

## Newsletter, July 2020

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### Virtual Parenting Conversations

Parents joined us online once a week every Thursday at 10 and 11 am to talk about different topics. The most popular topic was stress both in children and adults and ways to alleviate the stress everyone was experiencing during this difficult time. Some specific ideas shared:

- Notice what is going *well* for you and your child. Remind yourself of what you do well.
- Find one thing that you enjoy doing by yourself and one you enjoy doing with your child and do both! With your child, play time is always a winner, and it can easily replace stress with laughter, fun, and connection.
- Value relationships. Do practice social distancing, as needed to avoid infection from the coronavirus, but stay emotionally engaged. Children learn valuable life skills through emotional connections. Adults gain the support they need.
- Practice gratitude. It is a natural way to improve the health of your body and mind, and helps you create a positive environment for your children and everyone around you.

### The Play with Me Facebook Group

- In our private group, every week we share fun activities and ideas for parents who are graduates of our *Play with Me* program that they can try at home. Our favorite activity is Thankful Thursday! Parents write about something they are grateful for that they share with the group.
- We also enjoyed putting together a Facebook Live Event. We sang, we cooked, we read, we danced and we had a blast! Special thanks to our wonderful UTD students Helena Vaquera, Alicia Pan, Srishti Arora, and Ina Kavrakova for all the energy and time invested in this event.



## Introduction of Tele-Screenings during the COVID-19 Pandemic



With in-person contacts on hold due to the pandemic, the Crece Conmigo (Grow with Me) Program unfortunately had to postpone its spring Screening Fair that would have been held at Casa del Lago in Dallas, Texas. Instead, developmental screenings have been held in individual online meetings between the children with their parents and Maria Maese, M.S., director of our program. We've been very pleased with how well these have gone, and we expect to continue using the tele-screening method into the fall.

During the virtual screenings, families connected via two-way video call with the Developmental Specialist from the comfort of their homes. The families worked directly with their child to complete the screening tasks as directed by the Specialist.

Families were responsible for gathering their own materials to utilize during the screening activities. This worked well.

Following the screening, the child's screening report was provided electronically, and additional resources and activities were suggested to help promote their child's developmental progress.

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## Comets Giving Day

This year's Comets Giving Day will be unlike any giving day before. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our lives in many ways, the Comet spirit remains resilient. It is that very unique Comet strength paired with our University's 50th anniversary that we look forward to celebrating this year.

In honor of our University's founding year, we have 1,969 minutes to make an impact. Comets Giving Day begins Aug. 5 at 10 a.m. and ends on Aug. 6 at 6:49 p.m.

Be one of the first to support Center for *Children and Families* this Comets Giving Day! Make your gift today: [giving.utdallas.edu/cometsgivingday](https://giving.utdallas.edu/cometsgivingday) #COMETogetherUTD

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## Children Helping Science

CCF faculty member, Dr. Candice Mills, has helped launch the **Children Helping Science** project, to increase awareness and participation in a wide array of online developmental psychology studies. Visit the site to find exciting opportunities for your children to help science grow - and have fun along the way!



## From the Director

Friends, this has been the most difficult of summers. The continuing pandemic has become longer and more disruptive and traumatic than we could have imagined this past spring. Far too many across the world and in our own community have had firsthand experience with this threatening disease. Lives have been upended by necessary school and child care closures, loss of jobs and income, and enormous accompanying stresses and strains on families. Please strive to stay safe, and let's support one another in whatever ways we can.

- Margaret T. Owen, PhD, Robinson Family Professor, Director, Center for Children and Families, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences

STAY CONNECTED:



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