

BRI HIGHTOWER

e: bri@u.northwestern.edu

May 31, 2017

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Children and media, caregiver-child interaction, informal learning, educational technology, low-income families

EDUCATION

2016 - present

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
Graduate Student, Media, Technology, and Society PhD program
Expected completion: Spring 2021
Advisors: Drs. Ellen Wartella and Alexis Lauricella

2010 - 2014

Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies, School of Communication
Sociology minor, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
Integrated Marketing Certificate, Medill School of Journalism

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2017 - present

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (GRFP)
Three years of graduate fellowship funding awarded upon submitting a research proposal to examine how low-income families can be supported to engage in science talk with their preschool children

2017 - present

Brady Scholars Fellow
Mentor undergraduate scholars between Fall 2017 - Spring 2020 and teach cohort seminars in Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 that incorporate involvement in a community service project

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2016 - present

Graduate Research Assistant, School of Communication
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
Conduct research with the Center on Media and Human Development examining how social relationships with media characters can support STEM learning for preschoolers
Supervised by Drs. Ellen Wartella and Alexis Lauricella
NSF Award Number: 1252121

Assist with research in the Inclusive Lab which explores how young children use haptic features during digital STEM activities
Supervised by Dr. Anne Marie Piper
NSF Award Number: 1522921

2014 - 2016

Research Assistant, Center for Children and Technology
Education Development Center, New York, NY
Worked on projects funded by the US Department of Education, National Science Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Heising-Simon Foundation. This includes Ready To Learn, professional development for New York City educators, developing digital resources to enhance career mentorship for middle grade students, and understanding spatial concepts and reasoning of preschoolers

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2013 - 2014 **Research Assistant**, Center on Media and Human Development
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
Assisted with projects associated with the analysis of food marketing to children, reproductive health communication to youth, and morals and gender representations in children's media
Supervised by Drs. Ellen Wartella and Alexis Lauricella

2013 **Education and Media Intern**, Story Pirates, New York, NY
Researched and aided the creation of the company's Kids & Family podcast

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
2012 - 2013 **Instructor**, School of Education and Social Policy
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
Developed the curriculum for and taught an accredited, undergraduate course about the history of HIV in America

2012 - 2014 **Instructor**, Sexual Health and Assault Peer Education,
Health Service, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
Taught new peer educators how to facilitate programs and discussions about sexual health and education on a college campus

PUBLICATIONS

Hurwitz, L. B., Lauricella, A. R., **Hightower, B.**, Sroka, I., Woodruff, T. K., & Wartella, E. (2016). "When you're a baby you don't have puberty: Understanding of puberty and human reproduction in late childhood and early adolescence." *Journal of Early Adolescence*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/0272431616642323

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Rosenfeld, D., **Hightower, B.**, Llorente, C., & Hupert, N. (2016, July). "Supports for Teachers, Parents, and Children in the Use of Digital Media for Mathematics Learning." Session presented at the Administration for Children and Families National Research Conference on Early Childhood, Washington, D.C.

Bookser, B., Gerard, S. N., Gutierrez, J., **Hightower, B.**, & Sharifnia, E. (2016, July). "Texting to Support Early Learning Opportunities at Home." Session presented at the Administration for Children and Families National Research Conference on Early Childhood, Washington, D.C.

Hightower, B., Gutierrez, J., & Sharifnia, E. (2015, December). "Conducting a Home Study: Successful Family Engagement Methods." Session presented at the National Head Start Parent & Family Engagement Conference, San Diego, CA.

Hurwitz, L. B., **Hightower, B.**, Lauricella, A. R., & Wartella, E. (2015, March). "When you're a baby you don't have puberty: Understanding of puberty and human reproduction in late childhood and early adolescence." Poster presented at the Society for Research on Child Development Biennial Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

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Rosenfeld, D., Hupert, N., Llorente, C., Moorthy, S., Jo, I. Y., Gerard, S., Kamdar, D., & **Hightower, B.** (2015, March). "Media-supported early math learning: Results of a randomized control trial." Poster presented at the Society for Research on Child Development Biennial Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Gutierrez, J., **Hightower, B.**, Bookser, B., & Lemley, B. (2015, March). "Pre-school centered design: Creating and selecting websites to suit the cognitive development of preschoolers." Poster presented at the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education Meeting, Las Vegas, NV.

ONLINE

Hightower, B. (2015, November 19). Using texting to encourage participant engagement and retention [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://ltd.edc.org/using-texting-encourage-participant-engagement-and-retention>.

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

2016 - present **Community & Culture Committee Member**, Graduate Student Steering Committee, Media, Technology, and Society Doctoral Program

2017 **InfoSocial Conference Volunteer**, Graduate Research Conference

STUDENT MENTORING

2016 - 2017 Janet Lee, Undergraduate Student in Communication Studies, Northwestern University

UNDERGRADUATE RECOGNITION

2012 - 2014 **Elizabeth W. Arnold Scholarship**, Northwestern University
A full academic scholarship awarded to 3 - 4 undergraduate women yearly

2014 **Departmental Recognition of Excellence**, Northwestern University
Awarded by the School of Communication

2013 **Summer Internship Grant Program Fellowship**
Northwestern University awarded funding to participate in an internship at Story Pirates during Summer 2013

2011 - 2014 **Lambda Pi Eta Honorary Society**, Northwestern University
The National Communication Association's official honor society

2011 - 2014 **Dean's List**, Northwestern University

2010 - 2014 **McKinney Education Foundation Excellence Scholarship**
Awarded by McKinney ISD where I completed by secondary education