

An Investment in Babies' Brains, and Other Columbia Research

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Kimberly Hall

An investment in babies' brains

Columbia neuroscientist [Kimberly Noble](#) has [shown](#) that direct cash payments to low-income families can lead to improvements in young children's brain development, increasing neuronal activity associated with thinking and learning.

Mind the gap

Black and white Americans alike underestimate the racial wealth gap in the United States and vastly overestimate the chances of poor Black Americans moving up the economic ladder, according to new [research](#) by [Shai Davidai](#) of Columbia Business School.

The storms that keep on killing

Hurricanes are responsible for more deaths in the US than is commonly recognized, according to [research](#) by [Marianthi-Anna Kioumourtzoglou](#) of the Mailman School of Public Health. She and her colleagues find that in the months following tropical cyclones, thousands of Americans succumb to infectious diseases, stress-related illnesses, and other health problems that can be linked to the weather events.

Volcanic eruptions explained

A team of Columbia volcanologists led by [Terry Plank](#) '93GSAS have [discovered](#) that the explosive potential of magma inside active volcanoes is determined in part by its water content, with wetter magma possessing more pent-up energy. The scientists say the finding could lead to better eruption forecasting.

Illegal wildlife trade thriving under our nose

The US has played a major and largely unacknowledged role in the illegal trafficking of tiger body parts for medicinal purposes, with large volumes of tiger parts coming into the country through San Francisco, Dallas, and Atlanta, [finds](#) Sarika Khanwilkar, a doctoral student in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Evolutionary Biology. She obtained previously unpublished data about US Fish and Wildlife Service seizures through the Freedom of Information Act.

Promoting women leads to less bias

Companies that hire women into senior leadership positions are subsequently less likely to perpetuate gender stereotypes in their external and internal communications, according to a [study](#) led by [Sandra C. Matz](#) of Columbia Business School.



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