

Newsletter, July 2017

Save the Date for the 8th Annual Forum: October 20th, 2017

Save the date for the 2017 Forum on **Friday, October 20th**, on "Biobehavioral Effects of Early Adversity: Implications for Prevention and Intervention."

The [8th Annual Forum](#) will feature [Dr. Seth Pollak](#) from The University of Wisconsin, Madison, as the keynote speaker. Dr. Pollak studies mechanisms of emotional development that address the link between early adverse experiences and later psychological difficulties. His work helps generate new prevention and intervention efforts with children at risk, and have included in-service trainings for public entities providing treatments for children with disruptive behavioral disorders.

This year's forum will be held at the [Communities Foundation of Texas](#) (5500 Caruth Haven Lane, Dallas, TX 75225).



Seth Pollak, PhD



UTD Brain Lab Seeks Participants for Paid Study

With funding from the National Science Foundation, CCF faculty affiliate Dr. Mandy Maguire is [studying what happens in children's brains](#) as they learn new words, how this changes as they grow, and why kids might struggle when learning new words.

Dr. Maguire is seeking participants for this study. Participants will receive a **\$50 MasterCard gift card**, a t-shirt, and a picture of their brainwaves.

Parents of 8-15 year-olds interested in having their children join the study should contact the UTD [Developmental Neurolinguistics Lab](#) at **214-904-3164** or utd.dev.neuro.lab@utdallas.edu.

CCF's Evaluation Research Team Studies Program Effectiveness

CCF research scientist Dr. Ana-Maria Mata-Otero leads the Center for Children and Families' [Playful Learning Project](#) (PLP). The purpose of PLP is to investigate the effectiveness of CCF's *Juega Conmigo* parent-child play program for parents and their children. With support from the [Jerry M. Lewis, M.D. Mental Health Research Foundation](#), PLP is actively studying the *Juega Conmigo* program using pre-post surveys, interviews with the parents, and videotaped observations of parent-child interactions to assess *Juega Conmigo's* effectiveness in supporting playful learning and positive parent-child engagement. The study will enhance understanding of how the program impacts parents' knowledge of positive parenting practices, parent-child relationships, and early learning skills. The PLP team includes postdoctoral researcher Dr. Danny Pacheco, 3 undergraduate research assistants, and a parent interviewer from the community.



Ana-Maria Mata-Otero, PhD

New Program, *Comenzando Bien*, Launches in June



In June, the [Comenzando Bien](#) (Starting Off Right) program, launched at the Holy Nativity Episcopal Church in east Plano. Directed by UTD alumna [Adriana Portillo BS'17](#), with support from the Sigma Lambda Gamma sorority, the March of Dimes, and CCF, the program features an 8 week bilingual parenting class about pregnancy, prenatal care, labor and birth, and newborn care.

From the Director

I'm very excited to announce the Center's featured speaker for its annual forum--Dr. Seth Pollak--distinguished professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin, whose rich studies of children's emotional development have profound implications for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies for children who experience early adversity and who are most at risk for emotional, learning and behavior problems. The forum schedule will include representatives from local entities engaged in this crucial work. Join us **October 20th**. It will be a CCF forum you won't want to miss!



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