

To Whom It May Concern,

I am delighted to write this letter in strong support of Dr. Jiawen Wu. She is an exceptional mentor and teacher. I'm Luxin Zhang, a Research Assistant at the Center for Parent-Child Studies, and I've had the genuine privilege of working closely with Jiawen since I joined the Math Learning Project on April 16th of this year.

My experience under Jiawen's mentorship began with one of the most thorough and supportive onboardings I've ever encountered. From day one, she made sure I had a comprehensive understanding of our study by providing everything—the full research proposal, all participant recordings, and every version of the coding system. She patiently guided me through the complex behavioral coding system in one-on-one Zoom training sessions. We would often code a participant's recording simultaneously, and she would then compare our results. When I had questions or made errors, Jiawen was not only prompt in her corrections but also provided detailed explanations and her own completed coding examples to guide me. Her feedback was always delivered with patience and encouragement, which built an environment where I felt comfortable asking questions and learning from mistakes.

Jiawen's mentorship style is all about respect, organization, and a genuine commitment to her team's growth. She manages multiple project teams and assigns tasks with clarity and order. In our collaboration, she has always been communicative, never forcing tasks but rather fostering a respectful and cooperative atmosphere. She is also incredibly responsive: whenever an issue arose, she was quick to address it.

A powerful example of Jiawen's rigor and receptiveness is her approach to our coding system. When I raised differing opinions on a coding definition, she would first patiently explain the detailed logic. At the same time, she was genuinely open to feedback. If she found my suggestions valid, such as the need to refine a category or add a new example of one type of controlling behavior, she would thoughtfully adopt the change and modify the system. I was so impressed by her scientific integrity: any update to the system, no matter how small, meant we would re-code all previously completed work to ensure validity. She demonstrated foresight by having us pilot-test the system on a few recordings first, allowing us to identify ambiguities early and preventing massive re-working later. This perfectly illustrates her thoughtful planning, rigor, and collaborative research spirit.

Working with Jiawen has been pivotal to my own academic development. Her guidance truly deepened my understanding of family and child research methodologies and taught me the practical skills of improving and calculating inter-rater reliability. Beyond our lab work, Jiawen has been an invaluable guide for my PhD application process. She gave me highly effective, concrete suggestions on my research proposal, helping me sharpen my arguments and refine my methodology. She also actively encouraged me to submit to conferences, which led to an amazing outcome: a conference paper we co-authored for the Math Learning Study, on which I am the second author, has been submitted to the AERA conference and is currently under review.

Simply put, Dr. Jiawen Wu is an outstanding mentor, an organized leader, and a rigorous researcher. Her combination of structured guidance and genuine encouragement is rare. Any institution or team would be incredibly fortunate to have her as a teacher and mentor.

I grant permission for this letter to be included in Dr. Jiawen Wu's job and teaching materials.

Sincerely,

*Luxin Zhang*

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