Celebrating 10 Years of Service and Education

Center for Children and Families
Promoting optimal family and child development

2008-2018
10th Anniversary Report
Celebrating our Past and Looking Ahead

Center for Children and Families | The University of Texas at Dallas
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10th Anniversary Report

Striving to be a resource for parents and professionals in meeting the needs of children and families, the Center for Children and Families (CCF) was created 10 short years ago with the help of a generous matching grant from The Meadows Foundation. Drawing on the wealth of interdisciplinary child development research conducted by faculty and students in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences at UT Dallas, and with the visionary leadership of the late Dean Bert Moore, the Center set forth with a mission to promote optimal family and child development through research, practice, and outreach. I'm pleased to offer in this 10th anniversary report, a glimpse of our achievements in supporting this mission and in serving families, professionals, practitioners, students, and researchers. As the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences looks ahead to new leadership in the dean’s office and renewing its vision, CCF also looks forward to charting our course ahead with a dedication to solving real-world challenges and bringing science-based solutions to families and communities.

Thank you for your support of our endeavors and for walking beside us into our next chapter.

Margaret Tresch Owen, PhD
Interim Dean, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Director, Center for Children and Families
Robinson Family Professor of Psychological Sciences

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Across Our First 10 Years:

CCF has conducted over 1,300 developmental screenings for high-need children under age 5 through our Grow With Me (Crece Conmigo) program. Nearly 50% of those screenings have identified developmental delays or concerns, most often in the area of language and communication. Those with qualifying delays (~25%) are referred for intervention services and receive individualized support in securing such services.

CCF’s inclusive Play With Me (Juega Conmigo) program for children under 3 and their parents has grown steadily. The program serves more than 550 impoverished children and parents annually at 6 program sites throughout Dallas.

A program evaluation of Play With Me’s effectiveness, conducted in 2017-18, documented increases in positive parenting practices (+74%), growth in parenting efficacy (+6%), and a reduction in parenting stress (-28%) among participants. 94% of parents reported increased time they now spend playing with their children.

CCF has provided professional learning experiences for nearly 500 local practitioners and child advocates each year through its annual fall forum and spring lecture series.

Since the spring of 2014, we've held 9 screening fairs in high-need community sites, screening children and providing referrals for developmental, vision, hearing, autism and language delays.

Family celebration events for parents and children of our playful-learning program are held annually, providing play activities, puppet shows, and many family resources. Over the past 4 years, 550 children and parents have participated.

About 75 students work with the Center each year, for service learning experiences with our community outreach programs and events.


**Operating Budget: $490,863**

82% of funds support our education and outreach programs
Faculty Affiliates

UT Dallas researchers affiliated with the Center for Children and Families are engaged in a wide variety of research on how children develop and thrive.

Rob Ackerman, PhD  
Chandramallika Basak, PhD  
Denise Boots, PhD  
Tim Bray, PhD  
Christine Dollaghan, PhD  
Julia Evans, PhD  
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Raúl Rojas, PhD  
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Noah Sasson, PhD  
Richard Scotch, PhD  
Melanie Spence, PhD  
Emily Touchstone, PhD  
Anne van Kleeck, PhD  
Andrea Warner-Czyz, PhD

Selected Faculty Publications


My name is Ina Kavrakova. I am an undergraduate student at UT Dallas, studying speech-language pathology and child development. I have been involved with CCF for three years now. Volunteering with the Center has given me a community within the larger university. I’ve made so many connections and friendships because of the time I’ve spent with CCF. I am passionate about their work because it allows me to apply what I learn in my classes to real-life situations. I love seeing the progress the children make and the connections between program facilitators and the parents. I’m looking forward to sharing what I have learned with others. CCF has made me excited to work with children as a Speech Pathologist in the future.

Patricia and her 1-year-old daughter Ana joined our Play With Me program in the summer of 2018. Ana was very quiet and liked to stay close to her mom. It took mom’s encouragement for Ana to participate in the activities. Patricia shared her concerns about Ana. Ana was not eating well and not gaining weight properly. Patricia said she had talked with Ana’s pediatrician, but had only been given general feeding recommendations. CCF developmental specialists and Patricia still had concerns about Ana’s physical appearance and noticed she often fell down when walking. We referred Ana to Early Childhood Intervention services, where she qualified for physical therapy and nutrition. Patricia told us, “If not for CCF, I wouldn’t have taken these steps to make sure Ana was on the best path possible for her development.”

My name is Margarita, but everyone calls me Maggie. The Play With Me program has helped me have a better relationship with my daughter. Before we participated, we never played together. I didn’t have patience with her behavior. I did care for her, but it hurts me now to recognize how I was with her. I brought my daughter and nephew to Play With Me. I wanted them to attend so they could learn how to play, but the one who really learned to play was me. Now I really enjoy playing with them, spending time together and teaching them. I believe the program even helped heal my inner child. I now share this with others, saying that we should take advantage of this time with our children, and that it is healthy to give our time to them and help them develop their skills. I am very grateful.
The **Founders Society** celebrates those who donate at least $1,000 annually.

The **S sustaineders Society** honors those who donate year after year.

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