

# Melody Mann

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## EDUCATION

### PhD Sociology

#### *Focus on Disability Studies*

University of Maryland – College Park, MD

**Expected 2027**

### MA Psychology

#### *Focus on Cognition and Development*

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa – Honolulu, HI

**May 2023**

### MS Special Education

#### *Mild – Moderate Disabilities*

*Graduated with Distinction*

California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo – San Luis Obispo, CA

**June 2021**

### BA Child & Adolescent Development Teacher Preparation

#### *Minor Early Childhood Special Education*

*Dean’s Scholar Graduate*

San Jose State University – San Jose, CA

**May 2020**

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

### Lead Graduate Researcher

*Sikh Your Mind– Birmingham, UK*

*PI: Gobinderjit Kaur, PhD*

- Qualitatively analyzed help hotline data for Sikh Punjabi faith-based service supports using thematic analysis
- Prepared manuscript for publication using cultural and faith sensitive research practices.

**2024 - 2025**

### Graduate Research Assistant

**2024-2025**

*Department of Sociology, University of Maryland – College Park, MD*

*PI: Nicholas C. Smith, PhD*

- Engaged in outreach and recruitment for collaborative study between the Department of Psychology and Sociology
- Organized focus groups, scheduling, and maintaining spreadsheets

### Graduate Research Assistant

**2023 - 2024**

*Department of Special Education, University of Maryland – College Park, MD*

*PI: Veronica Kang, PhD*

- Conducted literature reviews, data analysis, and manuscript writing for culturally responsive and sustaining studies focusing on evidence-based practices for children with Autism.
- Created a website for recruitment and dissemination of lab findings.

### Graduate Research Assistant

**2022-2023**

*Department of Special Education, University of Texas at Austin – Austin, TX*

*PI: Sarah Powell, PhD*

- In this collaboration between University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and University of Texas at Austin, researchers worked to create an original coding sheet to best document gestures used by interventionists in tutoring sessions.
- To capture the significance that interventionists gestures hold on the early mathematical learning of children, researchers evaluated gestural frequencies, existing literature, and composed an original manuscript.

### **Childhood Trauma Learning Collaborative Intern**

**2020 - 2021**

*Center for Educational Improvement, Vienna, VA*

*PI: Christine Mason, PhD*

- In partnership with Yale University, CEI worked to inform communities about best practices in child development and trauma informed care.
- Post updates regarding grants, lesson plans, and coping strategies in basecamp channels for Community, Mental Health & SEL Funding, and Suicide Prevention

### **Principal Investigator**

**2018-2020**

*Lurie College of Education & McNair Scholars, San Jose State University – San Jose, CA*

*Mentor: Sylvia Branca, PhD*

- Conducted literature review utilizing empirical studies to further deepen understanding of child noncompliance in early care settings and its impact on teacher interaction
- Designed a qualitative research study that intends to describe how child noncompliance in a structured preschool classroom impacts the relationship between caregiver and child interaction.

### **Research Assistant**

**2019**

*Language and Cognition Lab, University of California Berkeley– Berkeley, CA*

*PI: Mahesh Srinivasan, PhD*

- Served as a research assistant lab intern for the moral norms and linguistic conventionality projects under the supervision of Mahesh Srinivasan, Jon Wehry, and Antonia Lagenhoff
- Involved in participant recruitment, data collection, conducting experiments, coding data, literature review, and overall study analysis.

## **Teaching Experience**

### **Co-Instructor**

**2024**

*University of Maryland, College Park at College Park, MD*

- Served as both the TA and Co-Instructor for EDSP 401 - Teaching Students with Disabilities in Elementary Classrooms
- Experience grading, facilitating lab discussions, article review, and exam facilitation

### **Lecturer**

**2022 - 2023**

*University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI*

- Instructed an asynchronous course PSY 324: Psychology of Emotions to 140+ undergraduate students
- Developed original curriculum, assessments, assignments, and activities for the course

### **Teaching Assistant**

**2021 - 2022**

*University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI*

- Served as an TA for courses PSY 240: Developmental Psychology, PSY 250: Social Psychology, and PSY 212: Research Methodologies in Psychology
- Experience grading, facilitating review sessions, holding office hours, and study guide development

### **Teacher Candidate**

**2021**

*Fairgrove Elementary School, Grover Beach, CA*

- Assist students in the Resource Room, grades 1 - 5 with mild -moderate disabilities, in reading, math, and social skills
- Facilitate remote intervention and assessments due to COVID19 campus closures

### **Teacher Candidate**

**2020**

*Virginia Peterson Elementary School, Paso Robles, CA*

- Assist Special Day Classroom for students grades 1 - 5 with mild -moderate disabilities in reading, math, and social skills
- Facilitate remote instruction, mentorship, and tutoring due to COVID19 campus closures

### **Writing Specialist**

**2020**

*Aspire TRIO, San Jose State University*

- Edit, critique, and assist first generation students of color enrolled in the Aspire & McNair Scholars programs to improve their writing, composition, and literacy skills
- Provide 1-hour sessions to meet target expectations, goals, and methodologies per student request

### **Substitute Teacher**

**2017-2019**

*Heads Up! Child Development Center, San Jose*

- Fulfil teacher-to-child ratios ranging from infancy – kindergarten
- Instill a Montessori based curriculum through facilitating circle time reading, writing, and art activities

## **Publications**

Mann, M., Krishnan, S., & Love, M. (in press). Equity Begins Early: Diversifying Emergent Literacy Instruction with Universal Design for Learning and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. *Young Exceptional Children*.

Mann, M. (in press). Bridging Language Barriers: Adapting the Picture Exchange Communication System for South Asian Children with Autism. *Journal of the International Association of Special Education*

Mann, M. & Blumenthal, E. (under review). Parent Perception of Teacher Quality and Teacher Cultural Sensitivity and Responsiveness as Mediators of Growth in Mathematics Understanding in Racially Minoritized and non-Racially Minoritized Head Start Preschoolers. *Early Education & Development*.

Mann, M. (under review). Punished by Color: Understanding the Growing Disproportionality of Overrepresentation & Disciplinary Rates Among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color with Disabilities Under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act. *Creative Education*

Mann, M. (under review). Leveraging Lived Experience for Practice Insight: A Pilot Study of Immigrant Caregivers Navigating Disability Services. *Journal for Social Work Scholar-Practitioners*

Mann, M (under review). Burdens of Unseen Labor: Understanding Parental Mental Health Within Systemic Responsibility Displacement in Special Education. *Child and Family Social Work*.

Mann, M. (under review). Global Pathways to Inclusion: A Global Framework for Intersectional Disability Rights in Education & Policy. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*

Arsenault, T., **Mann, M.**, Powell, S. (under review). The use of pointing and symbolic gestures during a word-problem schema intervention. *Special Issue on Math Cognition Interventions for the Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*.

Mann, M. & Ray, R. (pending submission.) The Tilted Tiara: How Ableism Erased Disability Representation Across Disney Princesses. *Research in Social Science and Disability*, 18

Mann, M. (pending submission). ਸਾਡੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ Recognize Us: Surveying the Empirical Representation of Punjabi Families' Perceptions on Early Intervention and Disabilities. *Disability & Society*

Kaur, A., Kaur, G., Makan, H. K., & **Mann, M.** (2025). Demographic Insights from a Mental Health Telephone Helpline for the Punjabi and Sikh Community. *Journal of Mental Health Disorders*, 5(1), 160-169.

Mann, M. & Kaur, G. (2025). Understanding Caller Satisfaction Survey Results from a Mental Health Helpline for Sikh and Punjabi Communities in the United Kingdom. *Sikh Research Journal*.

Mann, M., Love, M., & Krishnan, S. (2024). Fusion for Inclusion: Blending Universal Design for Learning & Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in Early Literacy. *Opportunity Matters*, 5, p. 22-42.

Mann, M. (2023). Salt Water Reflections. *Bookleaf Publishing*.

Mann, M. (2021, July). Resilience: Overcoming our challenges and celebrating our growth. *Center for Educational Improvement*. <https://www.edimprovement.org/post/resilience-overcoming-our-challenges-and-celebrating-our-growth>

Mann, M. (2021, March). Addressing inequities in education: Considerations for American Indian and Alaska Native children and youth in the era of COVID-19. *Center for Educational Improvement*. [Archived]

Mann, M. (2021, January). The power of the collective: Overcoming adversities together through the Community Resiliency Model. *Center for Educational Improvement*. <http://www.edimprovement.org/2021/01/the-power-of-the-collective-overcoming-adversities-together-through-the-community-resiliency-model/>

Mann, M. (2020, December). Addressing inequities in education: Considerations for Asian American children and youth in the era of COVID-19. *Center for Educational Improvement*. [Archived]

Mann, M. (2020). Understanding child noncompliance in the early care setting. *McNair Research Journal San Jose State University*, 16, 75-89.

## Presentations

Sikholars 2026 Conference of Jakara Movement at Stanford University – Speak	2026
2025 International Society of Contemplative Research – Poster	2025
Division of Early Childhood 41 <sup>st</sup> International Conference – Poster	2025
International Society on Early Intervention 2025 in Lisbon, Portugal - Poster(s)	2025
American Sociological Association 2025 Annual Meeting – Round Table Talk	2025
International Society for Autism Research Annual Meeting 2025 – Poster	2025
Society for Research in Child Development 2025 Biennial Meeting – Poster	2025
Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities Conference – Poster	2025
Council of Exceptional Children 2025 Convention & Expo – Poster	2025
Division of Early Childhood 40 <sup>th</sup> International Conference – Poster	2024
Transdisciplinary Approaches to Language & Literacy in Educational Research – Paper	2024
University of Maryland Graduate Research Appreciation Day – Paper ( <i>abstract accepted</i> )	2024
University of Maryland College of Education Graduate Research Symposium – Paper	2024
2024 Democracy & Governance Symposium at Georgetown University. – Poster	2024
Loughborough University, UK – 6 <sup>th</sup> Annual MCLS Conference – Poster	2023
52 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Jean Piaget Society in Madrid, Spain – Paper	2023

EWC International Graduate Student Conference – Poster ( <i>abstract accepted</i> )	<b>2023</b>
2022 Hawaii Association for Behavior Analysis Conference – Poster	<b>2022</b>
Cognitive Development Society’s Bi-Ennial Conference 2022– Poster	<b>2022</b>
University of the Aegean, Greece - e-Learning & Innovative Pedagogies – Poster	<b>2021</b>
California Polytechnic State University - 4 <sup>th</sup> Annual Student of Color Summit – Speaker	<b>2021</b>
Jagiellonian University, Poland – 28 International Conference on Learning – Poster	<b>2021</b>
UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education Research Day – Poster ( <i>abstract accepted</i> )	<b>2020</b>
San Jose State University 2020 Student Success Symposium – Poster ( <i>abstract accepted</i> )	<b>2020</b>
Washington DC 2020 Active Minds National Conference – Poster	<b>2020</b>
San Jose State University Fall 2019 Learning Showcase – Poster	<b>2019</b>
UC Santa Cruz Symposium for Undergraduate Research – Poster	<b>2019</b>
University of New Mexico 2019 McNair Scholars Conference – Poster	<b>2019</b>
UC Berkeley Developmental Lab Intern Colloquium – Poster	<b>2019</b>
Spartan Psychological Association Research Conference– Poster	<b>2019</b>

## HONORS AND Fellowships

Ajeet Singh Matharu Memorial Award for Best Conference Paper	<b>2026</b>
Robert Wood Johnson Rapid Response Grant	<b>2025</b>
William Form Summer Fellowship	<b>2025</b>
Goldhaber Travel Scholarship, University of Maryland	<b>2025</b>
College of Education Fall 2024 – Spring 2025 Scholarship, University of Maryland	<b>2024 - 2025</b>
Health Policy Research Scholars Fellowship, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	<b>2024 – 2028</b>
University of Maryland, College Park Exceptional Recruitment Fellowship	<b>2026 - 2027</b>
University of Maryland, College Park Dean’s Fellowship	<b>2025 - 2026</b>
Teach for America Ignite Fellow (declined)	<b>2024</b>
Laura Bassi Doctoral Scholarship (declined)	<b>2023</b>
University of Maryland, College Park COE Fall 2023 Scholarship	<b>2023</b>
Mathematical Cognition and Learning Society Foundry10 Travel Award	<b>2023</b>
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Graduate Student Association Travel Grant	<b>2023</b>
University of North Carolina - Wayland H. Cato Jr. First-Year Doctoral Fellowship (declined)	<b>2023</b>
University of Delaware Spencer Conference Scholarship	<b>2022</b>
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Graduate Student Association Fall 2021 Grant	<b>2021</b>
East-West Center Student Affiliate	<b>2021 - 2023</b>
Graduated with Distinction at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	<b>2021</b>
Dean’s Scholar Graduate at San Jose State University	<b>2020</b>
University of Cincinnati - Yates Fellowship Recipient (declined)	<b>2019</b>
California State University Residency Year Scholarship	<b>2019</b>
Hazel Cilker Smith - Marion Cilker Scholarship	<b>2019</b>
SJSU Lurie College of Education Alumni Board Scholarship	<b>2018 - 2020</b>
McNair Scholar, San Jose State University	<b>2018 - 2020</b>
Lurie College of Education Research Award, San Jose State University	<b>2018 - 2019</b>
Lurie College of Education Dean’s Scholar, San Jose State University	<b>2018</b>
DeFranco Family Scholar, San Jose State University	<b>2018</b>
Spartan Scholar, San Jose State University	<b>2016</b>

## Field Service

### Research Lead **2025 – current**

*Center for Educational Improvement, Vienna, VA*

- Oversee research fellow and interns across multiple projects, writing pieces, and organizational tasks.
- Co-lead RWJF Rapid Response Grant project with indigenous communities by supervising stakeholders.

### Education & Development Pillar Fellow **2025 – current**

*ABLE Foundation, National Harbor, MD*

- Developed project and curriculum for interns to explore applications in diversity and disability services
- Provide mentoring and instruction for research practices and community outreach

**Advisory Board Member & Intern Coordinator**

**2025 – current**

*PI: Dr. Christine Mason, Center for Educational Improvement, Vienna, VA*

- Oversee interns by providing 1:1 editing support for written pieces and direct research exploration
- Interview and recruit research assistants and fellows for grant applications within the organization

**Interventionist**

**2024 - 2025**

*University of Maryland, College Park, MD*

- Administer Naturalistic Interventions to families who have children with Autism
- Collect fidelity implementation, sibling, and user implementation data

**Student Representative Board Member**

**2023 - 2024**

*Hawai'i Association for Behavior Analysis, Honolulu, HI*

- Represented college students on O'ahu on the board by attending monthly meetings
- Focused on recruitment, disseminating supports and services, and accessibility to ABA resources

**Academic Coach**

**2022 – 2023**

*University of Hawai'i Center of Disability Studies, Honolulu, HI*

- Worked with the Post-secondary Supports Project to collect qualitative data and provide transitional services to undergraduate students with learning disabilities
- Met with 8+ students on a weekly basis to provide individualized academic, work, and life skills coaching through 1-hour sessions