

Child psychiatrist receives lifetime achievement award

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kbrannon@tulane.edu

Tulane University child psychiatrist [Dr. Michael Scheeringa](#) received a lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry for his pioneering research on the emotional and behavioral problems of very young children.



“For a long time, conventional wisdom had been that very young children couldn't get psychiatric disorders, and even if they did there were very few ways to treat them,” says Dr. Michael Scheeringa, whose work has proved otherwise. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Scheeringa, who is the Remigio Gonzalez, M.D., Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Tulane School of Medicine, received the 2013 Irving Philips Award for Prevention, an honor for those who have made significant contributions to the prevention of mental illness in children and adolescents.

“For a long time, conventional wisdom had been that very young children couldn't get psychiatric disorders, and even if they did there were very few ways to treat them,” Scheeringa says. “Our empirical work on the assessment and treatment of post-traumatic stress in very young children has helped to change that belief.”

Scheeringa's career has included many firsts in his field. He conducted the first study on the diagnostic validity of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in preschool children, the first study on the neurobiology associated with PTSD in preschool children, and the first longitudinal study of PTSD diagnosis in preschoolers.

His work was the primary basis for the first developmentally specialized criteria for PTSD that cuts across all age groups in the profession's leading authority for psychiatric diagnosis, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

Scheeringa also conducted the first randomized clinical trial to treat PTSD for any type of trauma in preschool children and created the second diagnostic interview for very young children, the Diagnostic Infant Preschool Assessment.

The Irving Philips Award for Prevention honors former AACAP president Dr. Irving Philips, who was renowned for his work in the field of prevention. Representing over 8,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists nationwide, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is the leading authority on children's mental health.