

Newsletter, Issue 10, Summer 2016

CCF-Affiliated Research Spotlight

[Dr. Mandy Maguire](#) is an associate professor in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences at UT Dallas, director of the [Developmental Neurolinguistics Laboratory](#), and CCF faculty affiliate. She was recently awarded a \$515,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study why children who live in poverty have smaller vocabularies than their peers, using a time frequency analysis of electroencephalogram (EEG) signals. The 3-year study will look at brain processes and behaviors when children between the ages of 8 and 15 hear an unfamiliar word in a sentence in which they know all the other words. "Reduced vocabulary is a big problem in the U.S., in Texas and in Dallas," Maguire said. "When a child is in fourth or fifth grade, general word-learning ability begins affecting other classes. It is very important to research children at this age because vocabulary has such an effect on their overall academic success." [Read More...](#)



Dr. Mandy Maguire

For those interested in participating in the study, Dr. Maguire's lab is currently recruiting child participants (ages 8-15). Participants in the study earn a \$50 gift card and a t-shirt. [See here for more information](#) or [contact the lab](#) to participate.



Dr. Deborah Lowe
Vandell

Save the Date: January 20th, 2017

Save the date for the Center's 7th annual forum on "**Out of School Time: Expanding Learning Opportunities, Reducing Achievement Gaps**" featuring keynote speaker [Dr. Deborah Vandell](#) from The University of California, Irvine. She is a professor of education and founding dean of the School of Education at UCI. Dr. Vandell is an internationally ranked scholar on the effects of afterschool programs and academic outcomes. Her [research](#) includes strategies for improving the quality of afterschool programs and developmental contexts on children's social, behavioral, and academic functioning.

Partner Spotlight: Children's Health

As a part of the **Early Childhood Health Initiative (ECHI)** involving several local partners in Dallas, CCF began working with [Children's Health](#) this summer on their

Project AHEAD: Physician Education

Program. Scheduled to launch in 2017, the program aims to provide training to pediatricians to improve early identification and intervention for children with various developmental concerns. The program also hopes to increase parent and caregiver education and awareness of developmental warning signs by providing materials and education to families who arrive for routine well-child visits. CCF's developmental specialists shared their wealth of experience gained in [providing](#)



Project AHEAD's Family Advisory Council meets to share their experiences

[developmental screenings and referrals](#) to address children's identified developmental and behavioral needs with the group. A Family Advisory Council was setup ahead of the launch to advise the project and is made up of families who have been personally impacted by a child with a developmental concern or delay. Families play the role of ambassadors during the physician training, sharing their stories about the needs and struggles families experience in the community. CCF's developmental specialists helped identify, organize, conduct, and lead Family Advisory Council sessions for the project. CCF also helped with translation into Spanish of written materials and sessions with the Family Advisory Council, together with Dr. Angela Moemeka, VP & Medical Director for Community Health, and Stella Osuji (MS'15, Healthcare Management, UT Dallas), Program Coordinator for Community Health at Children's Health. Several CCF student volunteers have also attended the meetings to provide playful-learning activities and arts and crafts for the Family Advisory Council's children while their parents were meeting.

Selected Recent Research from CCF Faculty-Affiliates

["Childhood Reports of Food Neglect and Impulse Control Problems and Violence in Adulthood"](#)



Dr. Alex Piquero

Recent research by [Dr. Alex Piquero](#), Ashbel Smith Professor of Criminology and associate dean for graduate programs in the School of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences, and colleagues published in the [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#) found that people who experienced frequent hunger as children were more than twice as likely to exhibit impulsivity and injure others intentionally as adolescents and adults. Previous research links childhood hunger to other negative outcomes, such as poor academic performance. This study was among the first to find a correlation between childhood hunger, low self-control, and interpersonal violence.

["Ready. Set. Learn. Dallas Project Investigates the Skills Behind School Success"](#)

CCF Director and Robinson Family Professor of Psychology [Dr. Margaret T. Owen](#) is the co-principal investigator in a longitudinal study that's investigating how social and emotional readiness predict how

well children do in school. Along with [Dr. Margaret Caughy](#) of UTHealth's School of Public Health Dallas Regional Campus, the researchers are interested in examining how soft skills, such as sitting still, following directions, and impulse control, can predict school readiness. Data from the study has revealed that children with better impulse control have achieved more in math and children who could easily shift attention from one task to another did better in reading. An important finding has been that when parents were more child-oriented and sensitive in their parenting approach, their children had better inhibitory control, better academic achievement, and fewer behavior problems.



Child with toy

Juega Conmigo Family Celebration

The [Latino Cultural Center](#) hosted our 2nd annual *Juega Conmigo* (Play With Me) family celebration on June 4th, 2016. The event featured a bilingual puppet show, games and activities for parents and children to enjoy together, and local service agencies available to help families with a variety of different needs. Thank you



Children and volunteers play together at the *Juega Conmigo* Family Celebration

to **Which Wich** for donating a sandwich lunch, the [Texas Home Visiting Coalition](#) for sponsoring the puppet show put on by The Sock Theater, **Starbucks** and **Chipotle** for donating coffee and food for our volunteers, [CCF Advisory Council](#) members for their support, In Motion Photography and Video for the pictures, the agency resources, and our many, many student and community volunteers! We served 250 children and parents at this event with your help - THANK YOU!



CCF's reception area in the expansion building

Our New Home in the Callier Center Expansion

In the next month, the Center for Children and Families will be moving out of Green Hall to our new suite of offices in the [Callier Center for Communication Disorders' expansion project](#) on UT Dallas' Richardson campus. The CCF office suite includes a reception area, offices, conference room, and storage space. The expansion project will add 50,000 square-feet to the existing 20,000 square-foot Callier Center building. In addition to CCF space, the

Callier expansion includes new classrooms, labs, speech-language and audiology treatment rooms, and faculty offices for the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences.

From the Director

This is an exciting time for the Center as we evaluate how far we've come over the past 8 years and the exciting future that awaits us. Having dedicated Center space in the Callier expansion building will provide easier access to us and open new opportunities and possibilities for collaborations between Center staff, faculty research, and child therapeutic services within the Callier Center for Communication Disorders. Our outreach programs in the community have been thriving this summer and we're looking forward to the Fall as we gear up for the series of weekly classes in our *Juega Conmigo* program, developmental screenings for all children enrolled in the program, and another Screening Fair. Stay tuned.



- Margaret T. Owen, Ph.D., Robinson Family Professor, Director, Center for Children and Families



How to Give

As we work to promote optimal family and child development, our community outreach programs and our child and family research **need your support**. To learn more about giving to the Center for Children and Families or how to designate your gift, contact Pagett Gosslee, CFRE, at pgosslee@utdallas.edu or [visit our giving page](#).

STAY CONNECTED:



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