



## Thalia Goldstein, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

### Education

PhD, Developmental Psychology, Boston College

### Key Interests

Child Development | Pretend Play | Embodiment | Imagination | Empathy | Social Cognition  
| Theatre and Drama | Theory of Mind | Social Skills

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### SELECT PUBLICATIONS

- › T. R. Goldstein & K. Alperson, Dancing bears and talking toasters: a content analysis of supernatural elements in children's media. *Psychology of Popular Media* (2019).
- › T. R. Goldstein & M. Lerner, Dramatic pretend play games uniquely improve emotional control in young children. *Developmental Science* 21(4), e12603 (2018).
- › T. R. Goldstein *et al.*, The arts as a venue for developmental science: realizing a latent opportunity. *Child Development* 88, 1505-1512 (2017).
- › T. R. Goldstein & J. Woolley, Ho! Ho! Who? Parent promotion of belief in and live encounters with Santa Claus. *Cognitive Development* 39, 113-137 (2016).

### Research Focus

My work focuses on children's developing social and emotional skills, particularly how they think about other people, empathy, and their emotional control and regulation. We particularly look at how such skills intersect with children's engagement in pretend play, theatre, drama, and other imaginative activities. Our work spans various age groups, from preschool through high school ages.

Social skills are critically important for children's health, wellbeing, academic success, friendships and later relationships. Determining the best ways to positively foster these skills is a key way to foster children's positive development. In addition, children are naturally engaged in pretend play and the imaginative arts, and therefore also determining the outcomes from these activities can help researchers, teachers, and parents determine how to encourage and work with children's natural imaginative inclinations.

### Current Projects

- Embodiment in Pretend Play: How do different levels and types of physical engagement in pretend play affect how 3-5-year old children learn and understand information?
- Embodiment in Acting: How do different levels of embodiment and perspective taking while engaging acting change 9-year-olds emotional understanding and theory of mind?
- Teaching Acting: We're conducting a large-scale qualitative analysis of acting teachers' classroom strategies to see what social and emotional skills are being taught, implicitly and explicitly, through acting classes at the high school level.
- Marching Band and Intergroup Contact: We're looking at whether marching band may be a particularly good environment to foster positive types of intergroup contact between different racial and ethnic groups.