



Center for Children and Families

Promoting optimal family and child development

Promoting Play: Our New Initiative in the Bachman Lake Community of Dallas



Above: Mothers and children at play during a “Juega Conmigo” session.

Play contributes to optimal child development for all children and is an important avenue to learning. It offers the opportunity for parents to engage fully with their children. The Center has worked to promote play in children’s lives beginning with our first Annual Forum in 2010 that featured Dr. Kathy Hirsh-Pasek’s lecture “Arts and Sciences of Play”. We

have put these ideas to action by launching “Juega Conmigo” (Play with Me) weekly sessions in the Bachman Lake branch of the Dallas Public Library in this high-need neighborhood of Dallas, Texas. During “Juega Conmigo”, bilingual Developmental Specialists facilitate play activities with parents and their infants and toddlers using toys, music, and movement.

Bachman continued on page 6

Fourth Annual Spring Lecture Series to Begin in January 2012

The Center’s fourth annual Spring Lecture Series begins on January 27, 2012 and will feature perspectives on children’s health. The series will consist of four lectures over a five month period with a break during the month of March. All are free and open to the public with no registration required.

Continuing education credits are available for the talks, which are scheduled to take place from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the UT Dallas School of Management, SOM 2.106. A brief reception will follow each lecture.

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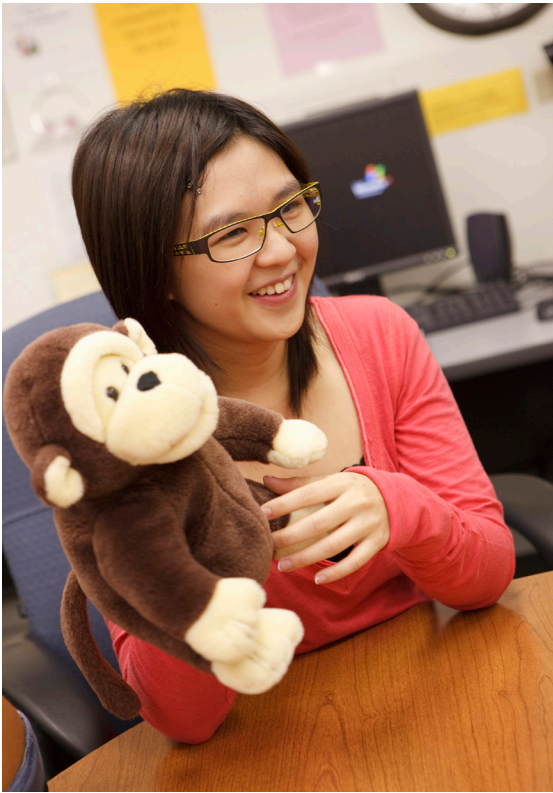
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ccf.utdallas.edu



Research Participation Opportunity:

ABC Eat Healthy Study

The Healthy Development Project of the Center for Children and Families at the University of Texas at Dallas is currently conducting a study to examine children's eating behaviors. We are inviting children between the ages of 5 and 8 to participate. Children will answer some fun questions and have a short play time with snacks. This study will last about 45 to 60 minutes and will be conducted at the UTD Richardson campus. Families will receive a \$10 Target gift card and their children will receive a certificate and small prize. To learn more or participate in this study, please contact Cin Cin Tan at cctan@utdallas.edu or 972-883-6073. With community participation, we will be able to complete this important research study. 🌂

Staff Spotlight

Meet the People of the
Center for Children and Families

Lyn Rodriguez
Neisius leads the Center's Infant Development Program, which provides free comprehensive developmental screenings for infants and toddlers in high-need communities.



Parents receive immediate feedback, valuable parenting advice, as well as education and referrals for early intervention services if the screening results indicate a need for such services. The developmental screenings provide early identification of developmental delays to prevent the development of greater disabilities.

Lyn's background makes her ideally suited for her position with the Infant Development Program. She holds a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology and an Educational Specialist degree in Child, Family and School Psychology both from the University of Denver. Lyn worked for 7 years as a Licensed Professional Counselor with the Spanish speaking Latino community in the Denver area with a specialization in post-partum depression and the adjustment to parenthood. Lyn also has 6 years of experience working as a School Psychologist in Colorado and South Florida. These experiences afforded her the opportunity to assess hundreds of young children (many of whom were English Language Learners) and work with educators and families to improve school performance. In her work with the Infant Development Program, she has been complimented for her cross cultural awareness and sensitive manner when dealing with the mothers and children. 🌂

Blog: News You Can Use

short summaries of developmental research and its implications for parents and families


The CCF website (<http://ccf.utdallas.edu/>) offers weekly posts on *News You Can Use*, which highlight implications from the latest developmental research for supporting children's optimal development. A recent post follows:

Tackling Toddlers' Tantrums

Toddlers are learning to think and develop ideas and opinions, and because this can sometimes conflict with the ideas and opinions of their parents, battles are often the result. To the parents of a toddler, it often seems like their child's favorite words are 'no' and 'myself'. Dr. Alicia Lieberman, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco and the author of *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*, writes that "At times parents find themselves caught in a contest of wills, vaguely embarrassed at being unable to win


more handily at this uneven match." How can parents of toddlers handle this battle of wills without their child throwing a temper tantrum? The American Academy of Pediatrics offers some suggestions:

- ▷ Distraction can be extremely helpful. If you notice your child growing upset, attempt to guide him or her to a new, more appropriate activity.
- ▷ Try not to reinforce your child's negative actions by providing a great deal of attention following his or her misbehavior.
- ▷ Wait until your child is calm and then talk about the situation and the behaviors you had thought were inappropriate.
- ▷ Use positive forms of discipline. Physical forms of punishment such as spanking may encourage your child to behave aggressively.

These steps can be helpful in decreasing the number and intensity of tantrums. Another key strategy is learning to pick your battles with toddlers. Although you should deal immediately with big issues that are a threat to your child's safety such as running into oncoming traffic, other issues such as wearing mismatching socks out of the house are less important and you can give your toddler more say in such decisions. This is echoed by Dr. Lieberman who counsels "the lifelong lesson of the toddler years involves learning that sometimes letting go – within limits – is the surest way of staying close". 

Read more at
ccf.utdallas.edu/blog

Second Annual Forum Draws a Large Audience

Over 300 researchers, educators, practitioners, university students, and local parents gathered at UTD for our Second Annual Forum on September 22nd to discuss how to best foster resilience in our children to ensure that more families experience positive outcomes in spite of serious threats to their development. Dr. Suniya Luthar of Teacher's College, Columbia University, a nationally and internationally renowned child development scholar, was the keynote speaker at this event. The Second Annual Forum included morning events of a presentation by Dr. Luthar, panel discussion by faculty members from The University of Texas at Dallas, Southern Methodist University, The University of Texas School of Public Health, and The University of Texas at Austin, an afternoon panel discussion by community educators and counselors who work with children in various capacities, and an evening lecture by Dr. Luthar titled "Fostering Resilience: Who Tends the Caregivers? Who Mothers Mommy?". The Forum was free and open to the public, funded by grants from the Timberlawn Psychiatric Research Foundation and the Meadows Foundation. The Center for Children and Families is already planning next year's forum to promote greater understanding of how children develop and thrive. 



News & Events



The Center for Children and Families has enlisted the keynote speaker for next year's forum: Dr. Cybele Raver, director of New York University's Institute of Human Development and Social Change. An authority on mechanisms that support children's

self regulation in contexts of poverty, she regularly advises local and federal government agencies and foundations on promoting school readiness among low-income children. The forum will be held in early October 2012.

The Center for Children and Families is hosting
The Montessori Institute of Texas for:

"School 2.0"

a public lecture for educators, parents and child advocates

Featured speaker

Dr. Steven J. Hughes,

President, American Academy of
Pediatric Neuropsychology

For all our technical progress, education throughout the world predominantly follows a 'School 1.0' model. However, life and work in the 21st century have placed increasing pressure on the School 1.0 model. What should young people be learning to experience successful, happy, interesting lives in the 21st century? Can traditional school give young people what they need, or is it time to rethink education--to consider 'School 2.0'?

Center for Children and Families
Le invitamos a:
Celebrar El Año Nuevo
con
¡Juega Conmigo!
El 5 de Enero del 2012
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
en la Biblioteca Pública de Bachman Lake
9480 Webb Chapel Road
Traiga a sus niños (de 0 a 5 años) para que se diviertan. Habrán snacks, juegos y una presentación bilingüe de títeres a las 10:30am y a las 11:00am
The Sock Theater
sponsored by The Mike & Mary Terry Family Foundation

January 5, 2012

Juega Conmigo and the Infant Development Program celebrated El Año Nuevo (the New Year) with a bilingual puppet show and party for the children and their parents. Over 140 people attended.

Bachman Lake Public Library
9480 Webb Chapel Road

March 5, 2012
7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Clark Conference Center
UT Dallas - Main Campus

Admission is \$20 per person. Registration coming soon! For more information, contact contact@montessori-mit.org or call 682-237-0400

Children and Families Research Fair Draws a Crowd

The Center held its second annual Research Fair on Thursday, November 3rd in the Galaxy Rooms of the UTD Student Union. Over 300 students, faculty, and members of the community attended to talk with our developmental experts and to learn more about ongoing child development research and opportunities for research participation.



Psychology Coalition members Russell Ansley and Edwin Hampton



Members of The Dallas Preschool Readiness Project

Volunteer Spotlight Meet Theo!

The Center would like to thank its many volunteers, but would like to highlight the contribution of Theo, a sixth grader from Colleyville, Texas who was instrumental to the success of our



“Juega Conmigo” Program this summer. With school out for summer, we had several older children (mainly between the ages of three and seven) accompany their parents and younger siblings to our weekly “Juega Conmigo” sessions. Theo and other volunteers helped to keep these older siblings entertained while their mothers were engaged in the sessions with their younger children. Theo read books to the older children, led art projects, and impressed all of us with his amazing origami skills, making different animals by folding paper. Theo’s handiwork was also appreciated by the infants and toddlers who participated in “Juega Conmigo” as he built an elaborate tunnel for them to explore. Theo’s contributions helped to make “Juega Conmigo” an enjoyable experience for the entire family, and we hope to see him again next summer. ☂



Drs. Jackie Nelson, Melanie Spence and Rob Ackerman at the 2011 CCF Annual Forum

Support the Center

Become involved in the lives of children and families!

As the Center works to promote optimal family and child development through innovative research, practice and outreach, we 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.

pgosslee@utdallas.edu
972-883-2837

Play a vital role for children and families.
Please join us with your support.




Bachman, cont.

We also share information about child development, how to best promote growth through play activities, and offer free individual screenings of the children's development. Our ultimate goal is to prepare at-risk infants and toddlers for Kindergarten and school success by advancing children's cognitive, language, physical, emotional and



social development through play and encouraging growth-promoting parent-child interactions.

The response to the "Juega Conmigo" has been very positive, with over 285 visits made since its initiation in June and many parents returning each week with their children. With new funding received from the Mike and Mary Terry Foundation, we will be able to continue offering Juega Conmigo throughout the year. With the large numbers attending each week, we are working to fund the addition of a second Juega Conmigo class. 

Lectures, cont.

The lectures feature UTD faculty and clinical lecturers and highlight the research being done by faculty associates of the Center for Children and Families at UT Dallas.

Spring 2012 Lecture Series

“Developmental Perspectives on Children’s Health”

January 27



Noah Sasson, Ph.D.
“The Evolving Diagnosis of Autism”

February 24



Jackie Nelson, Ph.D.
“Why Feelings Matter: The Importance of Emotional Competence in Childhood”

April 27



Toosje Van Beveren, Ph.D.
“The Legal Drug - Alcohol - and Child Development”

May 25



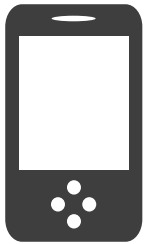
Deborah Wiebe, Ph.D.
“Parenting Adolescents with Chronic Health Needs”

Advisory Council Members, 2010-2011

John Castle (Chair), Debbie Dudley Branson, Sue Craven, Barbara Einsohn, Marion Flores, Sue Gainer, Mary Fan Kain, Pat Lockerd, Patty Miller, Lisa Oglesby Rocha, Carol and Maynard Redeker, and Norma Stone.

The Center for Children and Families Advisory Council assists in the identification, cultivation and stewardship of donors, corporate partners and friends of the outreach programs and research. The council members raise the public profile of the Center and the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences while advancing the mission and goals of the University of Texas at Dallas.

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