



INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

2023 Call for Proposals: Infants and Screens

Deadline for Letter of Intent: May 5, 2023, 5 pm ET
Deadline for Full Proposal: August 25, 2023, 5 pm ET

1.0 About Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development	2
1.1 Mission	
1.2 Background and Goals	
2.0 About Children and Screens' Interdisciplinary Research Grants Program	3
2.1 General Program Information	
2.2 Focus for 2023 Infants and Screens Grant Funding	
2.3 Eligibility	
2.4 Funding Levels and Selection Criteria	
2.5 Taxes	
3.0 Award Terms and Conditions	6
3.1 Grant Amounts/Terms of Agreement	
3.2 Reporting Requirements	
3.3 Acknowledgement of Support/Control of Research	
3.4 Notice of Award	
3.5 Evaluation	
4.0 Letter of Intent	7
4.1 LOI Guidelines	
4.2 Suggesting Reviewers	
4.3 Invitation to Apply	
4.4 Full Timeline	



1.0 About Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development

1.1 Mission

Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization that seeks insights into how children, their peers and their families are engaging with digital media; and how these interactions at home, school and within their communities affect their cognitive, psychological, social, behavioral and physical development. The Institute advances interdisciplinary research, supports human capital in the field, informs and educates the public, and advocates for sound public policy for child health and wellness.

1.2 Background and Goals

Children and Screens believes that it is not enough to look at questions of digital media use among children from a single perspective – whether medical, educational, or sociological. Rather, effective research requires a multidisciplinary, comprehensive, “kaleidoscopic” approach. Multi-field collaboration and discourse are critical to enhance the holistic understanding of the cognitive, psychological, and physical impacts of digital media on toddlers, children, and adolescents.

Since its inception in 2013, Children and Screens has utilized its unique position as an independent nonprofit capable of developing new, integrated questions and ideas bridging the scientific and clinical divides. We realize the importance of developing a foundational research agenda from a child development perspective generated and curated by researchers themselves. We also understand the importance of sparking public, private and scientific interest in new, rigorous, and comprehensive approaches to research and research design. We fund research by interdisciplinary experts, publish state-of-the-science articles, and identify critical areas for future research.

Beyond its research funding, the Institute achieves its mission by: convening interdisciplinary conferences, meetings, retreats, and events; producing free, public education *Ask the Experts* webinars; publishing resources to support caregivers, educators, and policymakers; and building diverse partnerships and collaborations that further enhance critical research, education, and policy initiatives.



2.0 About Children and Screens' Interdisciplinary Research Grants Program

"Employ the power of collaborative inquiry to understand the influence of digital media on the whole child and on the society to which that child is an heir. Make use of your respectful field's particular strengths, but share them. Help others to understand how your facet of the big picture relates to theirs and how your tools and methods might shed new light on their investigations. Invite them to do the same."

- Dr. Pamela Hurst-Della Pietra

2.1 General Program Information

Children and Screens' Interdisciplinary Grants provide seed funding, on a competitive basis, to support cutting-edge interdisciplinary scientific research projects that seek to advance our knowledge and understanding of digital media and child development. These small research grants are intended to deliver seed funds to interdisciplinary teams (at least two researchers) so that they may gain the preliminary results necessary to apply and compete for major funding from traditional funding sources. The grants are not intended to supplement existing grants.

The projects completed as part of this grant program must be collaborative from start to finish; Principle Investigators and collaborators should work together throughout all phases of the project. Research questions explored should be of national, state, and in many cases international relevance. We encourage collaboration with relevant stakeholders at any or all of these levels.

Interdisciplinary collaborations are required. These collaborations can be from one or across multiple institutions and consist of at least two different disciplines.

2.2 Focus for 2023 *Infants and Screens* Grant Funding

The National Academy of Science's seminal *Neurons to Neighborhood* report highlighted the critical role that early experiences play in shaping brain development. Increasingly, electronic devices are a large part of early experience for newborns and infants before the age of one. From birth, newborns often find themselves surrounded by electronic devices in the hands and the minds of their caregivers. These devices can capture the attention and stimulate the mind of the young infant as well as the adults caring for them. They often preempt competing natural visual and aural stimuli. The introduction of screens has altered the experiences of infants at a time in life when their brains are most plastic and forming foundational brain connections that may serve them for the remainder of their lives.

Research on the impact of these devices on brain development and subsequent sensory, cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development remains in its infancy. In particular, we know that it is during this period of life that latent ASD, executive function, and language acquisition (to name a few) begin to evolve. What are, if any, the interactions between these novel experiences and



different biological susceptibilities? How, if at all, have these devices altered the explorations by these young minds of the world and the people around them? Are there markers in the infant's brain, anatomical or functional, related to these experiences? Can we detect them early on? What challenges might they present to caregiver-child interactions?

Children and Screens is pleased to issue a request for proposals to advance our understanding of these critical questions. Studies can be laboratory or field-based but must focus on children 0-12 months of age and take an interdisciplinary approach meaning that investigators should come from at least 2 different disciplines. The funds can either be used to collect pilot data for a larger grant or to answer a discrete and relevant question related to this area. Either way, clear justification of how the work will advance the field including plans to secure additional funding (if applicable) is required.

We anticipate funding up to three 1-2 year projects with awards between \$100,000-300,000 total costs, including a maximum 10% indirect rate.

2.3 Eligibility

- The Principal Investigators (PIs) must possess a terminal degree (PhD, MD, or equivalent) and hold a tenure-track or tenured position at a university, college, or research facility. If a PI's institution does not offer tenure or tenure-track positions, then the PI must demonstrate that the PI's position would be considered equivalent to a tenured or tenure-track position in an academic institution. (Note, postdocs may be included on the grant, but cannot be listed as PIs.)
- All projects must be a collaborative effort consisting of at least two PIs; a maximum of five (5) PI may work on a single project. Projects must represent at least two different disciplines.
- The contact/administrative/fiscal PI must be a United States citizen, legal permanent resident, or those who have employment authorization from the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services at the time of the award and for the duration of the grant period.
 - The contact PI should be the one to email the letter of intent, and, if chosen, the full grant proposal to grants@childrenandscreens.com.
- The contact PI must be affiliated with an American entity that can receive and administer the grant from the Institute. The contact PI's affiliated institution will be designated as the fiscal agent and coordinating institution that will receive and process the grant from the Institute as well as support (i.e., contribute material and in-kind support) the funded research project, if awarded.
 - If the contact institution is a public university or college in the United States, then the grant will be awarded to the private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity (e.g., Regents of the University of California, Davis and not the University of California, Davis) designated to support the public university or college.
 - If the contact institution is a research facility in the United States then it must be a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity with a minimum operating budget of \$2.5 million,



have a minimum three-year track record of leading and conducting multi-year research projects (at least three over the last three years), include research as a core activity as described in recent annual reports, and have produced and publicly disseminated a minimum of five publications (over the last five years) reporting the results of their research.

- PIs affiliated with international universities, colleges and research facilities may be on the project team, but may not be the contact PI for tax purposes given the international status of their affiliated institution.
- All PIs are expected to commit, at a minimum, 10% of their time annually to the project.
- A minimum of one year (12 months) must have elapsed since receiving their terminal degrees before a PI may apply for a grant.
- A single PI may participate in a maximum of two Letters of Intent projects. A PI may only hold one award from the Institute at a time.
- Additional “collaborators” are permitted. These individuals do not need to be involved in the conception or execution of the project, but may act as resources or consultants.
- Multiple applicants from a single institution may submit Letters of Intent.
- All commercial and/or industry funding must be reported immediately to the Sponsor.

2.4 Funding Levels and Selection Criteria

The overall available funding is up to \$300,000; the number of awards is contingent on requested budgets and successful proposals. **Indirect costs per grant regardless of the number of subcontract institutions are limited to 10% of total direct costs.** Awards will be made to the contact institution; subcontract arrangements are managed by the contact institution.

Priority for funding will be based on the following:

1. Field impact
2. Novelty in terms of methodology or approach;
3. Multi-disciplinary nature that supports the needs of the whole child; and
4. Potential to lead to a larger project funded by other public or private sources.

The grants program is expected to be of interest to a wide range of disciplines and encourages unique perspectives. All grants will also be reviewed for their potential to support the Institute’s key stakeholders (e.g., parents, clinicians, educators, media and policymakers) to improve children’s media experience.

2.5 Taxes

Grant recipients are solely responsible for determining the tax consequences of Children and Screens Seed Grants.



3.0 Award Terms and Conditions

3.1 Grant Amounts/Terms of Agreement

Grant requests can be made in any amount up to \$300,000. The number and size of grant awards will be determined by the quality and overall number of submissions. Up to 3 total grants may be awarded. Funds will be awarded upon execution of the grant agreement.

A PI can only hold one award from the Institute at a time. Research already supported by any other sponsored award is not eligible for Institute funds. Applicants who were declined are welcome to resubmit for a different project.

Indirect costs per grant regardless of the number of subcontract institutions are limited to 10% total direct costs. Any funds remaining at the end of the grant period must be returned to the Institute.

3.2 Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be asked to self-assess their project on a variety of dimensions including scientific originality, interdisciplinary scope, integrative quality, conceptual links to the grant program topics and themes, and the likely scientific impacts of products produced by the project. Interim and final reports are required and should include:

1. A summary of progress toward the achievement of originally stated aims
2. Description of unexpected accomplishments and/or challenges
3. A concise description of the results (positive or negative) considered significant
4. A statement about where more research is needed
5. Status of the required manuscript suitable for publication
6. A list of publications and other products (including website links) resulting from the project not already reported
7. Financial report

3.3 Acknowledgement of Support/Control of Research

All publications and presentations resulting from the funded research must acknowledge support of Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development, including the grant number. Hard copies and website links for all such publications should be made available in draft form to Children and Screens via email to grants@childrenandscreens.com.

3.4 Notice of Award

Awards will be issued to the contact PI's affiliated "contact" institution through an award agreement that requires the signature of an authorized officer of a university, or an authorized



business official of the private, 501c3 nonprofit entity (refer to section 4.3). Investigators cannot sign these documents. Upon receipt of the signed agreement, Children and Screens will issue payment.

3.5 Evaluation

In order to learn from our work and better inform decisions about Children and Screens' Grants program strategy, design, implementation, and impacts, grant recipients will be asked to participate in periodic program evaluation discussions and/or surveys.

4.0 Letter of Intent

All interested applicants must submit a three-to-five-page Letter of Intent (LOI) via email in order to be considered for invitation to submit a detailed proposal for a grant. This letter should be a google doc or a .docx file. The letter should be emailed to grants@childrenandscreens.com.

LOI Deadline: Friday, May 5, 2023 by 5:00 pm ET

4.1 LOI Guidelines

The LOI should be a google doc or a .docx file and should be emailed to grants@childrenandscreens.com.

It is expected that the Letter of Intent will be approximately three to five pages and should include the following information:

1. Name of contact/administrative/fiscal PI, Title, Institution
2. Additional PI Name(s), Title(s), Institution(s)
3. Title of project
4. Total dollar amount requested with (approximate; may include a "wish list" budget, as well; maximum 10% indirect rate permitted)
5. Description of the needs or problem
6. Specific aims, research questions and theoretical basis for the project
7. Methodology including a description of the sample and recruitment feasibility (e.g., sample size, age of children, etc.), measures and analytic approaches
8. Expected outcomes of the research
9. Expected output of the team (e.g., papers, conference presentations, etc.)
10. Anticipated benefit to the intended population and/or development of the field, knowledge and/or understanding
11. Relevance to stated program topics and themes



4.2 Suggesting Reviewers

Along with the Letter of Intent, applicants are invited to suggest an appropriate reviewer to be included in the review process for all proposals. Children and Screens is not obligated to consult this reviewer.

4.3 Invitation to Apply

Following a review of the Letters of Intent, a selected number of candidates will be invited by Friday, June 23, 2023 to submit a detailed proposal.

4.4 Full Timeline

Submission to the grants program begins with the required Letter of Intent (3-5 pages), which will, in many cases, be followed by an invitation to submit a proposal. The deadline for submission of the Letter of Intent is Friday, May 5, 2023, 5pm ET. Following a review of the Letter of Intent, a selected number of candidates will be invited by June 23, 2023 to submit a detailed proposal. The deadline for full proposals is Friday, August 25, 2023 at 5 pm ET. In order to ensure fairness, late submissions will not be accepted. All applicants will be notified of their status via email by November 8, 2023. Projects are expected to begin as soon as possible thereafter.

This timeline is subject to change; applicants will be kept informed of any changes.

Timeline		
	Date	Time
Letter of Intent Submission Deadline	Friday, May 5, 2023	By 5pm ET
Invitations to Apply Sent	Friday, June 23, 2023	
Full Proposal Deadline	Friday, August 25, 2023	By 5pm ET
Questions from Reviewers Sent to Applicants	Week of September 18, 2023	
Answers from Applicants Due	Friday, October 6, 2023	By 5pm ET
Proposal Status Notification	Wednesday, November 8, 2023	
Start Date	As soon as possible	