

Juega Conmigo Grows as a Training Model



This fall, CCF's Infant Development Program, is collaborating with community partners to expand delivery of its culturally sensitive and inclusive early childhood education program, Juega Conmigo, for young children and their parents into the high-need neighborhoods of Pleasant Grove and Vickery Meadow. Juega Conmigo's free weekly playful teaching classes have been in existence for 2½ years in the Bachman Lake neighborhood library. At Juega Conmigo, the children engage in

playful learning with their parents and peers, facilitated by our bilingual developmental specialists who promote the children's cognitive, language, social-emotional, and motor development. The parents' participation serves to insure the children's comfort and increase the parents' knowledge and self-efficacy. Juega Conmigo's programming and curriculum for children ages 0-3 and their parents provide an important bridge that facilitates the children's movement into other early education programs with greater ease and success. The program has become a key component of our outreach work, and contributes to our ultimate goal to enhance Dallas children's health and development and prepare them to enter school ready to learn. In response to strong interest in the Juega Conmigo model and many requests for more Juega Conmigo programs, we are currently training facilitators from Avance Dallas and VMYD (Vickery Meadow Youth Development Foundation) to launch Juega Conmigo programs in their communities. In addition to the training, supervision, and support we will provide for the parent-child facilitators to successfully execute our Juega Conmigo curriculum, child development research faculty and students will collect outcome data to address program effectiveness for the parents and children. The new program will launch in late January 2014.

2014 Spring Lecture Series

“Surviving--and Thriving--in Adolescence”

Jan 17 Emily A. Tobey, Ph.D.
“The Bionic Ear: Challenges of Educating Deaf Teenagers in the 21st Century”

Feb 14 Samuel Ehrenreich, Ph.D.
“Adolescent Text Messaging and the Development of Antisocial Behavior”

Mar 7 Alex R. Piquero, Ph.D.
“Preventing Juveniles from a Life of Crime”

Apr 11 Joanna K. Gentsch, Ph.D.
“Beyond the Birds and the Bees: Communicating about Sexuality from Childhood through Adolescence”

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 for more info

Juega Conmigo Outcome Study

In our efforts to understand more about the families we have served at Juega Conmigo and measure how the program benefits the children and parents attending it, we have conducted phone interviews with parents who have attended at least five sessions of Juega Conmigo. From this sample we have learned that all of the children were born in the U.S., but 90% of the parents were born outside of the country, with 91.8% from Mexico. A large majority of the mothers (82%) report speaking only Spanish to their children. Only 63% of the mothers and 49% of the fathers of the children have at least a high school diploma; very few have more than a high school education. The families served by Juega Conmigo are predominantly low income: 90% reported incomes below two times the federal poverty level and 61% were below the poverty level. On average, from a 5-point scale (from little to very high), the mothers rated Juega Conmigo as a highly important source of support for them and their children.



Staff Spotlight



Cecilia Juarez-Lazcano, M.S. joined the CCF this fall as the full-time Program Manager for our Infant Development Program. She came to America in 2004 when she awarded a full scholarship from the Mexican National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT) to pursue a Master's degree in Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders at The University of Texas at Dallas. She also holds a degree in Education by the National Autonomous

University of Mexico. Cecilia worked for 6 years with at risk children and families with social-emotional challenges in a non-profit organization in the Dallas area as a Team leader of the Infant-Child Comprehensive Assessment Program, Parent educator, Intake/ Triage Coordinator and Co-facilitator of the socio-emotional skill-building intervention group with the Spanish speaking Latino community. Prior to coming to the United States, Cecilia's previous professional experience includes 12 years working with children and families in the public and private sector in her home town Mexico City. She worked as a teacher, summer camp coordinator, teacher coordinator, and school

Suzy Armstrong, M.Ed., IMH-E (IV) comes to UTD with over 30 years of work in the field of early intervention. She worked in the ECI State Office as a Program Consultant in the areas of policy development, training and technical assistance, coordinator of the ECI Statewide Conference, and coordinator of the credentialing system for Early Intervention Specialists. Most recently she served as Director of two ECI programs, an urban program serving Northeast Tarrant County, and a rural program serving San Angelo and surrounding counties, and as an Early Intervention Specialist providing direct services for families in Dallas through LaunchAbility ECI.



Adriana Villa Baird, M.S. has taken a new position at CCF as the full-time Program Manager for Juega Conmigo. She has been leading the multiple training sessions for the new Juega Conmigo facilitators and will be providing on-going support and supervision for the new programs' implementation. Adriana has had many roles at CCF including Community Liaison Specialist and a Juega Conmigo session facilitator.



Robert Crosnoe leads the discussion on "Standing Out, Fitting In" at CCF's Third Annual Forum

"What are the short term and long term implications of the social ups and downs of high school?" Dr. Rob Crosnoe asked as he began his keynote talk of this year's annual forum. Dr. Crosnoe was joined by CCF affiliated faculty as they began a day-long dialog on the connections between adolescents' psychosocial development, the development of healthy relationships, and their educational trajectories. Dr. Crosnoe's work as a Sociologist and Social Demographer resonated with the diverse audience of educators, counselors, social workers, community



advocates and parents and provided an introduction for compelling discussions on the special challenges faced by adolescents. Dr. Crosnoe described a year he spent with students in an urban high school in Austin where his ethnographic approach to data collection included interviews and case studies and became the focus on his most recent book, "Fitting In, Standing Out: Navigating the Social Challenges of High School to Get an Education". In this developmental context, Dr. Crosnoe was better able to understand and articulate the high stakes of social marginalization, and to determine which adolescents were at risk, particularly those struggling with obesity, gender identity or sexual orientation.

UTD's Dr. Marion Underwood followed with "Digital Connections", focusing on adolescent communication via text messaging and social networking based on data from her longitudinal study on peer relationships across middle school and high school social development. In an intriguing look at this evolving peer culture, Dr. Underwood shared positive and negative implications of technology use in adolescence and she offered practical advice for parents and teachers.

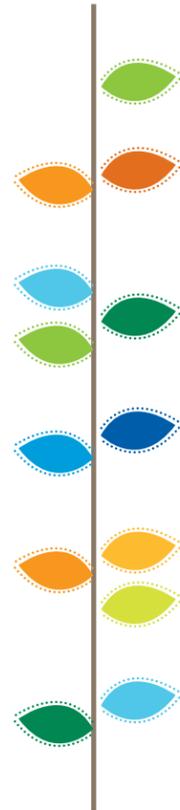
During lunch, Dr. Ray Tsai, a pediatrician from MyChildren's clinic provided information about the state of health care for children and adolescents in the Dallas area. In the afternoon, neuropsychologist, Dr. Francesca Filbey from UT Dallas' Center for Brain Health, presented the neural mechanisms associated with addictive disorders and the special risks to the adolescent's developing brain. The last speaker of the day, Dr. Robert Ackerman from UTDallas focused on his findings linking positive engagement in the adolescents' families with long term benefits for positive relationship outcomes twenty years later. This year's forum was held at the Eisemann Center which provided an excellent venue for another successful CCF event. Children's Medical Center was a major sponsor of this year's forum.

Study Receives Additional Funding to Follow Children through Entry to School



The Dallas Preschool Readiness Project (DPRReP), co-directed by center director Margaret T. Owen, and center affiliate, Margaret O.

Caughy, was launched in 2009 with funding from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to study the emergence of self-regulation and school readiness in a sample of 407 low income African American and Latino preschoolers in Dallas. From child assessments collected in home visits at ages 2½ and 3½ years, findings indicate that the children in this sample are already at significant risk for early academic failure at these early ages, with delays of 8-10 months in measures of self control. Their school readiness skills of pre-academic and receptive language skills fall a full standard deviation or more behind their peers. Other study findings indicate that supportive, non-intrusive parenting is associated with better self-regulation skill development and school readiness, especially among the children living in households characterized by higher risk conditions. DPRReP recently received additional federal funding to follow the children through their kindergarten and first grade years, measuring their self-regulation skills, academic achievement, psychosocial adjustment, and contexts of the children's development in their homes and their schools.



Rachel Berglund, M.A. joined the CCF this December as the full-time Administrative Project Coordinator. She recently moved to Texas from Washington D.C., where she worked as the Coordinator for Curricular Affairs in the School of Medicine at Georgetown University. She holds a Master's degree in Communications from Georgetown University. Rachel spent two years in rural Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher and has been a camp counselor and coordinator for various non-profit groups.





From the Director

This has been a year of growth and expansion of the Center's outreach efforts with children and families. With the

support of grants received from the Young Foundation, the Harold B. Simmons Foundation, and Children's Medical Center, we will be launching two new Juega Conmigo parent-child programs of playful learning in Pleasant Grove and Vickery Meadow, adding to our popular model program in the Bachman Lake area. I'm extremely grateful for the support we've received and our wonderful collaborative partners, enabling us to serve a growing number of children and families. Our collaborations with Children's Medical Center pediatric residents and with MyChildren's Primary Care Practice are also growing.

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

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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 toward implementing the Center's vision, 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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