

## VICTORIA COONS

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### **EDUCATION**

**Ph.D.**, Education, Specialization: Sociocultural and Community-Based Approaches (SCA), University of Delaware, anticipated 2028, Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Curtiss

**M.S.Ed.**, Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Development, University of Pennsylvania, 2024

**B.A.**, Psychology, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, 2021

**A.A.**, Education, Delaware County Community College, 2011

### **SUMMARY**

Victoria Coons is a Unidel Distinguished Graduate Scholar and Lydia C. Dunlap Scholar pursuing a Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Sociocultural and Community-Based Approaches (SCA) at the University of Delaware under the mentorship of Dr. Sarah Curtiss. She received her B.A. in Psychology from the University of North Carolina Wilmington and her M.S.Ed. in Interdisciplinary Studies in Human Development from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research integrates disability studies, implementation science, and community-engaged qualitative methods to co-create research with disabled people and their communities, working together to understand and improve the systems that shape everyday life. She is particularly interested in questions of identity, belonging, access, and participation, with the goal of bridging research, practice, and community by translating scholarship into accessible, actionable knowledge that supports meaningful systems change.

### **AWARDS & HONORS**

**Unidel Distinguished Graduate Scholar Award**, University of Delaware, 2024–2028  
(Competitive graduate fellowship providing full stipend support and \$3,000 annually in professional development funding.)

**Lydia C. Dunlap Scholar**, University of Delaware, 2024–2028 (Competitive scholarship providing full tuition support and a \$2,000 research stipend over the course of the doctoral program.)

**Meritorious Poster Submission**, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention, 2026 (Awarded to one of 85 posters selected from 1,418 submissions.)

## **ACADEMIC RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Graduate Research Assistant**, TELL Lab, The University of Delaware, August 2025–Present  
*NIH R21-Funded Project on Caregiver Support Groups*

*Supervisor:* Dr. Sarah Curtiss & Dr. Amanda Owen Van Horne

- Conduct and facilitate qualitative focus groups with caregivers and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) as part of an NIH R21-funded study examining caregiver support needs
- Lead qualitative data preparation and analysis, including transcript review, coding, and synthesis of emergent themes
- Turn qualitative findings into accessible, plain-language materials for caregivers, with attention to accessibility and usability
- Design materials with accessibility in mind, recognizing that many caregivers may also have DLD due to its heritability
- Prepare analytic reports and research summaries for internal use, grant documentation, and team dissemination
- Present preliminary and ongoing findings to the research team and advisory board to inform study development and implementation

**Graduate Research Assistant**, Autism in Context Lab, The University of Delaware, August 2025–Present

*Supervisor:* Dr. Sarah Curtiss

- Contribute to a scoping review examining participatory methods in autism research, with a focus on how autistic people are included in knowledge production
- Engage critically with interdisciplinary literature on neurodiversity, disability, and participatory research approaches
- Support research that challenges deficit-based models of autism and centers lived experience
- Collaborate on projects examining systems, access, and communication in autism-related research

**Graduate Research Assistant**, Child's Play, Learning, and Development Lab, The University of Delaware, 2024–2025

*Supervisor:* Dr. Roberta M. Golinkoff

- Trained and mentored undergraduate researchers in spatial language coding, literature review, and research methods to support collaborative research projects
- Assisted with data collection, data entry, and data analyses
- Actively participated in all lab-centered events, including weekly lab meetings where scientific research is reviewed

- Conducted original research, design studies, wrote study proposals, and actively pursued independent research initiatives

**Research Team Leader**, UPenn Consortium for Mental Health & Optimal Development, University of Pennsylvania, 2022–2024

*Supervisor:* Dr. Michael Nakkula

- Led focus groups to gather insights on mental health issues among students, educators and staff at K-12 schools in the Montgomery County Area
- Provided research support to over 16 local school districts, assisting in data collection and analysis
- Instructed and mentored research assistants in qualitative coding techniques including focus groups, ensuring high-quality data analysis
- Prepared and analyzed data, and wrote detailed reports for grant reporting, ensuring transparency and accountability in research funding allocation
- Regularly presented research findings at the monthly consortium meetings, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing within the group

## **CURRICULUM, INTERVENTION & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Supporting Families of Children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD): Caregiver Support Curriculum, University of Delaware TELL Lab (NIH R21), 2025–Present

- Co-designed and developed an evidence-informed, eight-session caregiver support curriculum informed by community-engaged qualitative research and implementation science principles
- Translated qualitative findings from caregiver and speech-language pathologist focus groups into accessible educational materials, facilitator guides, and participant resources
- Designed curriculum content to support caregiver learning, discussion, and application using plain-language, strengths-based, and accessibility-centered approaches
- Developed an accompanying website to host curriculum materials and increase accessibility for families and facilitators
- Collaborated with an interdisciplinary research team and community advisory board to iteratively refine curriculum content and implementation

## **TEACHING, MENTORSHIP & ACADEMIC SERVICE**

**Graduate Student Representative**, School of Education Advisory Committee, University of Delaware, Fall 2026–Present

- Represent graduate students on the School of Education Advisory Committee
- Contribute to school-wide initiatives related to governance, strategic planning, community climate, and feedback solicitation
- Partner with faculty and school leadership to strengthen communication, community engagement, and student representation across the School of Education

**Graduate Student Representative**, Ph.D. in Education Program Revision Committee,  
University of Delaware, Summer 2026

- Served as the doctoral student representative on the School of Education Ph.D. program revision committee
- Designed and implemented a mixed-methods student feedback process, including an anonymous survey and stage-based focus groups
- Synthesized qualitative and quantitative findings into a comprehensive report used to inform committee recommendations for program revision
- Collaborated with faculty to translate student perspectives into actionable recommendations for improving the doctoral program

**Research Mentor**, Autism in Context Lab, University of Delaware, Fall 2025

- Mentored a team of three undergraduate researchers through weekly meetings, including a Career & Life Studies Certificate (CLSC) independent study student and two undergraduate research assistants who collaborated to support the student's project
- Guided the development of an accessible website designed to support autistic travelers by translating research and lived experience into practical resources on topics including air travel, amusement parks, and major tourist destinations
- Provided mentorship in project planning, accessibility, and community-engaged knowledge translation

**Teaching Assistant**, University of Pennsylvania EDUC 5560: Human Development (Graduate Course), Fall 2023

- Evaluated graduate-level coursework and provided individualized, constructive written feedback on assignments
- Held regular office hours to support students' understanding of course content and assignment expectations
- Collaborated with the course instructor to ensure consistent and equitable evaluation of student work

**FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Research Consultant**, *Contracted Employee at*: C.W. Bill Young Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Aptive Resources, 2024

- Served concurrently as IRB Administrator and Research & Development Administrator, developing streamlined workflows to oversee both regulatory portfolios efficiently
- Coordinated/facilitated monthly RDC meetings and recorded meeting minutes
- Managed study packages and collected monthly reports
- Summarized study progress for presentation to the committee

- Processed incoming study requests, including new submissions, modifications, and annual reviews
- Reviewed submissions for compliance and approved or requested modifications
- Issued determination letters to study teams
- Managed Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) disclosures and tracked training requirements

**Senior Research Coordinator**, Institute of Education Sciences ([IES](#)) Predoctoral Training Program & Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education ([CBCSE](#)), GSE, University of Pennsylvania, 2023–2024

- Composed Letters of Intent (LOIs) and grant summaries for grant applications, effectively communicating the program's research objectives and needs
- Maintained budget tracking, ensuring compliance and fiscal responsibility in grant-funded projects
- Led the grant application process, including submission, tracking, and management of awarded grants to support ongoing research initiatives
- Organized research placements for 14 predoctoral fellows, coordinating placements and maintaining relationships at institutions such as AIR, MDRC, and Mathematica
- Facilitated workshops in cost-effectiveness analysis and research methods training, equipping researchers and analysts from around the country with valuable skills for their work

**Senior Research Coordinator**, Operations, Information and Decisions Department, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, 2021–2023

- Directed and executed the entire spectrum of behavioral science research initiatives for 27 PhD students and over 30 faculty members
- Played a pivotal role in study design, construction and analysis, proficiently utilizing tools such as Qualtrics, Prolific, Mturk, SPSS and JavaScript launching and completing over 1000 studies
- Designed and implemented an online platform to streamline research related requests and manage budget systems
- Maintained budgetary oversight on a daily and monthly basis and collaborated closely with the Wharton Behavioral Lab

## **VOLUNTEER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

**Learning Consultant**, [SEE Initiative \(Social Equity & Education\)](#), Sarasota & Manatee, FL, 2022–2023 (*In response to Florida's Parental Rights in Education Act, which restricts classroom instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in Florida public schools*)

- Conducted and coordinated research initiatives aimed at bolstering curriculum development for LGBTQ+ youth (age 13-18)

- Collaborated with neighboring youth centers in Sarasota and Manatee, Florida, to devise comprehensive strategies for adapting curriculum and programming into virtual formats, ensuring remote accessibility and effectiveness
- Provided guidance and training to a team of dedicated staff, ensuring their professional development and the delivery of high-quality services
- Demonstrated organizational skills by managing schedules and maintaining regular weekly office hours to optimize productivity and communication

## **PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS**

### ***Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations***

Owen Van Horne, A., O'Fallon, M., **Coons, V.**, Erskine, M., & Curtiss, S. (2026, November [Accepted]). *Engaging community partners to develop a support group for families of children with DLD*. 1-hour seminar presented at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention, Indianapolis, IN.

**Coons, V.**, O'Fallon, M., Erskine, M., Owen Van Horne, A., & Curtiss, S. (2026, November [Accepted]). *Designing an accessible caregiver support curriculum for DLD: Translating qualitative data into practice*. **Meritorious Poster Submission**. Poster presentation at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention, Indianapolis, IN.

Erskine, M., **Coons, V.**, O'Fallon, M., Curtiss, S., & Owen Van Horne, A. (2026, November [Accepted]). *Supporting children with DLD: What caregivers from underrepresented communities want us to understand*. Poster presentation at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention, Indianapolis, IN.

O'Fallon, M., **Coons, V.**, Erskine, M., Curtiss, S., & Owen Van Horne, A. (2026, June). *"Tell me what this means in real words": Caregiver and SLP perspectives on supporting families of children with DLD*. Poster presentation at the Society for Research in Child Language Development, Madison, WI.

Curtiss, S., **Coons, V.**, & Gordon, S. (2026, April). *From deficit to diversity: Reframing autism education for teachers*. Poster presentation at the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR), Prague, Czech Republic.

Zosh, J. M., Ramirez, A., **Coons, V.**, & Golinkoff, R. M. (2025, May). *Leveraging multi-generational video chat as a source of spatial language*. Symposium presentation at the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), Minneapolis, MN.

### ***Invited, University, and Professional Presentations***

Owen Van Horne, A., Tighe, J., **Coons, V.**, O'Fallon, M., & Curtiss, S. (2026, September). *Connecting families of children with DLD via counseling and support groups*. ASHA

continuing education presentation at the Statewide Developmental Language Disorder Professional Development Day, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

**Coons, V.**, O'Fallon, M., Erskine, M., Curtiss, S., & Owen Van Horne, A. (2026, January). *Supporting families of children with DLD: What caregivers and SLPs told us*. ASHA continuing education presentation at UD Advocacy Day, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

**Coons, V.**, O'Fallon, M., Erskine, M., Curtiss, S., & Owen Van Horne, A. (2026, April). *From Information to Support: Designing Caregiver-Centered Support for Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)*. Presentation at the Steele Symposium, Newark, DE.

**Coons, V.**, O'Fallon, M., Erskine, M., Curtiss, S., & Owen Van Horne, A. (2026, April). *"Tell me what this means in real words": Caregiver and SLP perspectives on supporting families of children with DLD*. Talk for Access:Ability Scholars, Newark, DE.

**Coons, V.**, O'Fallon, M., Erskine, M., Curtiss, S., & Owen Van Horne, A. (2026, March). *"Tell me what this means in real words": Caregiver and SLP perspectives on supporting families of children with DLD*. CHS Research Day, Newark, DE.

**Coons, V.**, Delgado, A., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2025, April). *"There's something beyond just being able to identify hexagon": Teachers' use and perceptions of a novel visual alphabet*. Poster presentation at the Steele Symposium, Newark, DE.

Delgado, A., Işıkoğlu, N., Braley, M., Araya, F., Chen, S., Gonzalez, B., **Coons, V.**, Wascheck, M., Gates, R., Gonsiewski, A., Mehr, J., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2025, April). *Exploring playful parent-child interactions with a novel visual alphabet*. Poster presentation at the Steele Symposium, Newark, DE.

### ***Public Scholarship***

Golinkoff, R. M., & Hirsh-Pasek, K., **Coons, V.**, (2025, July). *PBS Ready to Learn initiative helped children learn*. Psychology Today.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psyched/202507/pbs-ready-to-learn-initiative-helped-children-learn>

### **PUBLISHED NEWSLETTERS**

"Addressing Educator Burnout: A Multifaceted Approach." *Consortium For Mental Health & Optimal Development*, 2023.

"Empowering Educators and Students: Alleviating Anxiety in Schools with Mindfulness." *Consortium For Mental Health & Optimal Development*, 2023.

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), 2026–Present

American Psychological Association (APA), Division 15 (Educational Psychology),  
2024–Present

National Head Start Association, 2023–Present

Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology, 2020–Present

## **CERTIFICATES & TRAINING**

Penn Implementation Science Institute, Penn Implementation Science Center, University of  
Pennsylvania, June 2026

Lean Six Sigma Green Belt. Course Number: EV-101-LSSGB. 2024

*CITI* Research, Ethics, & Compliance Training

- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) (ID-74607250)
- Social/Behavioral Research Course IRB (ID-40696525)
- Working with the IACUC (ID-40789171)
- IPS Researchers Record (ID-40789173)
- Essentials for IACUC Members (ID-60814438)
- RandD Committee Members (ID-60814440)
- VA Human Subjects Protection (ID-60814437)
- VA ORD Biosecurity Training (ID-60814439)