

# Melissa W. Clearfield

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## Current Position

2020-present Laura and Carl Peterson Chair of Social Sciences  
2015 – 2018 Chair of the Faculty, Whitman College  
2013-present Professor of Psychology, Whitman College  
2007-2013 Associate Professor of Psychology, Whitman College  
2001-2007 Assistant Professor of Psychology, Whitman College

## Education

Ph.D. Indiana University, May 2001, Developmental Psychology  
Minor: Behavioral Neuroscience and Kinesiology

B.A. Middlebury College, May 1995, Psychology

## Academic and Professional Experience

Jan – Aug 2006 Visiting Professor, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences,  
Indiana University

2005-2010 Consultant, National Institute of Children’s Health and Development (NICHD)  
grant (#2 R37 HD22830-20)

1996-2001 Research Assistant, Motor Development Lab, Indiana University

1995-1996 Research Coordinator, Adolescent Parenting Project, University of  
Notre Dame

1994-1995 Research Assistant, Infant Development Lab, Carnegie Mellon University

1991-1994 Research Assistant, Infant Perception/Action Lab, Middlebury College

## Honors, Awards and Grants

2017 Gates Foundation grant (~\$20K)

2015-2017 Hemera Foundation grant (~\$75K)

2010 Pete and Hedda Reid Service Award, Whitman College

2008 Louis B. Perry Summer Research Grant, Whitman College

2007 G. Thomas Edwards Award for Excellence in Teaching & Scholarship

2005 Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers Award

2005 Louis B. Perry Summer Research Grant, Whitman College

2003 Louis B. Perry Summer Research Grant, Whitman College

2000 College of Arts & Sciences Teaching Excellence Recognition Award,  
Indiana University

1999 J.R. Kantor Graduate Award, College of Arts & Sciences, Indiana University

### Professional Service

- Associate Editor for *Developmental Psychology*, 2013-2014
- Ad hoc reviewer for *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*; *Infancy*; *Cognitive Development*; *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*; *Developmental Science*; *Developmental Psychology*, *Infant and Child Development*
- Reviewer for National Science Foundation Grant Proposals
- Reviewer for Society in Research in Child Development (SRCD) biennial meeting, *Infancy: Physical and Cognitive Processes Panel*, 2005 and 2003
- Reviewer for John Wiley and Sons Publishers new child development textbook
- Reviewer for Worth Publishers (Siegler, DeLoache & Eisenberg *How Children Develop*)
- Reviewer for International Conference on Infant Studies, *Physical and Cognitive Development Panel*, 2002

### Professional Affiliations

- Society for Research in Child Development
- International Congress on Infant Studies
- American Psychological Society
- American Psychological Association

### Peer-Reviewed Publications (\* denotes Whitman students)

Clearfield, M.W. (2020). Play For Success: A novel intervention to boost visual attention in low-SES infants. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *193*, 1-11.

Clearfield, M.W. (2019). Play For Success: An intervention to boost object exploration in infants from low-income households. *Infant Behavior & Development*, *55*, 112-122.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2019.03.001>

Marcovitch, S., Clearfield, M.W., Swinger, M.M., Calkins, S.D. & Bell, M.A. (2016). Attentional predictors of 5-month-olds' performance on a looking A-not-B task. *Infant and Child Development*, *25(4)*, 233-246.

Clearfield, M.W., Stanger, S.B.\* & Jenne, H.K.\* (2015). Socioeconomic Status (SES) Affects Means-End Behavior Across The First Year. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *38*, 22-28.

Tacke, N. \*, Bailey, L.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (2015). Socioeconomic status (SES) affects infants' selective exploration. *Infant and Child Development*, *24(6)*, 571-586.

Clearfield, M.W., Carter-Rodriguez, A.\*, Merali, A.\*, & Shober, S.\* (2014). The Effects of SES on Infant and Maternal Diurnal Salivary Cortisol Output. *Infant Behavior & Development*, *37(3)*, 298-304.

- Clearfield, M.W., Bailey, L.S.\*, Jenne, H. K.\*, Stanger, S.B.\* & Tacke, N.\* (2014). SES affects oral and manual exploration across the first year. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 35 (1), 63-69.
- Clearfield, M.W. (2013). Recognizing transcendence when you see it: Dynamic systems theory as an action-based approach. *Cognitive Development*, 28, 134-137.
- Clearfield, M.W. & Jedd, K.E.\* (2013). The effects of socio-economic status (SES) on infant attention. *Infant and Child Development*, 22(1), 53-67.
- Clearfield, M.W. & Niman, L.\* (2012). SES affects infant cognitive flexibility. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 35, 29-35.
- Clearfield, M.W. (2011). Learning to walk changes infants' social interactions. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 34, 15-25.
- Clearfield, M.W., Diedrich, F., Dineva, E., Smith, L.B., & Thelen, E. (2009). Cue salience and memory in infant perseverative reaching: Tests of the Dynamic Field Model. *Developmental Science*, 12(1), 26-40.
- Clearfield, M.W., Mullen, M.N.\* & Osborne, C.N.\* (2008). Learning by looking: Infants' social looking behavior across the transition from crawling to walking. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 100, 297-307.
- Feng J., Spencer J.P., Schöner G., Clearfield M.W., & Thelen, E. (2007). A Novel Technology for Investigating the Dynamics of Infant Perseverative Reaching. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39(4), 911-919.
- Clearfield, M.W., Feng, J., & Thelen, E. (2007). The development of reaching across the first year in twins of known placental type. *Motor Control*, 11(1), 29-53.
- Clearfield, M. W., Smith, L.B., Diedrich, F. J. & Thelen, E. (2006). Young infants reach correctly on the A-not-B task: On the development of stability and perseveration. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 29, 435-444.
- Clearfield, M.W. & Nelson, N.M. \* (2006). Sex differences in mothers' speech and play behavior with 6-, 9-, and 14-month-old infants. *Sex Roles*, 54(1-2), 127-137.
- Clearfield, M.W. & Westfahl, S. M-C. \* (2006). Familiarization in infants' perception of addition problems. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 7(1), 27-43.
- Clearfield, M.W. (2004). The role of crawling and walking experience in infant spatial memory. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 89(3), 214-241.
- Clearfield, M.W. (2004). Infants' enumeration of dynamic displays. *Cognitive Development*, 19(3), 309-324.

Clearfield, M.W. & Mix, K.S. (2001). Infant use continuous quantity — not number— to discriminate small visual sets. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 2(3), 243-260.

Eppler, M.A., Adolph, K.E., Marin, L., Weise, I.B., and Clearfield, M.W. (2000). Exploration in the service of locomotion. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 23, 441-460.

Clearfield, M.W. & Mix, K.S. (1999). Number versus contour length in infants' discrimination of small visual sets. *Psychological Science*, 10(5), 408-411.

### **Invited Chapters/Articles** (all are peer reviewed)

Clearfield, M.W. (2012). Infant Learning and Development. In N. Seel (Ed.).  
Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning. Springer Science Press.

Clearfield, M.W. (2011). Infant walking and social interaction. HowBabiesLearn.com.

Clearfield, M.W. (2006). A Dynamic Account of Infant Looking Behavior in Small and Large Number Tasks. In M.A. Vanchevsky (Ed.), *Focus on Cognitive Psychology Research*. Nova Science Publishers, 59-86.

Spencer, J.P., Clearfield, M., Corbetta, D., Ulrich, B., Buchanan, P., & Schoner, G. (2006). Moving towards a grand theory of development: In memory of Esther Thelen. *Child Development*, 77 (6), 1521-1538.

Clearfield, M.W. & Thelen, E. (2001). Stability and flexibility in the acquisition of skilled movement. In *the Handbook of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, C. Nelson & M. Luciano (Eds.).

### **Recent Conference Presentations** (all are peer-reviewed; \* denotes Whitman students)

Clearfield, M. W. (October, 2018). Play For Success: An Intervention to Boost Attention, Object Exploration and Problem-Solving in Low-income Infants. Poster presented at Zero to Three in Denver, CO.

Clearfield, M.W. (April, 2017). Play For Success: An Intervention to Boost Attention, Object Exploration and Problem-Solving in Low-income Infants. Talk given in Austin TX in April as part of a symposium titled: The Washington State Innovation Cluster: Building Executive Function and Self-Regulation Skills in Caregivers and Children.

Rust, E.\*, Friedman, J.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (April, 2017). Minimizing the Achievement Gap: Boosting problem-solving in low-income infants. Poster presented at SRCD in Austin TX in April, 2017.

Hodgkinson, N.\*, Hampton, L. \*, Sloss, M. \*, & Clearfield, M.W. (May 2016). Effects of an

Early Motor Intervention on Visual Attention and Object Exploration in Low-SES Infants. Poster presented at annual Western Psychological Association meeting, Long Beach, CA.

Davis, E. \*, Rubinstein, K. \*, Teplo, S. \* & Clearfield, M.W. (May 2016). The Interaction Between Task, Infant Sex, and Socioeconomic Status in Maternal Infant-Directed Speech. Poster presented at annual Western Psychological Association meeting, Long Beach, CA.

Clearfield, M.W. (March, 2015). Manual Exploratory Selectivity, SES, and Salivary Cortisol in Infants. Talk given as part of the symposium entitled “Infant Motor and Psychological Development: New Findings on a Classic Topic”, presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, Philadelphia, PA.

Clearfield, M.W., Carter-Rodriguez, A.\*, Merali, A.\*, & Shober, S.\* (Nov, 2013). SES Affects Infant Salivary Cortisol Levels. Poster at the 8th biennial meeting of the Society for the Study of Human Development, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Nov 3-5, 2013.

Tacke, N.\*, Bailey, L.\*, & Clearfield, M.W. (Oct, 2013). The Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Infants’ Selective Exploration. Poster presented at the Cognitive Development Society Meeting, Memphis, TN.

Clearfield, M.W., Bailey, L.\*, Jenne, H.\*, Stanger, S.\*, & Tacke, N.\* (April, 2013). SES Affects Oral and Manual Exploration Across the First Year. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA.

Stanger, S.\*, Jenne, H.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (April, 2013). The Role of SES in Problem Solving Across the First Year. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA.

Barich, K.E.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (June, 2012). The impact of socio-economic status (SES) on infant goal-setting. Poster presented at the International Conference on Infant Studies, Minneapolis, MN.

Jedd, K.\*, Barich, K.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (April, 2011). Attention Delays in Infants in Poverty. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, Montreal, Canada.

Munz, M.A.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (April 2010). Identifying the Onset of Attention Delays in Infants in Poverty. Poster presented at the Conference on Human Development, New York, NY.

Niman, L.C.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (April 2010). Cognitive Flexibility in Infants in Poverty. Poster presented at the Conference on Human Development, New York, NY.

Clearfield, M.W., Bushnell, E., Baxter, K.\* & Fitzgerald, J.\* (April, 2009). New walkers’ responses to the challenges of carrying objects. Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the Society for Research in Child Development, Denver, CO.

- Clearfield, M.W. & Fisher-Thomson, D. (April, 2009). To look or not to look: The structure of looking and looking away in infant visual attention tasks. Poster presented at the Biennial Conference of the Society for Research in Child Development, Denver, CO.
- Clearfield, M.W., Bushnell, E., Baxter, K.\* & Fitzgerald, J.\*(2008). Look mom, no hands! The impact of learning to walk on carrying objects. Poster presented at the Biennial International Conference on Infant Studies, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.
- Clearfield, M.W. (2007). Social learning in motion. Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the Society for Research in Child Development, Boston, MA.
- Clearfield, M.W., Smith, L.B. & Thelen, E. (2006). Perseveration is a developmental achievement: Lessons from the A-not-B task. Paper presented at the International Conference on Developmental Learning, Bloomington, IN.
- Clearfield, M.W. & Brey, E.L. \* (2006). The Effect of Walking Onset on Infant Temperament: A Longitudinal Study. Poster presented at the Conference on Human Development, Louisville, KY.
- Clearfield, M.W. & Osborne, C.N. \* (2006). Learning to walk changes infants' social looking behavior. Poster presented at the Conference on Human Development, Louisville, KY.
- Dineva, E. & Clearfield, M.W. (2005). The dynamics of memory for transient cues in the A-not-B task. Poster presented at the Cognitive Development Society Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Clearfield, M., Diedrich, F., Smith, L.B., & Schöner, G. (2005, April). From action to embodied cognition: Bridging the great divide. In J.P. Spencer & G. Schöner (Chairs), Moving toward a grand theory of development: In memory of Esther Thelen. Presidential Address presented at the Biennial Conference of the Society for Research in Child Development, Atlanta, GA.
- Corbetta, D., Clearfield, M., Gormley, D., Spencer, J.P., & Galloway, J.C. (2005, April). The transition to reaching: Mapping intentions to intrinsic dynamics. In J.P. Spencer & G. Schöner (Chairs), Moving toward a grand theory of development: In memory of Esther Thelen. Presidential Address presented at the Biennial Conference of the Society for Research in Child Development, Atlanta, GA.
- Mullen, M.K.,\* Osborne, C.N.\* & Clearfield, M.W. (2005). Infants' social referencing in the context of social looking behaviors. Poster presented at the Biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Atlanta, GA.
- Nelson, N.M., \* Karas, E.M. \* & Clearfield, M.W. (2005). Infant gender affects mothers' speech and interaction style at 6, 9, and 14 months. Poster presented at the Biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Atlanta, GA.
- Clearfield, M.W., Morgan, S., Reder, M., Fabritius, S., Halprin, J.A., Haring, K., Neylon, M.P., & Wixon, K. (2004). Models for Faculty Development: Teaching and Learning Centers at Small Colleges. Symposium presented at Annual meeting of Professional and Organizational Development, Montreal, Canada.

Clearfield, M.W., Mullen, M.K.\*, & Nelson, N.M. \* (2004). The effects of locomotor posture on infants' social and exploratory behaviors. Poster presented at the International Conference on Infant Studies, Chicago, IL.

Clearfield, M.W.& Westfahl, S.M-C. \* (2004). Familiarization in infants' perception of addition problems. Poster presented at the International Conference on Infant Studies, Chicago, IL.

Neel, K.S. \* & Clearfield, M.W. (2003). Age-related changes in infants' social referencing of mothers and strangers. Poster presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Tampa, FL.

### **Invited Talks**

Brain, Behavior and Cognition Series, Tufts University, March 2009: The nature vs nurture debate is over: A dynamic systems approach to infant learning.

Cognitive Science Series, California State University, Fresno, March 2006: First steps: The impact of learning to walk on spatial memory and social interactions.

### **Courses Taught** (all at Whitman College)

#### Introductory Level

- PSYC 110: Introduction to Psychology
- GENS 145-146: General Studies: Encounters Ancient & Modern
- PSYC 239: Psychology of Women and Gender

#### Mid-level

- PSYC 220: Research Methods in Psychology
- PSYC 240: Developmental Psychology
- PSYC 319: Research Methods: Poverty and Child Development
- PSYC 358: Research Experience in Psychology
- PSYC 380: Lab in Child Development

#### Advanced Seminars

- PSYC 301: Issues in Infancy
- PSYC 326: Theories of Knowledge Acquisition
- PSYC 319: Poverty and Child Development
- PHIL 340/PSYC 347: Philosophy and Psychology of Language
- PSYC 347: From Columbine to Parkland: How school shooters develop
- PSYC 420: Historical and Contemporary Issues in Psychology
- PSYC 495-496-498: Senior Thesis in Psychology
- PSYC 407-408: Independent Study

### **College Service**

Fall 2019

Fall 2015-2018

Fall 2014 - 2015

Spring 2014 - 2015

Search Committee Chair: Psychology

Chair of the Faculty

Psychology Department Chair

Presidential Search Committee

Fall 2011 - 2012	Search Committee Chair: Psychology (3 searches)
Fall 2011 – 2013	Psychology Department Chair
Fall 2010 –13	Coordinator, Faculty Mentoring Program
Fall 2009-10	Interim Director, Faculty Mentoring Program
Fall 2008	CTL Review Committee
Fall 2008	Search Committee: Psychology
Spring 2008	Search Committee: Spanish (2 searches)
Spring 2006 – Fall 2009	Faculty Commencement/Convocation Marshall
Fall 2005, Fall 2006-2008	Council on Student Affairs
Fall 2002 – 2009	Studies Involving Human Subjects Committee/Institutional Review Board
Fall 2004 – 2006	Beineke Scholarship Committee
Fall 2002 – Fall 2005	Center for Teaching and Learning Committee
Fall 2005	Search Committee: Psychology Department
Fall 2003 – Fall 2004	Search Committee: Psychology Department