

From Labs to Lives

How Research Funding Solves Real-World Problems

NSF-Funded Research on How Stress Affects Parents

Stress is more than just feeling overwhelmed—it can actually change the brain, affecting a parent’s ability to care for their children. At UC Davis, Dr. Rebecca Calisi Rodríguez leads NSF-funded research to understand how chronic stress affects parents’ brain health, using rock doves as a model. Like humans, birds show similar responses to stress, making them a powerful tool for studying its long-term effects. Her work sheds light on how stress impacts parenting and child development, helping to uncover ways to support families in high-stress environments.

Helping Humanity

Rodríguez’s research is about more than science—it’s about improving lives. By uncovering how chronic stress affects brain health and parenting, her work can help inform public health strategies that support families, particularly those in high-stress environments. Understanding these biological mechanisms can lead to interventions that promote mental well-being and positive child development. Without continued funding, we risk losing critical insights into how stress shapes family health, leaving communities vulnerable to the long-term effects of chronic stress.



Rebecca Calisi Rodríguez

College of Biological Sciences

Stress and Brain Health

Media Contact: Andy Fell
ahfell@ucdavis.edu

// If we stop funding research, we won’t just lose knowledge. We’ll lose the next generation of scientists who would have made the world a better place.” — Rebecca Calisi Rodríguez

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