

CCF-Affiliated Research Spotlight



During the preschool years, children begin to rely less on their caregivers and more on their own bodies to control their negative emotions. Recent research by Dr. Jackie Nelson, assistant professor in Psychological Sciences and CCF faculty affiliate, explores how preschoolers' developing physiological regulation is related to changes in their externalizing behavior problems over time. In collaboration with colleagues at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the researchers examined

children's physiological regulation during frustrating situations in the laboratory when children were 3, 4, and 5 years of age and asked parents to report on their child's behavior problems at each year. In a sample of 263 European American and African American families, results of the study "Early physiological regulation predicts the trajectory of externalizing behaviors across the preschool years," published this year in the journal *Developmental Psychobiology*, showed that only early regulatory abilities at age 3 were predictive of decreases in children's externalizing behavior problems over time. This suggests that early regulatory skills, as opposed to later regulation, may be a stronger contributor to children's ability to control their aggressive behaviors throughout preschool. Early physiological regulation at the start of preschool may provide an advantage that allows children to learn more efficiently, engage in more positive social interactions, and transition to school with less frustration.

2015 Spring Lecture Series

Ensuring Children's Success in School

Jan 23 Margaret Owen, Ph.D.
Supporting School Readiness by Building a Communication Foundation

Feb 13 Anne Van Kleeck, Ph.D.
Scholars in the Sandbox: Academic Talk with Preschoolers

Mar 27 Karen Huxtable-Jester, Ph.D.
Mindsets and Motivation as the Keys to Academic Success

Apr 17 Bill Barfoot, Ph.D.
Promoting Academic and Socioemotional Growth Among Exceptional Learners

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

Location: UT Dallas main campus,
School of Management, Room 2.115

CEUs available - visit ccf.utdallas.edu/programs-resources for more info

Juega Conmigo Classes Offered Weekly



Mondays 9:30 - 10:45am (Vickery Meadow)

Community Center Apt. Melody Park
5929 Melody Ln, Dallas TX 75231

Wednesdays 10:00 - 11:15am (Plano)

St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store
3305 N. Central Expressway, Plano TX 75023

Saturdays 10:00 - 11:15am (Pleasant Grove)

Prairie Creek Branch Library
9609 Lake June Rd, Dallas TX 75217

Tuesdays 9:00 - 10:15am (Plano Head Start)

Exclusive to Plano Head Start families

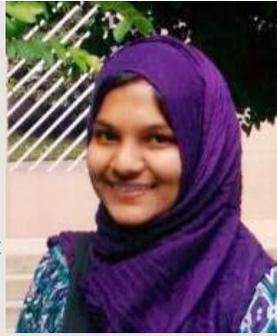
Plano Head Start School
1600 Rigsbee Drive, Plano TX 75074

Fridays 10:00 - 11:15am (Bachman Lake)

Bachman Lake Public Library
9480 Webb Chapel Road, Dallas TX 75220

Volunteer Spotlight Q&A

Fatema Jafferji, Junior,
Neuroscience Major



Q: What have you been doing with CCF?

A: As a volunteer with the Infant Development Program, we engage in screening activities associated with reception, expression, fine-motor, and gross-motor skills that ensure early and essential development in younger children.

Q: What have you learned from your experiences?

A: The program has helped me understand the importance of examining a child's behavior at a young age, to help promote the child's health and cognitive abilities long term, as well as enabling parents to seek early interventions in the case of developmental issues. Also, I've learned quite a bit of Spanish words!

Q: What impact do you believe you are having?

A: The feeling of connecting with the both the parents and child is absolutely wonderful. The program has inspired me to make a difference in the lives of children by helping the parents help their child, and has taught me how amazingly each child's mind partakes in complex, intellectual activities.

Adilene Romero, Senior,
Speech-Language Pathology and
Child Development Double Major



Q: What have you been doing with CCF?

A: I have been volunteering with both the Infant Development and *Juega Conmigo* programs since June. Participating in Spanish programs has reinforced my Spanish language skills and expanded them in a professional setting.

Q: What have you learned from your experiences?

A: I am very impressed with parents who want to do more for their children but don't know where to start. Most of the time, parents come to us with questions like "Am I doing the right thing for my child?" and "What can I do to help them?" The act of looking for help is the hardest and most important thing to acknowledge.

Q: What impact do you believe you are having?

A: My overall experience with CCF has encouraged me to pursue and excel in my studies; the more I learn, the more resources I have to help answer parents' questions. I enjoy being able to connect with parents, most of whom are Latino, and reassure or redirect them to methods that can better stimulate their child's development.

Head Start Partnership Grows

The Center for Children and Families' partnership with Plano Head Start is growing. In September, our fifth *Juega Conmigo* program opened to work with younger siblings of Plano's Head Start participants and their parents. Now, our Infant Development Program will bring developmental screenings to these families, providing assessments, guidance, and resources for parents with concerns about their child's growth. An information session about our developmental screenings, provided with some playful activities for the kids, was held in early November. Over 50 parents and children attended to learn about CCF's services and to sign up for screenings. This partnership also brings exciting opportunities to study our *Juega Conmigo* program's impact on children's early foundations for learning. Working with the younger siblings of the school's participants and their parents, we will be able to compare developmental outcomes when these children transition into Head Start between children who have and have not experienced *Juega Conmigo* prior to entering school.



Annual Fall Forum Review

Over 150 people from 45 different organizations gathered on October 31st to hear Dr. Robert Pianta from The University of Virginia address teacher-child interactions and the components of effective teaching and learning at CCF's fifth annual Fall Forum. Quality interactions, he noted, are based on emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support that gets the child thinking. The Forum theme, "Ensuring Children's Success in School," was carried on after the keynote address by talks from Alan Cohen of the Dallas Independent School District and Adrianna Cuéllar Rojas from United Ways of Texas. Cohen described the district's efforts in improving kindergarten readiness and Rojas spoke about the political climate in Texas and efforts to move the needle in early childhood education policy. Children's Health and Timberlawn Psychiatric Research Foundation were major supporters of the Forum.

The 2014 Research & Resource Fair

hosted by CCF, showcased Center-affiliated research labs and local resource groups to recruit student volunteers, interns, and research assistants. Over 300 students and community members attended. Thank you to the following groups for your participation:

- Alex Piquero and Stephanie Cardwell
- Callier Center
- Bilingual Language Lab
- Career Center
- Development of Social Cognition Lab
- Children at Risk
- Dallas Preschool Readiness Project
- The Warren Center
- The Infant Learning Project
- PAIR Lab
- Schizophrenia and Social Cognition Lab
- Avance Dallas
- The Healthy Development Project
- Family Research Lab
- Close Relationships and Health Lab
- Think Lab
- The Couples Daily Lives Project
- Children's Health
- Texas Association for Infant Mental Health
- Filbey Lab

Infant Development Program Screening Fair Returns to Vickery Meadow



CCF went back to Vickery Meadow in November for our second Screening Fair, bringing together developmental specialists, UT Dallas audiologists, and pediatric residents from Children's Health to provide hearing screenings, developmental screenings, guidance, and resource information to local families. Over 65 people attended with 25 developmental screenings and 27 hearing screenings conducted for parents and children. Playful activities were provided for families as they waited.

Additional Fairs are being planned for the upcoming year in other high-need areas of Dallas.





From the Director

It's been a busy and productive Fall for the Center: holding our 5th Annual Forum, this year addressing how to improve school success through effective teacher-child interactions; providing developmental and hearing screenings at our 2nd Screening Fair in the Vickery Meadow neighborhood; adding community agencies to research labs at our 5th annual Research & Resource Fair; and launching our newest *Juega Conmigo* playful learning program in September. Individual supporters and local foundations continue to respond positively to our efforts and dreams and we are extremely grateful. Support grew this Fall with grants from the Timberlawn Psychiatric Research Foundation and the M.B. and Edna Zale Foundation. Children's Health (formerly Children's Medical Center) provided a third year of support for the Forum. I also want to acknowledge the talented assistance we receive from our student volunteers. Because of their help and the many skills they bring we are able to extend our programs and services to many more. Coupled together, our outreach efforts and the innovative child and family research of Center-affiliated faculty are doing more and more to promote optimal family and child development in our community.

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

Advisory Council Members 2014-2015

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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 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 972-883-2837.

We are an important resource for children and families with your support.

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