

## CCF Researchers Enhance Community Outreach Events



Center for Children and Families (CCF) staff and affiliated researchers have been very active this past year sharing the Center's mission of promoting optimal family and child development through research, practice and outreach to the

broader community. CCF staff members, in collaboration with area school districts, developed programming focused on the special challenges of school-age mothers. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that more than half of school-age mothers do not complete high school, and Texas leads the nation in terms of poor outcomes for this group.

CCF has lent its expertise to help address these concerns. Last spring, UTD graduate students and CCF staff provided developmental screenings to a group of school-age mothers and their infants and facilitated parent-child playful learning. This fall, we provided an event with another district's school-age parents group focused on establishing routines in infancy. Nearly one hundred school age mothers (and a few dads) enjoyed lively presentations, including the "Challenges of Bedtime" led by Dr. Candice Mills, "Feeding Time" with Dr. Shayla Holub, "How to Talk to Your Baby" with Dr. Andrea Warner-Czyz (pictured above) and "Playtime With Baby" led by CCF Infant Development Program Director, Lyn Neisius. The young parents and parents-to-be found the highlight of the day to be "When Your Baby Cries," the swaddling demonstration and hands-on training with life-like dolls and blankets led by developmental specialist and CCF Advisory Council Chair, Patty Miller, M.S., CCLS.

Other successful CCF outreach events from this past year included:

■ "Get Dressed with Juega Conmigo," March 2012, Bachman Lake Library. CCF staff and volunteers distributed new clothing and shoes donated through Kids in Distressed Situations (KIDS) and presented a brief talk to parents on "Promoting Children's Self Help Skills."

■ "Back to School with Juega Conmigo," September 2012, Grauwylar Park Library. CCF staff and volunteers distributed 600 pairs of new children's jeans donated through KIDS and presented a talk, "Routines Matter! Helping Your Child Prepare for School Success."

## 2013 Spring Lecture Series

### "Promoting School Readiness and Achievement"

**Jan 25** Candice Mills, Ph.D.  
"Life after preschool: Supporting skills that help children thrive"



**Feb 15** Andrea Warner-Czyz, Ph.D., CCC-A  
"Early communication and academic success in children with and without communication disorders"



**Mar 22** Margaret Caughy, Sc.D.  
"Succeeding despite the obstacles: Closing the education gap for children in poverty"



**Apr 26** Raúl Rojas, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
"Bilingualism and school-aged children: What we know and where we go from here"



Talks will be held Friday mornings  
9:30 to 10:30 am, reception following

**Location** UT Dallas main campus, School of Management, Room 2.106

CEUs available - visit [ccf.utdallas.edu](http://ccf.utdallas.edu) for more info

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## Juega Conmigo Outcome Study

Increasingly it is recognized that play is central to the well-being and development of children. Yet, neighborhoods of concentrated poverty offer limited opportunities for play. Juego Conmigo was implemented by CCF with the overarching goal of providing an accessible space for children to engage in quality play experiences with their parents and peers. More specifically,



Juega Conmigo was designed to enhance responsive caregiving and promote child self-regulation and overall development by engaging families in playful learning activities guided by early childhood professionals. Beginning in the spring of 2013, Juego Conmigo will undertake an internal evaluation to examine whether the program meets its objectives. The evaluation will determine if program participation is associated with better developmental outcomes for children and seek to delineate patterns of participation that maximize those gains.

## Staff Spotlight



### **C**ommunity Liaison Specialist

Adriana Villa Baird has many roles at CCF. She is responsible for the Resource and Referral Program and is familiar to Juego Conmigo parents as a regular session facilitator. Adriana's many skills make her an invaluable resource. She is a native of Medellin, Colombia, is fluent in Spanish and English and offers consultations in both languages. She began her work in Dallas as a parent educator and has been a Coach, Trainer, and Consultant for Avance Dallas, teaching parenting skills to

Spanish-speaking families. Adriana has also worked for the Red Cross as a Coordinator of Health Prevention Programs for children, teens and adults. Adriana earned her B.S. in Psychology from the University of San Buenaventura in Medellin, Colombia and her M.S. in Counseling from Southern Methodist University.

Contact Adriana to learn more about CCF's Resource and Referral Program at 972-883-4827 or [resources.ccf@utdallas.edu](mailto:resources.ccf@utdallas.edu)

**T**atiana Peredo is a first year doctoral student in psychological sciences at UT Dallas. She received her bachelor's degree in Human and Organizational Development and master's degree in Human Development Counseling from Vanderbilt University. Prior to moving to Dallas, Tatiana worked in a language intervention research lab at Vanderbilt where she taught parents and preschool teachers strategies for supporting communication development in children 12-60 months old with special needs. Tatiana worked as an early intervention specialist with young Latino children and their families in Dallas and is currently working with the Infant Development Program and Juego Conmigo at the Center for Children and Families. Tatiana is a native speaker of Portuguese and learned Spanish studying abroad in college. She is enjoying expanding her Spanish vocabulary with the help of her colleagues and Juego families at CCF!



# Cybele Raver leads the discussion on “Learning How to Learn” at CCF’s Third Annual Forum



*Dr. Raver, the Keynote speaker of the Center for Children and Families Annual Forum, delivered the morning address to a room full of students, faculty, and DFW-area professionals, educators and parents.*

This year the focus was on education, intervention and policy as CCF welcomed several hundred visitors to campus for its third Annual Forum. Forum attendees heard about new and important research addressing initiatives promoting school readiness and participated in compelling discussions. Dr. Raver, a professor of applied psychology and Vice-Provost from New York University was the keynote speaker and was joined by other speakers including Marnie Glaser from Commit! Dallas, Dr. David Brown from Texas A&M Commerce, Dr. Reid Lyon from UTDallas’ Center for BrainHealth, Dr. Raul Rojas from UTDallas Callier Center, and Susan Hoff of the United Way. Dr. Raver has spent many years studying school readiness and child development in the context of

*Marnie Glaser of Commit! Dallas reports on current education achievement statistics and concerns for Dallas County and outlines Commit’s initiatives and progress.*



poverty. According to Raver “poverty has grave consequences for the formation of human capital in the next generation, increasing the risk of children’s lower academic achievement and heightening their risk of serious behavioral difficulty.” She described the success of a major intervention initiative she has spearheaded in Head Start center in the Chicago area.

The Fall 2013 Annual Forum will feature sociologist and developmental psychologist Dr. Robert Crosnoe, from the University of Texas at Austin, whose work focuses on connections between children’s and adolescents’ health, psychosocial development, and educational trajectories and their contributions to population-based inequalities. Stay tuned for more details.

## CCF Launches Speakers Bureau

The Center for Children and Families’ Speakers Bureau is a community outreach service made possible by speakers from among our affiliated faculty who teach, conduct research, study and work at UT Dallas. Our speakers offer insights on a broad range of current and relevant topics and are dedicated to sharing their expertise and extending our learning community.

The CCF Speakers Bureau provides speakers to schools and other community groups across the state for a small honorarium. The honorarium helps support our research and outreach efforts. For more information or to invite a speaker, contact Joanna Gentsch at 972-883-4179 or via email at [jgentsch@utdallas.edu](mailto:jgentsch@utdallas.edu)

## Help us learn more about Healthy Eating!



The Healthy Development Project of the Center for Children and Families at the University of Texas at Dallas is currently recruiting families for an important study about how parents feed their infants.

Mothers with infants between 6- and 12-months-old are invited to participate in the “My Baby and Me” study. Participants will be asked to complete a short survey at their convenience, and return it in a postage paid envelope. Participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a \$100 gift card!

To learn more about this study or if you would like to participate, please contact Elaine at [elaine.dolan@utdallas.edu](mailto:elaine.dolan@utdallas.edu) or 972-883-6073.



## From the Director

It has been a full year at the Center for

Children and Families with continued growth in our programming efforts and the initiation of new activities that build upon our strengths to serve needs of children and families in our community. In working to provide families with education and support to foster children's resilience and success, our Infant Development Program (IDP) has now completed two years in the Bachman Lake neighborhood, focusing on the earliest years of at-risk children. Among several new outreach efforts, in the coming year we will be working to expand our Juega Conmigo model of relationship-focused playful learning with targeted trainings to establish new programs in additional high-need neighborhoods. - *Margaret T. Owen, Ph.D., Robinson Family Professor, Director, Center for Children and Families*

## Advisory Council Members 2013

- Debbie Dudley Branson
- David Brown
- John Castle
- Barbara Einsohn
- Marion Flores
- Sue Gainer
- Mary Fan Kain
- Patty Miller
- Lisa Oglesby Rocha
- Norma Stone

The Center for Children and Families was established in 2008 with a generous grant from the Meadows Foundation. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to the individuals, foundations and organizations that have given and aided us in our vision.

## How to Give



As we work toward making our full vision a reality for the Center, gifts and grants for the community

outreach programs continue to need your support. To learn more about giving to the Center for Children and Families or how to designate your gift to a specific program within the Center, contact Pagett Gosslee, CFRE at [pgosslee@utdallas.edu](mailto:pgosslee@utdallas.edu) or 972-883-2837.

We are a resource for children and families with your support.



Center for Children and Families  
 Promoting optimal family and child development  
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