Most of my research focuses on the interrelations between the social world and children's social, moral, and cognitive development. My current line of research is on the development of gratitude, and the decline of materialism, in children and adolescents. Although many scholars who study gratitude view it as a positive emotion, I treat it as a virtue, drawing on neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. As such, it involves being grateful to those who have benefited us in some way (and a desire to reciprocate if possible) rather than being grateful for the nice things that happen to us. Colleagues and I are therefore exploring the development of these characteristics in children and adolescents, and the role of their parents, in different cultures. This research received three years of funding from The John Templeton Foundation, and here is a link to the executive summary of the study. Findings from this study, and related research, was published earlier this year in Tudge, J. R. H., & Freitas, L. B. L. (Eds.), Developing gratitude in children and adolescents. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, and also in a Special Issue on the development of gratitude in Cross-Cultural Research (January 2018). We are currently conducting an intervention study in schools in the United States and Brazil, to assess the effectiveness of trying to encourage the development of gratitude as a virtue.

In much of my earlier research I used cultural-ecological theory, a contextualist theory that draws on the ideas of Lev Vygotsky and Urie Bronfenbrenner. The major line of research is longitudinal and cross-cultural in design, dealing with the ways in which young children become part of the cultural group in which they live. This work involves extensive observations of the everyday activities of children when they are three years of age as well as interviews and questionnaires with their parents regarding their child-rearing values and beliefs. The children are followed through their first years of school, when data on parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of the children’s social and academic competence are also gathered. This research is cross-cultural (US, Russia, Estonia, Finland, Korea, Kenya, and Brazil) and examines within-societal variations as a function of ethnicity and social class. A book, based on this research, is: Tudge, J. R. H. (2008). The everyday lives of young children: Culture, class, and child rearing in diverse societies. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Publications on these and other topics can be found in the papers or presentations section of my web site, and a link to the book based on the observations of 3-year-olds around the world can be found here.

More details are on my web site, where you can also find my full CV. Some recent submitted papers and published work include the following:


