

SickKids[®]

Centre for
Community
Mental Health

Assessment Practicum Placement
in Clinical Child & Adolescent
Psychology
2021-22

Toronto,
Ontario, Canada



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About us



SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health (SickKids CCMH) is a multi-professional, not-for-profit, children's mental health centre located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. SickKids CCMH provides primary prevention, early intervention, and clinical treatment services to infants, children and youth (from birth to 18) and to their families and communities. Services at SickKids CCMH are enriched by activities in research, program evaluation, the education and training of mental health professionals and the use of volunteers.

The programs offered to families at SickKids CCMH are housed in two main facilities within the city of Toronto and include prevention/early intervention programs, outpatient programs, intensive services for children (which includes day treatment & Section 23 classrooms), and an intensive services for youth program (which includes Section 23 classrooms and a residential treatment program). Treatment services to clients include assessment, individual therapy, family therapy, group therapy, and parent-child therapy, as well as liaison and consultation with community caregivers (e.g., day care providers, physicians, teachers).

Affiliated with the University of Toronto and accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Services to Children and Families, SickKids CCMH is also a member of Children's Mental Health Ontario.

On average, SickKids CCMH has about 225 staff. This includes full-time, part-time and contract staff; consultants; trainees from a variety of disciplines (early childhood education, child and youth care, psychiatry, psychology, social work, and art/expressive arts); and volunteers. More detailed information about SickKids CCMH's programs and services are at www.sickkidscmh.ca.

SickKids CCMH has a rich history of teaching and training interns and practicum students across multiple disciplines including psychology, social work, psychiatry, and art therapy stemming back to when the agency was referred to as The Hincks-Dellcrest Centre and even prior. Because of this decades-long pride in student teaching and training, SickKids CCMH tends to attract staff who are highly invested in prioritizing the development and supervision of new and upcoming clinicians. Psychology staff at SickKids CCMH are especially proud of assessment, intervention, and training we do, and we encourage you to explore this brochure carefully and with curiosity. For those of you who attend an interview for an upcoming placement, we will look forward to learning more about you, responding to your questions, and sharing our pride in what we do.

For your information, the internship program at SickKids CCMH is a member of the *Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers* (APPIC). We are also members of the

Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programs (CCPPP). The psychology training program is managed by a doctoral staff psychologist as Director of Training. The internship is not CPA accredited; however, we have submitted our self-study to the *Canadian Psychological Association* for their consideration and we hope to be accredited within the next year or so.

Please note: Although SickKids CCMH has several settings and offers several types of assessment and treatment services, this assessment placement is based at our 1645 Sheppard Ave. W. site in north Toronto (Sheppard & Keele).

Available practicum placements



One **assessment practicum** placement in clinical child psychology is available to a student enrolled in a PhD track CPA-accredited university psychology program. Although SickKids CCMH has several settings and offers several types of prevention and treatment services as mentioned above, the practicum placement is based at our Sheppard site. Clients seen by the practicum student may be involved in services from our Outpatient, In-Home and Day Treatment programs. Practicum placements positions generally are 11 months, 2 to 2.5 days a week¹ beginning on the first Wednesday after Labour Day and ending on the last working day of July the following year. This totals approximately a *minimum* of 600 hours onsite time. One of the days a week that the student must be onsite is Thursdays.

The practicum student is provided with a common room/shared space at their designated site. The practicum student may be involved in some infrequent travel to and the provision of services at one or more of the centre's other locations in the city.

If you are interested in an **intervention practicum** experience, please see our separate brochure for that program.

Impact of COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 on the 2021-2022 training cycle is unknown at this time. Please, be advised that some of the descriptions in this brochure may be impacted by COVID-19 disruptions and restrictions within SickKids CCMH. At the time of writing this brochure, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted some of the training opportunities we are able to provide to our current trainees. However, we have adjusted their experiences in order to meet their training goals to the best of our ability. From mid-March to July 2020, training experiences have taken place remotely through videoconferencing technology. This includes virtual: clinical assessment, individual and family psychotherapy, some play therapy, parent counseling, interviewing, supervision, didactics & seminars, psychology team meetings, and grand rounds.

Described below is the intended program structure and experiences, which may require modification depending on limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Should adjustments be required, potential and actual trainees will be notified as soon as information becomes available. Our program has thus far navigated the uncertain landscape with flexibility and creativity, and we will continue to honour our commitment to achieve program competencies in the upcoming academic cycles as well. We cannot predict with any degree of certainty how the pandemic may impact future training cycles, but we can commit to being transparent with information, collaborating with trainees to develop disruption contingency plans guided by

¹ Minimum 2 days; ½ day optional.

training goals, and to expressly document adjusted goals and expectations (including supervision arrangements). Should disruptions occur in the future, potential and actual trainees will be notified as soon as information becomes available. We are confident that we can continue to provide the necessary training experiences to allow our trainees to achieve program goals and competencies.

Practicum students are expected to comply with any and all federal, provincial, and SickKids CCMH organization regulations including but not limited to wearing PPE, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, abiding by travel restrictions, quarantining, and other Infection Prevention and Control procedures within the context of providing clinical services, or otherwise.

Please, see the Application Process section at the end of this brochure for more information about the impact of COVID-19 on training experience.

Assessment practicum placement philosophy and objectives



The primary emphasis of the assessment practicum placement is on a developmental and theoretically integrated approach to the psychological and clinical assessment of children and families. In addition, an interprofessional approach is integral to the clinical practices of SickKids CCMH and provides practicum students with the opportunity to work with mental health professionals of different backgrounds and with a broad range of interests, knowledge, and skills.

Training goals:

1. Develop skills in conducting comprehensive psychological assessments, including administering and interpreting standardized psychological assessment measures and tests, writing psychological assessment reports, and providing feedback and consultation.
2. Develop skills in clinical assessment, diagnosis, and formulation that focus on underlying developmental, psychodynamic, biological, family, and system factors that produce vulnerability to specific symptom formation in children and adolescents.
3. Develop skills in establishing therapeutic rapport, in cultural competence, and in the ability to communicate assessment and diagnostic information clearly and sensitively to clients.
4. Expand respect for and critical thought regarding research and best practices in the area of children's mental health.
5. Develop the skills needed to work collaboratively in an interprofessional and organizational service-delivery environment, including an understanding of and respect for the contributions of the various disciplines to children's mental health.
6. Develop skills in applying relevant ethical, legal, and professional standards in their clinical work.

The assessment practicum placement experience



The assessment practicum placement offers the student opportunities for conducting comprehensive psychological assessments for children and youth (aged 6 to 17 years) who are referred from within SickKids CCMH programs including Outpatient services, In-Home and our Intensive Services for Children Day Treatment program. Assessments are typically requested for psycho-educational, socio-emotional, and psycho-diagnostic considerations. Practicum students will gain experience with regard to clinical and diagnostic interviewing, administering and interpreting standardized psychological assessment measures and tests, integrating clinical information with psychological test data, and provision of written and verbal feedback to clients, families, and referring agents. Assessment tools include intelligence and academic testing as well as assessment of attention, memory, and language, as well as socio-emotional, personality, and projective measures. Practicum students are trained via individual supervision.

In addition, the assessment practicum student is required to be a member of the Child and Adolescent Assessment Team – Sheppard (CAAT-S). This is an interprofessional team that engages in the comprehensive clinical assessment of children and adolescents (aged 6 to 17 years) at the Sheppard site. There are two primary objectives associated with this team: First, participating families will receive a comprehensive assessment which will involve semi-structured family and individual interviews, the completion of standardized questionnaires, play assessments when appropriate, and consultation with collateral systems. Upon completion of the assessment process families will receive feedback from the team including a comprehensive and interprofessional formulation, diagnoses where appropriate, and recommendations. Second, this is a training team where students will learn how to engage families in an assessment process and take the lead in doing so. Feedback will be shared amongst team members to enhance assessment skills and students' comfort working with families within this context.

The placement is comprised of the following components that generally run from September to July of the next year. Each practicum trainee will undertake each of the following components:

- provision of direct assessment service activities to their case load of clients
- membership on one interprofessional direct service training team (CAAT-S)
- individual supervision
- participation in educational seminars (this is an optional component)

Client contact

The trainee is expected to conduct *at least* five comprehensive assessments over the year. This includes *at least* one clinical assessment with the CAAT-S interprofessional assessment team and four comprehensive psychological assessments. The nature of the contact at the beginning of the practicum placement depends on the background and previous experience of the student. In the first two months, students may receive a high degree of live supervision, and supervision will focus on rapport building with clients and on assessment skills.

Seminars

In consultation with their supervisor, and as consistent with their individualized training goals, psychology assessment students may choose to attend a seminar or two.

Supervision and performance evaluation

Supervision is provided in both individual and small group format (a minimum of two hours per week). Throughout their practicum placement, the student is assigned a supervisor who is a registered psychologist. The supervisor guides their practicum experience and meets weekly with the student. Students will also receive team-specific supervision on CAAT-S from members of other disciplines (e.g., psychiatry, social work). All of the student's work, however, is discussed with and monitored by the student's psychologist supervisor, with ongoing feedback throughout the year. In consultation with others involved in the student's work, formal performance evaluations are completed by the supervisor at the end of January and at the end of July each year, using the relevant university's evaluation form and/or the centre's "Competency Assessment" form. Both evaluations are filed in the practicum student's personnel record. The student's psychologist supervisor provides the link between the centre and the student's university, ensuring that specific university practicum placement expectations are met with regard to training objectives, experience, supervision, and performance evaluation. All practicum students are asked to complete the centre's "Student/Trainee exit interview" upon completion of their placement.

Policies and procedures

SickKids CCMH's *Policies and Operational Procedures* apply to all personnel associated with SickKids CCMH, including psychology practicum students. As part of the contracting process, practicum students receive access to, and are required to sign an acknowledgment of having read, the following SickKids CCMH policies: Personnel Code of Ethics; Privacy and Confidentiality; and Use of Technology. Advance copies of these policies will be provided on request. Practicum students receive orientation regarding centre policies and operational procedures at the beginning of their placement, and ongoing supervision with regard to their implementation. In particular, practicum students are helped to familiarize themselves with the

centre's clinical policies/operational procedures (e.g., Client Privacy and Confidentiality, Client Records, Behaviour Management), and with the centre's human resources policies/operational procedures (e.g., Personnel Code of Ethics, Workplace Harassment Prevention, Use of Technology, Infection Prevention and Control). **All trainees are required to have a vulnerable-sector police check completed to the satisfaction of SickKids CCMH prior to the beginning of their placement.**

Complaints and performance concerns

Responses to practicum students' concerns about their supervisor or about their practicum experience, and supervisors' concerns about psychology student performance, are guided by the principles of fairness, transparency, and due process, and by the following SickKids CCMH policies and procedures: Supervision, Performance Management, Conflict Resolution, and Disciplinary Action.

In addition, the centre has specific procedures for psychology trainees: Due Process Procedures and Trainee Grievance Procedures, which are distributed during the first week of orientation and available upon request. The centre also familiarizes itself with and respects the specific requirements of students' universities with regard to dealing with such matters, including involvement of the university's practicum field supervisor/training director when warranted.

Application qualifications and process



Applicants must currently be enrolled in a PhD track CPA-accredited university applied psychology program. In addition, applicants are expected to have completed coursework in child and adolescent development and in psychological assessment and psychopathology in infants, children, youth, and families.

Applicants should have considerable interest in a rigorous, theoretically integrated, and developmental approach to assessment of children and families, as this is the predominant orientation of SickKids CCMH.

Interested applicants must submit the following:

1. A PDF document containing a cover letter and CV to the e-mail below. The cover letter should contain the following information:
 - a. Brief description of your training and skills
 - b. Reason for applying to SickKids CCMH
 - c. Training goals
2. Two letters of reference, preferably from psychologists familiar with their professional work (to be mailed or e-mailed with original signatures)
3. The *University Authorization Form* (Appendix A) signed by their University's Coordinator of Practicum Placement Training
4. The completed application form (Appendix B)

Please note: Do NOT submit university course transcripts.

We will attempt to acknowledge all applications by e-mail.

Once accepted for a placement position, all trainees are required to have vulnerable-sector police check satisfactory to SickKids CCMH completed prior to the beginning of their placement.

Please direct application to Dr. Susan Yabsley at syabsley@sickkidscmh.ca

Susan Yabsley, PhD, C. Psych.
Psychology Training Leader
SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health
440 Jarvis Street
Toronto ON M4Y 2H4

General inquiries should be directed to:

Suventhini Thamothersampillai
Educational Coordinator
SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health
416-924-1164 ext.4243
sthamotharampillai@sickkidscmh.ca

Practicum placement applications should be submitted by Feb.1; that is, eight months prior to when the practicum placement would begin (i.e., the first working day in September of the same year). Interviews, when indicated, will be scheduled in February and/or March.

Selection process

Two to three staff members, PhD-level psychologists, review the application of each candidate. Candidates are invited to attend an interview. Our interviews are scheduled in February and/or March.

SickKids CCMH follows the **Greater Toronto Area Common Notification Day**. Check with your DCTs for that date each year. Offers of a practicum placement made on the GTA Common Notification Day will be made by email and/or telephone and the director of clinical training of the trainee's program will be copied on the email.

Psychology personnel



The following psychologist personnel may be assigned to provide direct supervision to one or more psychology practicum students each year. We look forward to working with you.

Lorne Sugar, PhD, C. Psych. (York University).

Psychologist, Outpatient Services; Psychology Intern and Practicum Supervisor

Elyse Reim, PhD, C. Psych. (Guelph University).

Psychologist, In-Home & Day Treatment and Outpatient Services; Practicum Supervisor.

Susan Yabsley, PhD, C. Psych. (University College, London; Anna Freud Centre).

Director, Specialized Services & Interprofessional Practice; Psychology Director of Training; Psychology Intern and Practicum Supervisor.

Dina Lafoyiannis, PhD, C. Psych. (York University).

Psychologist, Outpatient Services; Psychology Intern and Practicum Supervisor.

Leah Litwin, Ph.D. C.Psych. (Supervised Practice). York University.

Psychologist (Supervised Practice); Intensive Services for Youth and Outpatient Services. Psychology Practicum Supervisor.

Appendix A: University authorization form

I, _____

(Print name of University Director of Practicum Training)

at _____

(Print name of university)

have discussed and approve the application of:

(Print name of graduate student in Psychology)

for an assessment practicum placement to begin next September at SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health.

(Signature of University Director of Practicum Training)

This form should be included with the other required application materials sent by the practicum placement applicant to: Dr. Susan Yabsley, Psychology Training Leader, SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health, 440 Jarvis Street, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2H4 Canada

Appendix B: Psychology assessment practicum placement application form



Applications due on or before: February 1

A. General information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Citizenship status: _____

B. Education background

University	Dates of attendance	Major	Degree granted/ Expected date of completion
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C. Additional training, practicum placements; please, list and describe

D. Director of Clinical Training at your institution

Name: _____

University/Institution: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please note: Applications are due on or before **01 February**. Offers of a practicum placement will be made on the **Greater Toronto Area Common Notification Day** by e-mail and/or telephone. Check with your Director of Clinical Training for the date each year (typically mid-March). **The Director of Clinical Training at your institution will be cc'd on the e-mail offer so, please, ensure the above information is included and correct.**

This form should be included with the other required application materials sent by the practicum placement applicant to:

Dr. Susan Yabsley, Psychology Training Leader, SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health, 440 Jarvis Street, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2H4, Canada.