

# Michael Walsh McGarrah

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## Education

Ph.D. Candidate in Human Development, Learning & Teaching (expected May 2022),  
Harvard University, 2017–Present

Dissertation: “Investigating the Influence of Internalizing and Externalizing Symptoms on Early-Onset Substance Use in Elementary School and Across the Transition to Middle and High School: Integrating Variable- and Person-Centered Analyses of Child and Adolescent Development”

Primary Advisors: Dr. Stephanie M. Jones, Dr. Leah H. Somerville, Dr. Dana C. McCoy

M.A. in Education, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (expected November 2021)

Ed.M. in Human Development and Psychology, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2019

B.A. in Child Psychology, University of Minnesota, 2012

*Summa Cum Laude, with Distinction, Phi Beta Kappa*

Honors Thesis: “The Development of Emotion Regulation and Children’s Age-Related Performance on the Emotional Interference Task”

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Philip D. Zelazo and Dr. Stephanie M. Carlson

## Professional and Research Experience

### **Independent Research Consultant**

**02/2019–Present**

- Secured contracts with clients, including the MIT Applied Educational Neuroscience Initiative, The Carroll School, Global Citizen Year, and IDinsight/State of Jarkhand, India
- Lead the quantitative research team as Chief Psychometrician to validate a novel, tablet-based diagnostic test battery of early dyslexia symptoms (AppRISE) with the MIT Applied Educational Neuroscience Initiative, in partnership with UC San Francisco and University of Connecticut
- Apply psychometric methods, including reliability analysis, item response theory models, score linking, and mixed effects regression, to validate the AppRISE diagnostic battery
- Serve as content expert on social and emotional skills for IDinsight, an international development consulting firm located in San Francisco, CA, in collaboration with the State of Jharkand, India, to develop a program evaluation study design and set of survey tools aimed at assessing the effectiveness of a state-wide program to foster social and emotional development in Indian middle and high schools
- Authored a complete psychometric report analyzing the initial validation study for the AppRISE diagnostic battery, presenting the results to a multi-university team of principal investigators, advising them on next steps and future work
- Advised the Carroll School in Lincoln, MA on quasi-causal methods and model design to evaluate the effectiveness of a school-based program to improve outcomes for students with dyslexia
- Directed quantitative program evaluation for Global Citizen Year, a prominent “gap year” program for pre-college high school graduates located in Oakland, CA, with a special focus on

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differential effects for minority and low-SES students

- Co-designed outcome surveys for Global Citizen Year, with special emphasis on capturing the development of social and emotional skills

**Doctoral Student Researcher, EASEL Lab, Harvard University**

**08/2017–Present**

- Led quantitative analysis of a survey-based study, funded by the Hewlett Foundation, evaluating national-level implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL) programs across U.S. public elementary schools, including data cleaning, inspection of psychometric properties of the survey instruments, mixed effects analysis of associations between variables of interest, and presentation of findings to the lab team
- Repurposed an existing dataset on SEL program evaluation, pulling out rare data on very early substance use and related symptoms of emergent psychopathology among elementary school students in order to evaluate proximal causes of early-onset substance use disorder and develop intervention strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of substance abuse in elementary school and across the middle school transition

**Research and Policy Associate, The Aspen Institute**

**08/2016–08/2017**

- Led the research team for the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development
- Analyzed and synthesized the literature on social and emotional learning across multiple academic disciplines, including developmental, clinical, and educational psychology, as well as prevention science, neuroscience, medicine, and economics
- Prepared briefs for Executive Directors and the Vice President, and conferred with leading academics in the field
- Authored a background document on social and emotional learning that received high praise from members of the Council of Distinguished Scientists, including Angela Duckworth, Marc Brackett, and Mark Greenberg
- Authored a set of guided readings about social and emotional learning that were reviewed positively by Commissioners, including Linda Darling-Hammond, Hugh Price, and General Craig McKinley

**Research Associate, American Institutes for Research**

**07/2013–08/2016**

- Developed survey items related to self-regulation, self-efficacy, and achievement motivation for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, in collaboration with the Educational Testing Service and the National Center for Education Statistics
- Published two empirical evaluations of higher education spending patterns and the employment of contingent faculty, utilizing the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, and conducting analyses in Stata
- Developed survey items for principal and teacher surveys for an Institute of Education Sciences RCT intervention on teacher and principal professional development and academic standards implementation (i.e., Common Core); led survey rollout across multiple states; coded over 100 hours of teacher classroom practice recordings using the Framework for Teaching (FFT) evaluation rubric
- Published a brief examining practice and policy issues related to the assessment of the social and emotional development of children and adolescents in education settings; a guide to building and maintaining assessment systems; and an inventory of evidence-based assessments of inter- and

intra-personal competencies

- Managed funding and staff, and successfully secured continued funding, for a \$6,000,000 U.S. Department of Education research and technical assistance center (the College and Career Readiness and Success Center)
- Authored various reports and led presentations for a variety of clients, including the U.S. Department of Education; Institute of Education Sciences; National Center for Education Statistics; Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; Office of Special Education Programs; Office of Educational Technology; Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education; Kansas State Department of Education; California Department of Education; The TIAA Institute; The Joyce Foundation; and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Fulbright Scholar, U.S. Department of State, Government of Madrid, Spain 09/2012–07/2013**

- Led professional development for teachers in the Madrid bilingual public schools related to language acquisition and teaching English as a second language
- Instructed classes for middle and high school students in English and Spanish

**Research Assistant, Institute of Child Development, Univ. of Minnesota 01/2011–09/2012**

- Developed a measure of emotion regulation, the Emotional Interference Task, for use with young children; The measure consists of sequentially presenting differently valenced affective pictures alongside a cognitive task, and measuring the differential reaction times associated with the cognitive task, by affective valence
- Designed the computer-delivered assessment for the Emotional Interference Task using e-Prime
- Recruited and directed over 100 participants for the Emotional Interference Task, coded and analyzed all data using SPSS
- Conducted state-by-state analysis of Pre-K-3rd Grade systems for the Chicago Longitudinal Study
- Consulted with Dr. Phil Zelazo to scale up the Emotional Interference Task and pursue publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- Coded video recordings of a mindfulness training intervention for young children
- Directed a task exploring adult personality self-perception utilizing skin conductance measures

**Early Childhood Education Policy Intern, Children’s Defense Fund 06/2011–09/2011**

- Authored a white paper on the effectiveness of full day kindergarten programs.
- Prepared materials for and attended briefings and meetings with members of the United States Congress and Senate.

**Working Papers**

**McGarrah, M.W.**, Jones, S. M., McCoy, D., & Somerville, L. “Integrating the internalizing and externalizing pathways to early-onset substance use: A dynamic developmental cascades model.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

**McGarrah, M.W.**, Jones, S. M., McCoy, D., & Somerville, L. “Bi-directional influences of internalizing and externalizing symptoms and subsequent early-onset substance use: A latent trajectory model with structured residuals.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

**McGarrah, M.W.**, Jones, S. M., McCoy, D., & Somerville, L. “A person-centered analysis of the internalizing and externalizing pathways to early-onset substance use: A parallel process growth mixture model.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Whillans, A., Yemiscigil, A., **McGarrah, M.W.**, & Johnston, E. “Response shift bias and the measurement of change in socio-emotional outcomes in a gap year program.” Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

### **Peer-Reviewed Publications**

Jones, S. M., **McGarrah, M.W.**, & Kahn, J. (2019). “Social and emotional learning: A principled science of human development in context.” *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 129-143.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1625776>

### **Reports**

Hurlburt, S., & **McGarrah, M.W.** (2016). “Cost savings or cost shifting? The relationship between part-time contingent faculty and institutional spending.” New York, NY: TIAA Institute.  
<https://www.tiaainstitute.org/publication/cost-savings-or-cost-shifting>

Hurlburt, S., & **McGarrah, M.W.** (2016). “The shifting academic workforce: Where are the contingent faculty?” New York, NY: TIAA Institute. <https://www.tiaainstitute.org/publication/shifting-academic-workforce>

**McGarrah, M.W.**, & Moroney, D. A. (2015). “Are you ready to assess social and emotional development? Stop. Think. Act.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.  
<https://www.air.org/resource/are-you-ready-assess-social-and-emotional-learning-and-development-second-edition>

**McGarrah, M.W.** (2015). “Lifelong learning skills for college and career readiness: Considerations for education policy.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. <https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/lifelong-learning-skills-college-and-career-readiness-considerations-education>

Cushing, E. C., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Foster, L. R., & Jacques, C. (2015). “Integrating employability skills: A framework for all educators.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.  
<https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/lifelong-learning-skills-college-and-career-readiness-considerations-education>

**McGarrah, M.W.** (2014). “Lifelong learning skills for college and career readiness: An annotated bibliography.” Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. <https://ccrscenter.org/technical-assistance-networks/professional-learning-modules/integrating-employability-skills>

**McGarrah, M.W.** (2012). “The development of emotion regulation & children’s age-related performance on the emotional interference task.” (Undergraduate Honors Thesis). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy. <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/183083>

**McGarrah, M.W.** (2012). “The case for full-day kindergarten: A review of research.” [White paper]. Washington, DC: Children’s Defense Fund.

### **Professional Presentations**

Johnston, E. F., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Yemiscigil, A., & Whillans, A. (2020, November). “When quant and qual collide: Response shift bias and the measurement of change in gap year participants.” Gap Year Association Conference (online). Portland, OR.

**McGarrah, M.W.** (2019, May). “Examining early predictors of substance use in elementary school: Psychosocial characteristics and quality of student-teacher relationships.” Association for Psychological Science Annual Conference. Washington, DC.

**McGarrah, M.W.** (2016, April). “Creating the conditions for social and emotional learning: Why it matters and how to bring it to afterschool and expanded learning environments.” Horizons National Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA.

Cushing, E. C., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Foster, L. R., & Jacques, C. (2015, May). “Integrating the employability skills framework: A professional learning module for all educators.” Presented at the Kansas Department of Education. Topeka, KA.

Cushing, E. C., **McGarrah, M.W.**, Foster, L. R., & Jacques, C. (2015, April). “Integrating the employability skills framework: A professional learning module for all educators.” U.S. Department of Education LINCS Conference. Minneapolis, MN.

### **Teaching Experience**

Teaching Fellow, Harvard Graduate School of Education (2019–Present). Courses taught:

Spring 2020, Fall 2020	Developmental Insights, Professor Stephanie Jones
Spring 2020	Beyond Grit: Non-Cognitive Factors in School Success, Professor Stephanie Jones
Fall 2020, Fall 2019	Typical and Atypical Neurodevelopment, Professors Charles Nelson and Nadine Gaab
Fall 2020, Fall 2019	Developmental Psychology, Professor Paul L. Harris

### **Academic Service**

2021–Present Graduate Student Affiliate, Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science  
2021–Present Invited Committee Member, Harvard GSAS Task Force on Scholarship Restart  
2021–Present Advisor to the Council, Harvard Graduate Student Council  
2021–Present Graduate Student Advisor, Harvard Graduate School of Education  
2020–Present Invited Committee Member, Harvard FAS Task Force on Visual Culture and Signage  
2020–2021 Vice President, Harvard Graduate Student Council  
2020 Invited Reviewer: Educational Psychologist; Psychometrika  
2019–2020 At-Large Representative for Interdisciplinary Studies, Harvard Graduate Student Council

### **Certifications And Languages**

2020	Harvard Business School Online “CORE” Business Readiness Credential, High Honors
2014	Certified Rater, Framework for Teaching (FFT), The Danielson Group
2012	Proficient in Spanish, University of Minnesota Diploma Credential

### **Honors and Awards**

2020	APA Division 15 Best Paper of the Year Award: Jones, McGarrah, and Kahn 2019
2019	Elected Member, Sigma Xi National Scientific Honor Society
2019	Honorable Mention, National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program
2016	Exceptional Service in Staff Development, American Institutes for Research

2015 Exceptional Service in Research and Evaluation, American Institutes for Research  
2014 Exceptional Service in Technical Assistance, American Institutes for Research  
2012 Fulbright Scholarship, U. S. Department of State, Government of Madrid, Spain  
2012 Elected Member, Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha of Minnesota  
2010 Outstanding Leader of a Student Health Group, University of Minnesota