

RNBC Awarded Major Research Grant from Institute of Education Sciences

On May 18, 2016, the Rush NeuroBehavioral Center, under the direction of Dr. Clark McKown, was awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. The RNBC research team, will use the grant to create SELweb LE, a web-based system to assess important social-emotional skills in children in the late elementary grades. SELweb LE is designed for broad use in schools to assess and address student social-emotional needs.

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This award extends a growing portfolio of creative and high-impact research at RNBC, much of it focused on developing scalable methods to assess children's social-emotional development. This is the fourth federal grant awarded to the RNBC team and it was among a small percentage of applications that were awarded by the Institute of Education Sciences in a very competitive funding climate.

The newest grant funds RNBC and its partners to create a web-based system to assess social-emotional skills, including children's understanding of emotions, and their ability to take others' perspectives, solve social problems, and self-regulate. It will also include a simple measure of child behavior. SELweb LE will include engaging interactive tasks that require children to demonstrate their social-emotional skills.

SELweb LE builds on a successful grant-funded project to develop an early elementary version of the assessment, called "SELweb EE," which has been used across the country with many thousands of children.

Asked about what sets SELweb LE apart, Dr. McKown said, "Along with our other social-emotional assessment systems, SELweb LE will be the only scientifically sound, scalable, usable, direct assessment of the social-emotional skills that are so crucial for success in school and life. Along with SELweb Early Elementary and VESIP, our avatar-based social reasoning assessment, we are creating assessment options for educators where before there were none. Unlike teacher questionnaires, SELweb LE, VESIP, and SELweb EE are direct assessments—children demonstrate their social-emotional understanding through their choices as they navigate social challenges."

Generous philanthropic support helped launch the RNBC research program in 2007. Building on that early work, Drs. McKown and Russo-Ponsaran have raised more than \$5 million in research support from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research, national foundations, and individual donors.