SPSS, PowerPoint and Endnote are a plus. All volunteers work closely with Dr. Beebe on a day-to-day basis, helping her to manage all research activities.

**Filming Team.** This team oversees the collection of data for our NIH R01 grant on prenatal environmental toxins, mother-infant interaction, and epigenetic mechanisms project. The team engages with all participant-facing aspects of this project and attends weekly filming team meetings with Dr. Beebe, in which recordings of mothers and babies are discussed and analyzed.

### ***Seeking a Spanish speaker.***

This team is made up of the Project Coordinator, two film team members, and coders who wish to commit an extra 5-8 hours to the lab. The two film team members must commit to two days a week, with one of those days being Tuesday and another day to be worked out. **We are especially interested in Spanish Speakers becoming film team members because most of the research participants in this study only speak Spanish.**

Responsibilities of the Filming Team include, but are not limited to:

- Document consent and familiarize participants with the procedure of 4-month and 12-month filming visits
- Observe and participate in the acquisition, handling, and organization of biodata (buccal swabs and urine samples)
- Operate our camera and backup systems properly and efficiently
- Act as the “stranger” in Strange Situation procedures and Stranger-Infant paradigms
- Handle the intricacies and sensitivity of our IRB, and learn how to ensure the privacy of our participants
- Engage with mothers and babies during the visit, making them feel comfortable and at ease during what may be a stressful time for them
- Conduct outreach to mothers and administer self-report questionnaires.

**Lab Manager: People and Projects.** This position always has one lead student and one “understudy” student, who will take over after the lead student completes the two-year internship. This allows the understudy one year to learn this job. These two students work closely with Dr. Beebe to oversee all aspects of administering and coordinating the lab’s students, research studies, and research grants. This is a demanding, detail oriented job that will quickly expose the student to how a lab functions day-to-day. The two students handle all IRB submissions and renewals; oversee the confidentiality of all data; assemble and submit research grants to Columbia, NIH, and private foundations; manage the lab’s active grant accounts through Columbia; submit invoices for payment; correspond with Dr. Beebe’s students and colleagues about research matters; order lab supplies; and, as needed, assist in preparing Dr. Beebe’s manuscripts for publication, develop literature reviews for grant requests and research papers, create reference lists, serve on the A/V team for any of our active Mother-Infant filming studies, and completes any other miscellaneous administrative tasks.

**Stats Team.** This position always has one lead student and one “understudy” student, who will take over after the lead student completes the two-year internship. We have a statistician, so this team does not actually do the basic analyses of the lab. Instead, the students on this team need a basic statistical background (SPSS needed, SAS ideal). This is a pivotal team, and they participate with the supervision of

our lab statistician in data management, learn about time-series modeling, and do some very basic analyses. There is the opportunity to take the output from data analyses and work them up into APA format tables, to make figures, to help write results sections, and to participate in the interpretation of the results. This team also helps us in the initial stages of grant writing and in drawing illustrations of research findings for lectures.

**Media Team.** This position always has one lead student and one “understudy” student, who will take over after the lead student completes the two-year internship. The media team has everyday contact with our video data and gains an understanding of nonverbal communication, particularly frame-by-frame analysis, which allows the student to learn about the amazing rapidity, subtlety and complexity of mother-infant communication and its disturbances, relevant in both the research and clinical side of our work. The media team has computer/technical knowledge and can help troubleshoot routine computer glitches, maintain software/hardware, and A/V equipment.

Responsibilities of the Media Team include, but are not limited to:

- Dubbing between VHS, DVD, miniDV etc.
- DVD authoring (DVD Studio Pro)
- Videotaping of dyad interactions
- Overseeing of all video projects
- Attending to various requests for particular videos or DVD creation
- Ability to use and troubleshoot:
  - All AV equipment: VHS/DVD decks, microphones
  - Mac computers
  - Final Cut Pro, QuickTime etc.

**Video Coders.** Coders make up the majority of the students in the lab. Coders learn to code the videotapes of mother-infant interaction at 4 months, in a specific communication channel, such as gaze, facial affect, vocal affect, vocal rhythm, infant head orientation, maternal spatial orientation, or touch. Through this work the coder comes to understand the details of nonverbal communication which are often too fast to pick up with the naked eye.

**30yr Follow-Up Study (FUP) Coordinator.** This position oversees the collection and organization all of the FUP data (i.e., consents, self-report scales, Adult Attachment Interviews, conversation footage). This lab assistant works closely with psychotherapist, Dana Berg LCSW, on the project, leading weekly meetings and updating weekly deliverables. The FUP Coordinator is also trained to transcribe the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI).

Responsibilities of the FUP Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- Collecting all FUP data and organizing it in accordance with an up to date data filing system
- Responsible for logging all contact and corresponding with possible participants in a professional and responsive manner
- Scores all phone lab scales and works with a second lab member who supports this project by serving as either the “primary scorer” or “second scorer”

I am very grateful for your interest. Please think carefully about a position in our lab. We cannot afford to have people drop out of these positions. If you are interested, please ask two people from the academic community to email me with a short recommendation. Do not hesitate to email me with any questions at [beatrice.beebe@nyspi.columbia.edu](mailto:beatrice.beebe@nyspi.columbia.edu).

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