

ALISON K. VENTURA, Ph.D.

Post-Doctoral Fellow

Monell Chemical Senses Center
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EDUCATION:

- Post-doc** Monell Chemical Senses Center September 2008-Present
Advisor: Dr. Julie Mennella
- Ph.D.** The Pennsylvania State University August 2008
Human Development and Family Studies
Thesis: "New perspectives for understanding developmental trajectories for metabolic syndrome and obesity."
Thesis Advisors: Drs. Leann Birch & Eric Loken
- M.S.** The Pennsylvania State University December 2005
Human Development and Family Studies
Thesis: "Breastfeeding influences subsequent weight status, pickiness, diet variety, and diet quality."
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Leann Birch
- M.S.** The Pennsylvania State University August 2008
Nutritional Sciences
Thesis: "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
- B.S.** University of California, Davis June 2003
Psychology with a Biology Emphasis
Minor in Community Nutrition

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Pre- and postnatal influences on the development of flavor preferences, eating behaviors, and self-regulatory abilities
- The lifestyle and growth patterns during infancy and childhood that are predictive of obesity and metabolic syndrome risk during adolescence and adulthood
- The primary prevention of obesity through modification of parent behaviors and child feeding practices during the pre- and post-natal periods

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

- Post-doctoral Fellow** September 2008–Present
 Monell Chemical Senses Center, Philadelphia, PA
Advisor: Dr. Julie Mennella
- Research Consultant** May 2008 – December 2008
 The Pennsylvania Nutrition TRACKS Program, University Park, PA
Advisor: Dr. Barbara Lohse
- Graduate Research Assistant** August 2003 – August 2008
 The Penn State Center for Childhood Obesity, University Park, PA
Advisor: Dr. Leann Birch
- Graduate Assistant** August 2005 – August 2007
 The Penn State Breastfeeding Clinic, University Park, PA
Advisors: Drs. Leann Birch and Cynthia Bartok
- Research Intern** September 2001 – May 2003
 UC Davis USDA Western Human Nutrition Research Center, Davis, CA
Advisor: Dr. Nancy Keim

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- Adjunct Lecturer** Summer 2010
Course: Introduction to Human Development
Class size: 50 students anticipated
 Aria Health School of Nursing, The Pennsylvania State University at Abington
- Adjunct Lecturer** Spring 2010
Course: Nutrition and Health
Class size: 43 undergraduate students
 Dept. of Public Health, Temple University
- Received Penn State Graduate School Teaching Certificate** Fall 2008
 I earned this certificate by: (1) completing two teaching courses, (2) demonstrating teaching proficiency during an in-class evaluation, (3) creating a teaching portfolio
- Co-Instructor** Summer 2007
Course: Infant and Child Development
Class size: 28 undergraduate students
 Dept. of Human Development & Family Studies, The Pennsylvania State University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (continued):

Co-Instructor	Summer 2006
<i>Course:</i> Introduction to Empirical Inquiry	
<i>Class size:</i> 13 undergraduate students	
Dept. of Human Development & Family Studies, The Pennsylvania State University	

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Kligman Dissertation Fellowship, Penn State	2007-2008
Grace Henderson Scholarship, Penn State	2006-2007
Prevention Research Fellowship, Penn State	2005-2006
First Place Poster Presentation, Penn State Graduate Research Exhibition	2005
Emma Brunkheart Senior Leadership Award, UC Davis	2003
Outstanding Senior Award, UC Davis	2003
Dean's List (12 consecutive quarters), UC Davis	1999-2003

RESEARCH GRANTS AND PROJECTS FUNDED:

PA Department of Health Breastfeeding Mini-Grant	2006-2007
<i>Amount:</i> \$3000	
<i>Purpose:</i> To develop and evaluate The Breastfeeding Triad Project (www.breastfeedingtriad.com), a website-based intervention designed to educate fathers of breastfed infants about how to best support their breastfeeding partner	

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Association for Chemoreception Sciences	2008-Present
The Obesity Society	2003-Present
Society for Prevention Research	2003-Present
International Society for the Study of Behavioral Nutrition & Physical Activity	2003-Present
Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society	2002-2003
Order of Omega Scholastic Honor Society	2001-2003

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:

USDA Nutrition Evidence Library 2010-Present
Evidence Abstractor

Manuscript Reviewer

Annals of Behavioral Medicine	Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior
Appetite	Journal of Pediatrics
BioMedical Central Public Health	Obesity Facts
Chemical Senses	Obesity Reviews
Chemosensory Perception	Public Health Nutrition
Journal of the American Dietetic Association	Pediatrics

Volunteer Contributor

The Vegetarian Resource Group: Website and Newsletter (www.vrg.org)
The Association for Child Development: *Potpourri* (www.acd.org)
The Local Foods Connection: Educational Materials (www.localfoodsconnection.org)

Nutrition Graduate Student Association 2003-2008
Treasurer 2005-2006

Human Development and Family Studies Graduate Steering Committee 2003-2008
Admissions Co-Chair 2006-2007
Departmental Delegate to the Graduate Student Council 2005-2006
Newsletter Chair 2004-2005
Departmental Delegate to the Graduate Student Association 2003-2004

PUBLICATIONS: Refereed Journal Articles

Ventura AK, Lohse BA, Gromis J. Feeding practices and styles used by racially diverse, low-income caregivers to 2-6-year-old children. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. *Accepted*.

Paul IM, Bartock CJ, Downs DS, Stifter CA, **Ventura AK**, Birch LL. Opportunities for the primary prevention of obesity during infancy. *2009 Adv Pediatr*. Dec; 56(1):107-33.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch LL. Developmental trajectories of girls' BMI across childhood and adolescence. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*. 2009 Nov;17(11):2067-74. Epub 2009 May 7.

Birch LL, **Ventura AK**. Preventing childhood obesity: what works? *Int J Obes (Lond)*. 2009 Apr;33 Suppl 1:S74-81.

Bartok CJ, **Ventura AK**. Mechanisms underlying the association between breastfeeding and obesity. *Int J Pediatr Obes*. 2009 Feb 24:1-9.

Ventura AK, Birch LL. Does parenting affect children's eating and weight status? *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act*. 2008 Mar 17;5:15.

PUBLICATIONS: Refereed Journal Articles (continued)

Coffman DL, Patrick ME, Palen LA, Rhoades BL, **Ventura AK**. Why do high school seniors drink? Implications for a targeted approach to intervention. *Prev Sci*. 2007 Dec;8(4):241-8. Epub 2007 Oct 26.

Francis LA, **Ventura AK**, Marini M, Birch LL. Parent overweight predicts daughters' increase in BMI and disinhibited overeating from 5 to 13 years. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*. 2007 Jun;15(6):1544-53.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch LL. Risk profiles for metabolic syndrome in a nonclinical sample of adolescent girls. *Pediatrics*. 2006 Dec;118(6):2434-42.

Fiorito LM, **Ventura AK**, Mitchell DC, Smiciklas-Wright H, Birch LL. Girls' dairy intake, energy intake, and weight status. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2006 Nov;106(11):1851-5.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Mitchell DC, Smiciklas-Wright H, Birch LL. Understanding reporting bias in the dietary recall data of 11-year-old girls. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*. 2006 Jun;14(6):1073-84.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS: Non-Refereed Journal Articles and Book Chapters

Ventura AK, Johnson SL, Birch LL. 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*. 2009.

Birch LL, Savage JS, **Ventura AK**. Influences on the Development of Children's Eating Behaviours: From Infancy to Adolescence. *Can J Diet Pract Res*. 2007;68(1):s1-s56.

Ventura AK, Smith M, Tomazin M, Hoover K. Breastfeeding Comprehensive, Intensive and Basics: Review of a breastfeeding video series. *Journal of Human Lactation Online Content*. 2005 Available at: <http://www.ilca.org>

Ventura AK, Savage JF, May AL, Birch LL. Early behavioral, familial and psychosocial predictors of overweight and obesity. 2005 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. Available at: <http://www.excellence-earlychildhood.ca/documents/Ventura-Savage-May-BirchANGxp.pdf>

OTHER PUBLICATIONS: Manuscripts in Progress and Under Review

Mennella JA, **Ventura AK**. The flavor world of children: From basic biology to culture. *Submitted*.

Garcia-Dominic O, Wray LA, Rolls BJ, Ledikwe J, Mitchell D, **Ventura AK**, Hernandez AE, Yin Z, Trevino RP, Ulbrecht JS. Accuracy of dietary recall of low-income, urban, 4th grade, minority children. *Submitted*.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS: Manuscripts in Progress and Under Review (continued)

Ventura AK, Reed, DR, Mennella JA. Recurrent otitis media is associated with markers of taste perception and higher weight status in children. *Submitted*.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch, LL. Maternal characteristics, attitudes and feeding practices predict differences in daughters' weight status trajectories. *In progress*.

Mennella JA, **Ventura AK**, Lukasewycz LD, Castor SM, Beauchamp GK. Not all formulas are alike: Differential growth patterns among infants fed protein hydrolysate or cows milk-based formulas. *In progress*.

Ventura AK, Mennella JA, San Gabriel A, Beauchamp GK. Determination of free amino acid content in infant formulas. *In progress*.

ABSTRACTS:

Oral Presentations:

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. The American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. November 2009.

Ventura AK. How do babies know when they are hungry? Monell Chemical Senses Center Sponsor's Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. October 2009.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch LL. Modeling heterogeneity in weight status trajectories across childhood and adolescence. Pediatric Research Day. Hershey Medical Center, PA. April 2008.

Bartok CJ, **Ventura AK**. "The top ten (and more) ways breastfeeding protects against childhood obesity." Towards Clinical Excellence in Lactation Annual Conference, Hershey Medical Center, PA. October 2007.

Ventura AK, Birch LL. A person-centered approach to the study of child-feeding practices. The International Society for Behaviors in Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting. Oslo, Norway, June 2007.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch LL. A longitudinal examination of the emergence of metabolic syndrome in adolescent girls. The International Society for Behaviors in Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting. Boston, MA, July 2006.

Coffman D, Palen L, Patrick M, Rhoades B, **Ventura AK**. Why do high school seniors drink? Implications for a targeted approach. Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting. San Antonio, TX, May 2006.

ABSTRACTS:

Oral Presentations (continued);

Ventura AK, Birch LL. Systematic differences in under-reporting of dietary recall data in 11-year old girls. Oral Presentation. Experimental Biology Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, April 2005.

Ventura AK, Birch LL. Links between weight status and school achievement in 11-year old girls. Oral Presentation. International Society for Behaviors in Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, June 2004.

ABSTRACTS

Poster Presentations:

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. The Association for Chemoreceptory Sciences Annual Meeting, St. Pete Beach, FL. April 2010.

Ventura AK, Reed, DR, Mennella JA. Recurrent otitis media is associated with children's taste perception and preferences, and higher weight status. Poster Presentation. The Obesity Society Annual Meeting, Washington, DC. October 2009.

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. The Association for Chemoreceptory Sciences Annual Meeting, Sarasota, FL. April 2009.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch LL. Maternal characteristics, attitudes, and feeding practices are associated with heterogeneity in daughters' weight status trajectories. Poster Presentation. The Obesity Society Annual Meeting, Phoenix, AZ. October 2008.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch LL. Modeling heterogeneity in weight status trajectories across childhood and adolescence. Poster Presentation. The Society for Research on Adolescence Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL. March 2008.

Ventura AK, Loken E, Birch LL, Goran MI. Risk for metabolic syndrome in a sample of overweight, Hispanic boys and girls. Poster Presentation. The Obesity Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA. October 2007.

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. The Obesity Society Annual Meeting, Boston, MA. October 2006.

Ventura AK, Birch LL. Within-family associations among fathers', mothers', and daughters' weight status and weight gain. Poster Presentation. The Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. May 2006.

ABSTRACTS

Poster Presentations (continued):

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. The Pennsylvania State University Graduate Research Exhibition, University Park, PA. March 2006.

Ventura AK, Birch LL. Distal effects of breastfeeding on weight status, diet quality, and pickiness. Poster Presentation. The Pennsylvania State University Graduate Research Exhibition, University Park, PA. March 2005.

Ventura AK, Birch LL. A developmental examination of the associations among weight status, self-perceptions, and weight concern in young girls. Poster Presentation. North American Association for the Study of Obesity Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV. November 2004.

Ventura AK, Birch LL. Links between weight status, cognitive performance, and school achievement in 11-year old girls. The Pennsylvania State University Graduate Research Exhibition, University Park, PA, March 2004.

REFERENCES:

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Leann Birch, Ph.D.

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