My research focuses on social cognitive development, and it recruits theories and methods from social psychology, developmental psychology, and the learning sciences. During the preschool period, the child’s social horizon expands dramatically. Increasingly, they can learn from teachers and peers as well as from their immediate family. What cues are important for children in deciding whom to learn from, and do these cues change over the course of development? An understanding of the cues that facilitate learning in young children can inform classroom practices, instructional campaigns, and the provision of digital information.

Much research in both psychology and education has focused on the importance of the ‘child as scientist’ in constructing knowledge. Ironically, much of what we teach in education – especially in science education – cannot be learned through first-hand experience. Consider, for example, how children learn the shape of the earth. Although it is plausible for children to view the earth from space to understand that it is a sphere, sending all children to space is by no means the most effective or efficient teaching method. Thus, it is important to focus on the role of the teacher in the dissemination of information. Indeed, my work has shown that children differ in their biases to trust individuals even before entering formal schooling. We focus on the malleable factors associated with children’s selective trust in individuals in formal and informal settings through our partnerships with the Boston Museum of Science and the Boston Children’s Museum. Our current research projects focus on the importance of social context in children’s development of scientific critical thinking skills as well as children’s developing self-regulatory skills. Both critical thinking and self-regulation has been shown to be predictive in later school success. By developing these skills in early learners, we aim to promote school readiness for all children.

Biographical Sketch
Kathleen H. Corriveau is a Peter Paul Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at Boston University’s School of Education. She is the director of the BU Social Learning Laboratory (www.bu.edu/learninglab) and recently received one of 4 Peter Paul Career Development Awards given across all of Boston University. Dr. Corriveau is an active member in the Society for Research in Child Development, the Cognitive Development Society, and Division 7 (Developmental Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. She currently serves on the executive board of Division E (Counseling and Human Development) of the American Education Research Association and on the editorial board of the Journal of Experimental Child Psychology. Publications related to this work can be solicited directly from Dr. Corriveau at kcorriv@bu.edu or found on her lab website (www.bu.edu/learninglab/publications). Her collaborative work with the Museum of Science can be found online at (www.livinglab.org).