

**ALISON K. VENTURA, PhD, FTOS**

**Assistant Professor of Kinesiology**

Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo

One Grand Ave, 43A-371

San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Phone: (805) 765-5693

Email: [akventur@calpoly.edu](mailto:akventur@calpoly.edu)

Website: [www.alisonkventura.com](http://www.alisonkventura.com)

**EDUCATION:**

---

**Post-doctoral Training:**

2008-2011            NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Individual Award Fellow  
The Monell Chemical Senses Center; Philadelphia, PA  
*Postdoctoral Advisor:* Dr. Julie Mennella

**Degree Granting Education:**

2005-2008    Ph.D.    Human Development and Family Studies  
The Pennsylvania State University; University Park, PA  
*Dissertation Title:* "New perspectives for understanding developmental trajectories of metabolic syndrome and obesity."  
*Dissertation Advisors:* Drs. Eric Loken & Leann Birch

2003-2005    M.S.    Human Development and Family Studies  
The Pennsylvania State University; University Park, PA  
*Thesis Title:* "Breastfeeding influences subsequent weight status, pickiness, and diet variety."  
*Thesis Advisor:* Dr. Leann Birch

2003-2005    M.S.    Nutrition Sciences  
The Pennsylvania State University; University Park, PA  
*Thesis Title:* "Understanding reporting bias in the dietary recall data of 11-year-old girls: Identifying and describing under-, plausible, and over-reporters of energy intake."  
*Thesis Advisor:* Dr. Leann Birch

1999-2003    B.S.    Psychology with a Biology Emphasis, Minor in Community Nutrition  
Graduated with Honors, Dean's List  
University of California, Davis; Davis, CA

**Additional Training and Certifications:**

2013            The Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training Certification  
2012            Facial Action Coding System Training and Certification  
2008            Penn State Graduate School Teaching Certificate

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

---

2014-	Assistant Professor	Department of Kinesiology, Cal Poly University
2011-2014	Assistant Professor	Department of Nutrition Sciences, Drexel University
2010	Adjunct Lecturer	Department of Public Health, Temple University
2010	Adjunct Lecturer	Aria School of Nursing, Penn State Abington
2008-2011	Postdoctoral Fellow	Monell Chemical Senses Center
2008-2010	Research Consultant	The Pennsylvania Nutrition TRACKS Program
2006-2007	Instructor	Department of Human Devel & Family Studies, Penn State
2005-2007	Graduate Assistant	The Breastfeeding Clinic, Penn State
2003-2008	Research Assistant	The Center for Childhood Obesity Research, Penn State

**FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND HONORS**

---

2014	Drexel Teaching Excellence Award Nominee
2014	Drexel University Service Award Nominee
2012	Fellow of The Obesity Society
2011	Polak Young Investigator Award, Association for Chemoreception Sciences
2010	Outstanding Patient-Oriented Research Poster, University of Pennsylvania
2007	Kligman Dissertation Fellowship, Penn State
2006	Grace M. Henderson Scholarship, Penn State
2005	Prevention Research Fellowship, Penn State

**PUBLICATIONS: Refereed Journal Articles**

---

1. Golen RB, **Ventura AK**. (2015). Mindless feeding: Is maternal distraction during bottle-feeding associated with over-feeding? *Appetite*. 91, 385-392.
2. **Ventura AK**, Golen RB. (2015). A pilot study comparing opaque, weighted bottles with conventional, clear bottles for infant feeding. *Appetite*. 85, 178-184.
3. **Ventura AK**, Anzman-Frasca SA, Garst BA. (2014). Mealtimes at residential summer camps: What are camp staff doing to promote campers' healthy eating behaviors? *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 46 (6), 491-498.
4. **Ventura AK**, Inamdar L, Mennella JA. (2014). Consistency in infants' behavioural signaling of satiation during bottle-feeding. *Pediatr Obes*. [Epub ahead of print].
5. **Ventura AK**, Garst BA. (2013). Residential summer camp: A new venue for nutrition education and physical activity promotion. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act*. 24 (10), 64-73.
6. **Ventura AK**, Worobey J. (2013). Early influences on the development of food preferences. *Curr Biol*. 23 (9), R401-R408.
7. **Ventura AK**, San Gabriel A, Hirota M, & Mennella JA. (2012). Determination of free amino acid content in infant formulas. *Nutr Food Sci*. 42 (4), 271-278.
8. **Ventura AK**, Beauchamp GK, Mennella JA. (2012). Does free glutamate in infant formula promote satiation and satiety during short-term feeding sessions? *Am J Clin Nutr*, 95 (4), 875-881.
9. **Ventura AK**, Mennella JA. (2011). Innate and learned preferences for sweet taste during childhood. *Cur Opin in Clin Nutr Metab Care*, 14 (4), 379-384.
10. Mennella JA, **Ventura AK**, & Beauchamp GK. (2011). Differential growth patterns among infants fed protein hydrolysate or cow's milk-based formulas. *Pediatrics*, 127 (1), 110-118.
11. Mennella JA, & **Ventura AK**. (2010). The basic biology underlying the flavor world of children. *Current Zoology*, 56 (6), 834-841.

**PUBLICATIONS: Refereed Journal Articles (continued)**

---

12. Garcia-Dominic O, Wray LA, Ledikwe JH, Mitchell DC, **Ventura AK**, Hernandez AE., Yin Z, Trevino RP, Ulbrecht JS. (2010). Accuracy of Self-Reported Energy Intakes in Low-Income Urban 4th Grade Minority Children. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*, 18 (11), 2220-2226.
13. **Ventura AK**, Gromis JC, & Lohse BA. (2010). Feeding practices and styles used by a diverse sample of low-income parents of preschool-age children. *J Nutr Educ Behav*, 42(4), 242-249.
14. Paul IM, Bartok CJ, Downs DS., Stifter CA, **Ventura AK**, & Birch LL. (2009). Opportunities for the primary prevention of obesity during infancy. *Adv Pediatr*, 56, 107-133.
15. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, & Birch LL. (2009). Developmental trajectories of girls' BMI across childhood and adolescence. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*, 17(11), 2067-2074.
16. Bartok CJ, & **Ventura AK**. (2009). Mechanisms underlying the association between breastfeeding and obesity. *Int J Pediatr Obes*, 4(4), 196-204.
17. Birch LL, & **Ventura AK**. (2009). Preventing childhood obesity: what works? *Int J Obes (Lond)*, 33 Suppl 1, S74-81.
18. **Ventura AK**, & Birch LL. (2008). Does parenting affect children's eating and weight status? *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act*, 5, 15.
19. Coffman DL, Patrick ME, Palen LA., Rhoades BL, & **Ventura AK**. (2007). Why do high school seniors drink? Implications for a targeted approach to intervention. *Prev Sci*, 8(4), 241-248.
20. Francis LA, **Ventura AK**, Marini M, & Birch LL. (2007). Parent overweight predicts daughters' increase in BMI and disinhibited overeating from 5 to 13 years. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*, 15(6), 1544-1553.
21. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, & Birch LL. (2006). Risk profiles for metabolic syndrome in a nonclinical sample of adolescent girls. *Pediatrics*, 118(6), 2434-2442.
22. Fiorito LM, **Ventura AK**, Mitchell DC, Smiciklas-Wright H, & Birch LL. (2006). Girls' dairy intake, energy intake, and weight status. *J Am Diet Assoc*, 106(11), 1851-1855.
23. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, Mitchell DC, Smiciklas-Wright H, & Birch LL. (2006). Understanding reporting bias in the dietary recall data of 11-year-old girls. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*, 14(6), 1073-1084.

**OTHER PUBLICATIONS: Non-Refereed Journal Articles and Book Chapters**

---

1. Phelan S, **Ventura AK**. (Forthcoming). Prenatal and early postnatal influences on children's obesity risk. Chapter in: *Handbook of Pediatric Obesity*.
2. **Ventura AK**, Terndrup H. (Forthcoming). Breasts versus bottles for infant feeding: What's the difference? Chapter in: *Infant Feeding: Parental perceptions, behaviors, and health effects*.
3. **Ventura AK**. (In Press). Obesity. Chapter in: *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*.
4. **Ventura AK**. (2013). Fostering the development of healthy eating behaviors during childhood. *Nestle Nutrition Nest. No. 34*, 4-5.
5. Mennella JA, **Ventura AK**, Lipchock S. (2011). Le origini della preferenza del cibo. In: C Bellieni Ed: "Sento dunque sono. Sensi e sensazioni del feto". pg. 33-50 Cantagalli, Siena. ISBN: 978-88-8272-632-4.
6. Mennella JA, & **Ventura AK**. (2011). Early feeding: Setting the stage for healthy eating habits. *Nestle Nutr Workshop Ser Pediatr Program*, 68, 153-163; discussion 164-168.
7. **Ventura, AK** (2010). Helping new vegetarian parents learn responsive feeding practices. *Vegetarian Nutrition Update*. XIX(1): 10-11.

8. **Ventura AK**, Johnson SL, & Birch LL. (2009). Children's eating: The development of food-acceptance patterns. In E. Essa & Burnham, M. (Eds), *Informing our Practice: Useful Research on Young Children's Development*.
9. Birch LL, Savage JS, & **Ventura AK**. (2007). Influences on the Development of Children's Eating Behaviours: From Infancy to Adolescence. *Can J Diet Pract Res*. 68(1):s1-s56.
10. **Ventura AK**, Smith M, Tomazin M, Hoover K (2005). Breastfeeding Comprehensive, Intensive and Basics: Review of a breastfeeding video series. *Journal of Human Lactation Online Content*.
11. **Ventura AK**, Savage JS, May AL, & Birch LL (2005). Early behavioral, familial and psychosocial predictors of overweight and obesity. In: Tremblay, R. E., Barr, R. G., Peters R. D.e.V., Eds. *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online]. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development; pp. 1-10.

### **CURRENT RESEARCH SUPPORT**

---

#### **R03 HD080730, NIH/NICHD**

**9/4/2014-9/3/2016**

Does Knowing The Amount Of Milk In The Bottle Alter Infant Feeding Practices?

The goal of the proposed research is to test the hypothesis that providing mothers with opaque, weighted bottles (that remove visual and weight cues related to the amount of formula in the bottle) leads to lower infant formula intakes compared to when mothers are given conventional, clear bottles.

Amount: \$160,423

Role: PI

### **PAST RESEARCH SUPPORT**

---

#### **Drexel College of Nursing and Health Professions Grant**

**2/1/2013-1/31/2014**

The goal of the project supported by this grant is to examine whether knowing the amount of milk in the bottle alters maternal bottle-feeding practices.

Amount: \$20,000.00

Role: PI

#### **American Camp Association Research Mini-Grant**

**6/1/2012-5/31/2013**

This grant supported a project that explored the mealtime interactions of camp staff and campers at residential summer camps. This project was a collaboration with the American Camp Association.

Amount: \$400.00

Role: PI

#### **Drexel Career Development Award**

**6/1/2012-5/31/2013**

This award provided funds for me to become trained in the Facial Action Coding System, and to establish a collaboration with Drs. Susan Johnson and Nancy Krebs at the UC Denver.

Amount: \$6007.00

Role: PI

#### **Drexel Community Development Research Grant**

**4/1/2012-3/31/2013**

The goal of this research is to partner with the Philadelphia Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to teach responsive parenting skills to low-income mothers of formula-feeding infants.

Amount: \$16,856.00

Role: PI

**F32 HD063343, NIH/NICHD**

**4/1/2010-8/31/2011**

National Ruth L. Kirschstein Service Award; NICHD

The goal of this study was to test hypotheses related to understanding whether and how the composition of formulas fed and the feeding practices mothers use influence young infants' short-term feeding behaviors.

Role: PI

**PA Department of Health Breastfeeding Mini-Grant**

**6/1/2006-5/31/2007**

The goal of this study to develop and evaluate The Breastfeeding Triad Project

([www.breastfeedingtriad.com](http://www.breastfeedingtriad.com)), a website-based intervention designed to educate fathers of breastfed infants about how to best support their breastfeeding partner.

Amount: \$3,000.00

Role: PI

---

**PENDING RESEARCH SUPPORT**

**R03 NIH/NICHD**

**9/1/2015-8/31/2017**

Mindless Feeding: Does Distraction Lead To Overfeeding During Bottle-Feeding Interactions?

The goal of the proposed research is to experimentally test the hypothesis that the use of technology (e.g., television, mobile devices) during infant feeding leads mothers to be less responsive to infant hunger and satiation cues and more likely to over-feed during bottle-feeding interactions.

Amount: ~\$160,000

Role: PI

---

**PRESENTATIONS: Invited**

1. **Ventura AK.** Promoting responsive feeding during infant bottle-feeding. Invited oral presentation for the San Luis Obispo County WIC Infant Feeding In-service. May 2015.
2. **Ventura AK,** Golen RB. Influences on mothers' infant-feeding practices. Invited oral presentation at the Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior Meeting, Seattle, WA. July 2014.
3. **Ventura AK.** Early influences on the development of flavor preferences and eating behaviors. Oral Presentation at ASPEN Nutrition Week, Phoenix, AZ. February 12, 2013.
4. **Ventura AK.** Influence of free amino acids in infant formula on infant regulation of intake and growth patterns. Invited seminar for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Nutrition Seminar Series. January 2013.
5. **Ventura AK.** Influence of formula composition on infant self-regulation of intake and growth patterns. Invited seminar for Monell Chemical Senses Center. November 2012.
6. **Ventura AK.** More than just s'mores and campfires: the potential of residential summer camps for promoting children's healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Invited lecture for the Drexel Department of Nutrition Sciences. October 2012.
7. **Ventura AK.** Pre- and postnatal influences in flavor and food preferences. Invited lecture for the Lactation Consultants Together (LaCTo) meeting. April 2010.
8. **Ventura AK.** Understanding heterogeneity in the developmental trajectory of overweight during infancy and childhood. Invited lecture for the University of Pennsylvania Center for Weight and Eating Disorders Seminar Series. December 2010.
9. **Ventura AK.** Influences on infant eating behavior and weight status trajectories. Invited lecture for the Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center Seminar Series. November 2010.
10. **Ventura AK.** New perspectives on the developmental trajectory of overweight during infancy and childhood. Invited lecture for the William and Mary Department of Psychology Seminar Series. October 2010.

**PRESENTATIONS: Invited (continued)**

---

11. **Ventura AK.** What are early markers for obesity risk during infancy? Oral presentation at the Monell Sponsors' Meeting. Philadelphia, PA. October 2010.
12. **Ventura AK.** How do babies decide when they are hungry? Oral presentation at the Monell Sponsors' Meeting. Philadelphia, PA. October 2009.
13. **Ventura AK,** Loken E, Birch LL. Modeling heterogeneity in weight status trajectories across childhood and adolescence. Oral presentation at the Pediatric Research Day, Hershey Medical Center, PA. April 2008.
14. Bartok CJ, **Ventura AK.** The top ten (and more) ways breastfeeding protects against childhood obesity. Oral presentation at the Towards Clinical Excellence in Lactation Annual Conference, Hershey Medical Center, PA. October 2007.

**PRESENTATIONS: Professional Meetings**

---

1. Golen RB, **Ventura AK.** Is maternal distraction during bottle-feeding associated with over-feeding? Oral Presentation at the Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior Meeting, Denver, CO. July 2015.
2. **Ventura AK,** Golen RB. Does knowing the amount of formula in the bottle lead to overfeeding? Oral presentation at the International Society for Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Meeting, San Diego, CA. May 2014.
3. **Ventura AK,** Pollack RB. Removal of visual and weight cues related to the amount of formula in the bottle as a strategy for preventing overfeeding during bottle-feeding. Poster presentation at the Society for Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. April 2014.
4. **Ventura AK.** Making Mealtimes Matter: Why promotion of healthy eating should be part of your camp staff training. Oral presentation at the American Camp Association Tri-State Conference, Atlantic City, NJ. March 2013.
5. **Ventura AK,** Inamdar L, Mennella JA. A model system to understand infant satiation. Poster presentation at the Obesity Society Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. September 2012.
6. **Ventura AK,** Beauchamp GK, Mennella JA. Composition of formula influences infant satiation and satiety. Oral presentation at the Obesity Society Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL. October 2011.
7. **Ventura AK,** Khawaja S, Beauchamp GK, Mennella JA. Does free glutamate influence infant satiation and satiety? Oral presentation at the Association for Chemoreception Sciences Annual Meeting, St. Pete Beach, FL. April 2011.
8. **Ventura AK,** Rollins BY, Loken E, Birch LL. Positive and negative correlates of dietary restraint. Oral presentation at the Society for Research on Child Development Biennial Meeting, Montreal, Canada, April 2011.
9. **Ventura AK,** Mennella JA, Beauchamp GK. Slower growth rates for healthy infants fed protein hydrolysate formula compared to those fed cows milk formula. Poster presentation at the Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior Annual Meeting, Pittsburg, PA. July 2010.
10. **Ventura AK,** Mennella JA, Lukasewycz LD, Castor SM, Beauchamp GK. Not all formulas are alike: Differential growth patterns among infants fed protein hydrolysate or cows milk-based formulas. Poster presentation at the Association for Chemoreception Sciences Annual Meeting, St. Pete Beach, FL. April 2010.
11. **Ventura AK,** Mennella JA, Beauchamp GK. Slower growth rates for healthy infants fed protein hydrolysate formula compared to those fed cows milk formula. Poster presentation at the Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior Annual Meeting, Pittsburg, PA. July 2010.

**PRESENTATIONS: Professional Meetings (continued)**

---

12. **Ventura AK**, Mennella JA, Lukasewycz LD, Castor SM, Beauchamp GK. Not all formulas are alike: Differential growth patterns among infants fed protein hydrolysate or cows milk-based formulas. Poster presentation at the Association for Chemoreception Sciences Annual Meeting, St. Pete Beach, FL. April 2010.
13. Lohse BA, Yoder T, **Ventura AK**, Smith SR, Gromis JC, Tzilkowski A. Food and Nutrition Service's core nutrition education messages align with needs assessment of parents of preschoolers in Pennsylvania supplemental nutrition assistance program education. Oral presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. November 2009.
14. **Ventura AK**, Reed, DR, Mennella JA. Recurrent otitis media is associated with children's taste perception and preferences, and higher weight status. Poster presentation at the Obesity Society Annual Meeting, Washington, DC. October 2009.
15. **Ventura AK**, Reed, DR, Mennella JA. Chronic otitis media is associated with a marker of taste damage and higher weight status in children. Poster presentation at the Association for Chemoreception Sciences Annual Meeting, Sarasota, FL. April 2009.
16. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, Birch LL. Maternal characteristics, attitudes, and feeding practices are associated with heterogeneity in daughters' weight status trajectories. Poster presentation at the Obesity Society Annual Meeting, Phoenix, AZ. October 2008.
17. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, Birch LL. Modeling heterogeneity in weight status trajectories across childhood and adolescence. Poster presentation at the Society for Research on Adolescence Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. March 2008.
18. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, Birch LL, Goran MI. Risk for metabolic syndrome in a sample of overweight, Hispanic boys and girls. Poster presentation at the Obesity Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA. October 2007.
19. **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. A person-centered approach to the study of child-feeding practices. Oral presentation at the International Society for Behaviors in Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting, Oslo, Norway, June 2007.
20. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, Birch LL. Prelude to a risk: The emergence of metabolic syndrome in a non-clinical sample of 13-year-old girls. Poster presentation at the Obesity Society Annual Meeting, Boston, MA. October 2006.
21. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, Birch LL. A longitudinal examination of the emergence of metabolic syndrome in adolescent girls. Oral presentation at the International Society for Behaviors in Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting. Boston, MA, July 2006.
22. **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. Within-family associations among fathers', mothers', and daughters' weight status and weight gain. Poster presentation at the Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. May 2006.
23. Coffman D, Palen L, Patrick M, Rhoades B, **Ventura AK**. Why do high school seniors drink? Implications for a targeted approach. Oral presentation at the Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting. San Antonio, TX, May 2006.
24. **Ventura AK**, Loken E, Birch LL. The emergence of metabolic syndrome: A developmental examination of indicators and risk factors in a non-clinical sample of 13-year-old girls. Poster presentation at the Pennsylvania State University Graduate Research Exhibition, University Park, PA. March 2006.
25. **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. Systematic differences in under-reporting of dietary recall data in 11-year old girls. Oral presentation at the Experimental Biology Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, April 2005.

**PRESENTATIONS: Professional Meetings (continued)**

---

26. **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. Distal effects of breastfeeding on weight status, diet quality, and pickiness. Poster presentation at the Pennsylvania State University Graduate Research Exhibition, University Park, PA. March 2005.
27. **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. A developmental examination of the associations among weight status, self-perceptions, and weight concern in young girls. Poster presentation at the North American Association for the Study of Obesity Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV. November 2004.
28. **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. Links between weight status and school achievement in 11-year old girls. Oral presentation at the International Society for Behaviors in Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, June 2004.
29. **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. Links between weight status, cognitive performance, and school achievement in 11-year old girls. Poster presentation at the Pennsylvania State University Graduate Research Exhibition, University Park, PA, March 2004.

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:**

---

The Obesity Society

- 2011- Pediatric Obesity Committee
- 2012- Early Career Investigator Committee
- 2014- Abstract Reviewer

Association for Chemoreception Sciences

- 2012-2015 Program Committee

Society for Research in Child Development

- 2013-2014 Abstract Reviewer

Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior

Intl. Society for the Study of Behavioral Nutrition & Physical Activity

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:**

---

Consultant, HCD Research

Subject Matter Expert in nutrition and human development, LearningMate Publishing

Early Career Reviewer for the Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health

Evidence Abstractor for the USDA Nutrition Evidence Library

Grant Reviewer; Dairy Research Institute

Manuscript reviewer:

- American Journal of Clinical Nutrition
- Appetite
- Child Development
- Childhood Obesity
- Health Psychology
- Health Promotion Practice
- International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity
- International Journal of Obesity
- Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior
- Journal of Pediatrics
- Journal of Public Health
- Obesity
- Pediatrics
- Pediatric Obesity