CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2014: YEAR IN REVIEW

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ADMINISTRATION

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Steering Committee
- Karen Bogenschneider, Rothermel Bascom Professor of Human Ecology, Human Development and Family Studies, UW-Madison, UW-Extension
- Connie Flanagan, Professor, Civil Society and Community Studies, UW-Madison
- Roseanne Clark, Professor, Psychiatry Department, UW-Madison
- Hilary Runion, graduate student, Human Development and Family Studies, UW-Madison
- Amy Taub, graduate student, Human Development and Family Studies, UW-Madison
- Jill Riley, Director, SoHE Preschool Laboratory, UW-Madison
- Lynn Edlefson, Director, Office of Child Care and Family Resources, UW-Madison
- Mary Erdman, Director, Dane County Parent Council

Project Assistant
- Lindsay Weymouth, graduate student, Human Development and Family Studies

VISION AND MISSION

The Center for Child and Family Well-Being (CCFW) promotes the development and well-being of individuals and families across the lifespan by advancing multidisciplinary family research and evidence-based programming and policymaking.

The Center serves as a forum for research and outreach that unites scholars, students, practitioners, funders and policymakers to combine their collective expertise in the creation of innovative approaches that address issues related to child, adult, family, and consumer well-being.

Families and the people who serve them often have difficulty accessing research information and using it to improve practices, policies, and the lives of families. At the same time, the quality and relevance of research is significantly enhanced when it is informed by families and those who work with them.
2014 CENTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Maintained a balance between supporting ongoing research, new grant applications, and hosting university and community education and outreach events
- Nearly 500 people attended our education and outreach events, with an additional 230 views of our seminar videos and more than 1000 hits on our webpages
- Increased the diversity of audiences and participants, especially for our fall 2014 events and in our affiliated projects
- Held spring and fall Steering Committee meetings, and elected 6 new Steering Committee members
- Recruited additional Center affiliates from the university and community
- Increased the number of research and outreach projects affiliated with the Center from 11 to 18. Grants, contracts, and gifts run through the Center totaled $1,341,563.
- Launched new website in May 2014
- Gave first annual awards for faculty, graduate students, and community members in August 2014
- Planned and hosted the first Youth On! Film Festival in November 2014
- Planned and held 2nd annual RePLAY, children’s fashion show and sustainable play event, in December 2014
- Began planning for 2nd biennial conference (to be held October 2015), including developing budget, working with the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds, inviting keynote speakers, working with CALS conference services on logistics
- Direction of the Frances and Elliott Lehman Family Research lab
  - Developed initial policies and procedures for lab use
  - Maintained parking space for lab research participants
  - More than 100 research appointments were held in the lab
  - Of the 18 projects affiliated with the Center, 5 research studies are currently using the lab:
    - The Compassionate Parenting Project [PI: Julie Poehlmann-Tynan]
    - Empty Nest Marriage Relationships [PI: Lauren Papp]
    - Young Adult Dating Couples [PI: Lauren Papp]
    - Learning from Touchscreens in Early Childhood [PI: Heather Kirkorian]
    - Design Studies-Consumer Science Focus Group [PI: Dee Warmath]
EDUCATIONAL AND OUTREACH EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Families and Well-being Seminar Series

The Center for Child and Family Well-Being (CCFW) continued its annual seminar series on “Families and Well-Being.” Based on a multidisciplinary perspective, the 2014 series explored the physical, psychological, social, and economic aspects of well-being in families. All of the seminars in 2014 took place in Plenary Hall in Nancy Nicholas Hall, and a total 256 people attended the talks. Videos of talks are edited and posted on the Center’s You Tube Channel, with a total of 230 views of the 2014 videos. The titles of the talks and speakers included:

Kristen Shook Slack, PhD., Professor, School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison
February 18, 2014

Promoting Health and Well-being through Shared Family Meals.
Barbara Fiese, PhD. Professor, Human Development and Family Studies; Pampered Chef, Ltd. Endowed Chair in Family Resiliency; Director, Family Resiliency Center, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
March 7, 2014

Creating Positive Futures: The Secrets of Human Resilience.
Arnold Sameroff, PhD. Professor Emeritus, Psychology, Center for Human Growth and Development, University of Michigan
April 21, 2014

Mindful Parenting: A Framework to Promote Family Well-Being in Diverse Contexts.
Larissa Duncan, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Family and Community Medicine, University of California, San Francisco
September 2, 2014

Moving from a Successful Demonstration Project to Sustainability and Statewide Adoption: The Parenting the First Year Project.
David Riley, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Human Development & Family Studies, UW-Extension, University of Wisconsin-Madison
September 23, 2014
Tribal Youth Media Initiative: Stand Back and Be Amazed!
**Patty Loew**, Ph.D., Professor, Life Sciences Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison
October 13, 2014

From Saying No to Female Genital Mutilation to Empowering Girls through Education in Kenya. The Life Long Journey of Aniceta Kiriga.
**Aniceta Kiriga**, Director of Tharaka Women’s Welfare Project, Kenya
October 20, 2014

Exploring the Role of Debt and Money Management in Young Adult Relationships
**Fenaba Addo**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Consumer Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison
November 18, 2014

**Youth On! Film Festival and Filmmaking Workshops**

In 2014, the Center for Child and Family Well Being and the non-profit youth media organization, **Youth On! Assignment** teamed together to bring to Madison the first ever youth-only film festival. The first annual Youth On! Film Festival, held from November 7-9 at Nancy Nicholas Hall, was an exciting and important opportunity to feature youth-produced narrative and documentary films. Filmmaking in the digital arts is a growing and significant component of today’s positive youth development. Research continues to demonstrate that when teen age youth are trained in filmmaking and given an opportunity to present their works to an audience, important things happen like increased self-esteem, identity exploration and reinforcement, creative expression, and empowerment.

The only submissions accepted to the festival were those produced by youth age 19 and under. Nearly 40 films were submitted and just over 30 were accepted from around the world, including tribal youth films, films from the United Kingdom, and films from nearly every major youth media organization in the United States (e.g., Youth FX in New York City, Wide Angle Youth Media in Baltimore,).
Every youth submission occurred through the Youth On! Film Festival website (http://www.youthonfilmfestival.org), which was designed and maintained by the Director of Youth On! Assignment. Published in August of 2014, the website was live only for a relatively brief period (3 months) before the submission deadline, which was October 31, 2014. During that period, 1,150 unique visitors accessed the film festival website. Of the pages on the website, the most often accessed page was the home page, followed by the ‘submissions’ page and the ‘About Us’ page. This is important because the ‘About Us’ page is where readers learned of the Center and the School of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The website remains active and the ‘2014 Winners’ page is a popular aspect of the live site.

The festival itself spanned three days in November. The film festival began Friday, November 7th with a special reception for supporters and youth filmmakers partaking in the festival. The reception launched with an impressive performance from teen music sensation Sam Wright, also known as Pretty Boy Hefner followed by a special screening of Hope From Youth Inside. The Hope From Youth Inside film series is from Dane County youth who are at the tail end of their incarceration and at the time were residents in area group homes.

Saturday and Sunday (Nov 8 and 9) were days devoted to film screenings. All screenings were held in room 2235 of Nancy Nicholas Hall on the two large movie screens. Including Friday’s reception, over 80 people attended the festival with many more accessing the films online. In attendance of the festival were several SOHE faculty, the Provost, SoHE Dean, and Deputy Secretary Jim Moeser of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. Staff from the Orion Family Services group homes and families of the formerly incarcerated youth filmmakers were also VIPs in attendance.

The website continues to act as an online accolade and venue for the Youth On! Film Festival. The winning films are on display on the site and continue to promote the impressive work submitted to the festival. Perhaps the most important and greatest honor of the festival is the sheer quality of films screened. Films like “I’m Just Like You” by Ashton Tu, which won for Best Documentary, is under 4 minutes long but is life-moving and one of the most impressive films one can see about disability. Likewise, the Runner Up for Best Critical Film is a stop-motion animation film by Drew Goldsmith who himself is an amazing filmmaker with autism.

The weekend prior to the Film Festival, three intense filmmaking workshops were offered to youth by Tim Poehlmann-Tynan, the director of Youth On! Assignment. The workshops were free and also graduated, so a participant could register for all three knowing that a more advanced workshop built on the previous one. The workshops were held in the computer lab of Nancy Nicholas Hall. Ten children participated in the workshops, including several young people from area group homes.

**Attendance:** 85

**Website:** www.youthonfilmfestival.org
RePLAY: Sustainable Kids’ Fashion Show and Educational Play Event

Everyone is welcome at RePLAY: Sustainable Kids’ Fashion Show and Educational Play Event! This is an annual family-friendly event with developmentally appropriate games for children and their families. This year, we partnered with local organizations to broaden the diversity of participation. A preview of the event was held at the Madison Children’s Museum on December 3rd at their free family night, which attracts many community families, including those struggling economically. Twenty children from local preschools modeled clothing at the Children’s Museum, with about 50 people attending. The main event was held on Saturday December 6th at Nancy Nicholas Hall, with 35 children modeling clothing and about 130 people attending. It was an incredibly diverse group of children and families, and a significant number of fathers accompanied their children down the runway. We had 65 students volunteer to help with RePLAY. They were from multiple departments including Human Development and Family Studies, Civil Society and Community Studies, Interior Design, and Landscape Architecture as well as student organizations.

The main event began with preschool children modeling garments from local resale and consignment shops. These garments have the least environmental impact and are accessible for families on a budget. Children from area preschools, including the SoHE Preschool Lab, Eagle's Wing, Goodman Community Center, Waisman Early Childhood Program, and other community centers modeled the clothing. After the show, activity booths featured fun games and crafts for the entire family. RePLAY showcased fun ways for families with young children to live sustainably on a budget while reducing their environmental footprint, including:

- **Nature play** activities designed by UW-Madison professor Sam Dennis and students

- **Food play** activities designed by UW-Madison professor Jen Gaddis, such as seasoning and tasting heirloom applesauce from locally-grown organic apples

- A booth hosted by the Madison Children’s Museum featuring creation of fun accessories from recycled materials

- Activities about wildlife and conservation hosted by the Aldo Leopold Nature Center
· A food booth hosted by **REAP Food Group**

· **Arts and crafts** with recycled materials designed by UW-Madison students and Faculty Associate Kristy Burkholder

· A **dress-up booth** with a real photographer

· **Healthy child-friendly snacks**, and more!

**Attendance:** 130

**Website:** [http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/familycenter/4323.htm](http://www.sohe.wisc.edu/familycenter/4323.htm)

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**READ Together! Reading, Educating, and Developing Together**

Reading, Educating, and Developing Together is a monthly reading program that pairs special guests from the CCFW with the SoHE Preschool Lab. It is coordinated by Bobette Heller of UW Foundation and Jill Riley, Director of the Preschool Lab and CCFW Steering Committee Member. Readers visit the preschool the first Wednesday of each month from 10:30-11:00am. Guests read to a circle of children on each level. Many of the books selected emphasize positive interpersonal relationships and kindness and compassion to others, the earth, and all living things, consistent with our Mind-Body, Families and Well-being initiative (see below).

**2014 guests included:**
- Diane Ballweg (February 5)
- Ellen Hall (April 2)
- Mark Tauscher (May 16)
- Marilyn Olson (June 18)
- Linda and Scott Dicks (August 6)
- Jane Toon (August 13)
- Bonnie Bogen (November 14)
- Provost Sarah Mangelsdorf and Professor Karl Rosengren (December 12)

**Guests from the previous year included:**
- UW-Madison Alumni such as Mary Sue Shannon
- American Girl Vice President Jean McKenzie
- Michael Johnson, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County
- Scott Hartman, Illustrator of the ABC Dinosaur book and current UW graduate student
- Chancellor Rebecca Blank
- Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration Darrell Bazzell
- Dean Soyeon Shim
- Graduate students and professors
Mind-Body and Family Well-Being Initiative

The Mind-Body and Family Well-Being initiative began in 2012 as a joint effort among the Human Development and Family Studies department, the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds at the Waisman Center, the School of Medicine and Public Health, and the Center for Child and Family Well-Being. It involves several foci designed to make UW-Madison, including the School of Human Ecology, a hub of activity to investigate and apply secular contemplative practices as a means to promote child and family well-being and optimal physical and mental health. We seek to advance the science and practice of contemplative practices to address children’s and family members’ attention and emotion regulation, feelings of stress, empathy, compassion, and positive interactions with others (especially between parents and children).

The initiative includes several components, including:

- The first biennial **Contemplative Practices to Promote Child and Family Well-Being Conference** was held in October 2013 and the second one will be held in October 2015. The conference brings together scholars and practitioners whose work is designed to enhance the well-being of children and families through secular contemplative practices such as mindfulness and meditation. Cutting edge research findings and their applications are presented, with many opportunities for discussion, sharing, and networking across the 2 days. The conference will again occur on the beautiful University of Wisconsin-Madison campus in the School of Human Ecology’s Nancy Nicholas Hall.

In 2015, keynote speakers include Professor Richard Davidson from the University of Wisconsin, Larissa Duncan from the University of California, San Francisco, and Charles Raison from the University of Arizona.

- Conducting randomized controlled trials of secular contemplative practices for children and families
  - Using the Kindness Curriculum with Economically Disadvantaged Preschoolers (funded by a gift from Dorothy O’Brien and a fellowship from the Mind and Life Institute to Dr. Julie Poehlmann-Tynan)
  - Compassionate Parenting Project (funded by gifts from Mary Sue Shannon and the Mai Family Foundation and a grant from the Mayer Family Foundation) PI: Julie Poehlmann-Tynan; collaborator: Chuck Raison

- Fund-raising for endowed chair positions in Healthy Minds, Children, and Families
  - In June 2013, UW-Madison alumni Mary Sue and Mike Shannon provided a gift to fund an endowed faculty chair focusing on mind, body and family well-being through collaborations among the School of Human Ecology, the School of Medicine and Public Health, the Waisman Center, and the Global Health Institute. The Mary Sue and Mike Shannon Chair for Healthy Minds, Children and Families serves as an interdisciplinary champion of a broad range of healthy mind, body and behavior programs.
RESOURCES

The Frances and Elliot Lehman Research Center
The Research Center promotes research combining behavioral observations with indices of individual and family well-being and development across the lifespan, including physical well-being and health, cognitive development, emotional development, relational well-being and family processes, economic well-being, and cultural contexts. The facility includes two rooms each with wall-mounted remote-control digital video capability: a furnished dining/family room and a child playroom. Each room also has an observation/control room. An underground parking spot in Nancy Nicholas Hall is available for research participants at minimal cost to investigators.

The Preschool Laboratory (PSL)
PSL is a child development and early learning program for community children and a teaching and research laboratory for University students, faculty and staff. The Preschool offers year round programs for children ages 6 weeks - 5 years. Part of our mission to provide a population and a setting for UW faculty and students to conduct research on issues related to child development, early learning, and family studies. Projects can be observational or participatory.

Family Living Programs – UW Extension
Family Living’s unique and effective programs are developed using university research. Extension educators based in every county and on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus have a direct link to university resources, allowing them to draw from and contribute to current research about families. By responding to the challenges facing today’s families with evidence-informed programs and practices, as well as local knowledge gained from living in the communities they serve, Extension educators are helping to create an environment where families have the information, skills and assets they need to improve their quality of life and contribute to their communities. All families need support and resources to develop skills at critical points in their lives. Family Living works to meet these needs by helping communities explore effective responses to issues affecting families such as poverty, childhood obesity, prevent of child abuse, financial security and aging, serving as catalysts for positive change by providing leadership to ensure that community systems, services and facilities support the healthy functioning of families, increasing knowledge about health, access to safe, nutritious food and parenting practices and reaching out to diverse families to provide research-based education and resources to help improve quality of life.
AFFILIATED RESEARCH AND OUTREACH PROJECTS

The Center for Child and Family Well-Being and the Human Development and Family Studies administratively hosted federally funded or private foundation-funded research and outreach projects representing $270,210 in grant-related expenditures in 2014, and gift-supported projects representing more than $800,000 in outreach and research related expenditures. (Total award amounts were $326,062 for Grants and Contracts and $1,015,501 for Gift-Funded projects.)

The 2014 research expenditures related to 8 HDFS Faculty/Principal Investigators' projects, covering a broad range of topics, including: informing policy on family and children's issues; examining toddler use of touchscreens; exploring strategies for the children of incarcerated parents; investigating domestic violence issues; developing and examining the impact of mindfulness and compassionate parenting strategies; and research on relationships at various stages in the life cycle. Aligned with SoHE's Vision Pillars, these projects were characterized by a strong emphasis on outreach and dissemination, and solving "real world problems". The following is a list of the projects, the PIs, and funding sources.

Empty Nest Marriage Relationships

Principal Investigator: Lauren M. Papp, PhD Human Development and Family Studies

Funded by a Vilas Associates Award

The UW Couples Lab in the School of Human Ecology is currently recruiting midlife couples whose adult children have recently left the home (“empty nesters”) to participate in a relationship study. We are interested in learning about the romantic relationships of empty nesters. If you take part in this study, you and your partner would attend two lab sessions together approximately two weeks apart on the UW-Madison campus. Between these visits, both of you will be asked to fill out brief daily diaries for 14 days. To be able to take part in this study, both partners must be between 43 and 57 years old and have entered the empty nest period within the last two years; additional eligibility criteria may apply. Sessions are conveniently offered during daytime/evening hours, including on weekends. Compensation is provided for participation.

Young Adult Dating Couples

Principal Investigator: Lauren M. Papp, PhD Human Development and Family Studies

Funded by a WARF competition grant

The UW Couples Lab in the School of Human Ecology is looking for young adults to participate in a dating study. We are interested in learning more about the connections between close relationships and daily feelings and behaviors. This study is particularly interested in how young adults use prescription medication. If you take part in this study, you and your partner would attend two lab sessions two weeks apart on the UW-Madison campus. Between these visits, both of you will be asked to fill out brief daily diaries for 10 days. To be able to take part in this study, both partners must be at least 18 years old and dating exclusively for at least one month; additional eligibility criteria may apply. Sessions are conveniently offered during daytime/evening hours, including on weekends. Compensation is provided for participation.
Family Outcomes and Autism Spectrum Disorders

Principal Investigator: Sigan Hartley, Ph.D., Human Development and Family Studies

Funded by NIH

It is now estimated that 1 in 88 children in the United States are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children with ASDs present with a challenging and lifelong profile of autism symptoms (deficits in communication, social relatedness, and restricted/repetitive interests and behaviors) and co-occurring behavior problems such as inattention, depressed and anxious affect, and aggression. Little research has examined family-level outcomes within families of children with ASDs. Mothers and fathers of children with ASDs encounter unique parenting experiences, yet virtually nothing is known about the impact of these unique parenting experiences on their marital relationship. In turn, divorce and marital discord may have considerable consequences for the functioning of children with ASDs. The overarching goal of this study is to examine how children with ASDs affect and are affected by parents’ marital relationship and why some couples are able to successfully adapt to the unique challenges of having a son or daughter with an ASD, and may even grow closer, whereas other couples are not. Specifically, we are investigating the within-family associations between the child functioning, parental experiences, and marital adjustment as these processes unfold in naturalistic contexts and across 5 years. Findings from the study can be used to identify potential avenues for improving the well-being of both parents and children with ASDs. In total, 175 couples of children with an ASD (aged 5 to 12) will participate in the study at multiple time points across 5 years. We are also recruiting a control group of 150 couples of children without a disability. This study is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Please visit the Hartley Lab (http://hartleylab.wordpress.com/) for more information.

Learning from Touchscreens in Early Childhood

Principal Investigator: Heather Kirkorian, Ph.D., Human Development and Family Studies

Funded by NSF

Young children are spending an increasing amount of time with interactive screen media (e.g., computers, iPad-style tablet devices) and the mobile application market is becoming saturated with allegedly educational products targeting toddlers and preschoolers. Yet researchers know almost nothing about the impact of these newer technologies on children. Research suggests that television and videos are not educationally valuable for children younger than three years of age. However, some studies suggest that toddlers learn from screens when they are interactive. For instance, toddlers are more likely to learn from video when interacting with another person via video chat. What remains unclear is whether video needs to be socially interactive (i.e., adaptive, reciprocal) in order for very young children to learn. Do interactive screens in and of themselves promote learning by very young children? If so, how is it effective? Interactive media may have far greater potential than traditional screen media to offer any benefit to children younger than three years of age.

In our current studies, we explore whether and how young children learn from interactive and non-interactive video using a touchscreen tablet. These studies are unique in their multi-method approach to observe learning by very young children and in their focus on not just whether but also how contingency facilitates learning. This project will generate applicable knowledge that will educate parents, teachers, policymakers, and other
child development experts about the efficacy of educational, interactive media products for very young children. This knowledge will also inform the production of these products to maximize learning.

**Focus on Fathers (FOF) Initiative**

Principal Investigators: [Sarah Halpern-Meekin, Ph.D.](#) Human Development and Family Studies and Noelle Chesley, Ph.D. (UW-Milwaukee, Sociology)

Funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program

With a grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program, the Racine YMCA is running the Focus on Fathers (FOF) initiative. Noelle Chesley and Sarah Halpern-Meekin will be evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of this initiative. FOF consists of three programmatic components through which participants proceed sequentially: (1) the Nurturing Fathers program, which teaches parenting skills and addresses obstacles to successful parenting; (2) the Within Our Reach program, which works with both members of a couple to build their relationship skills, allowing for better conflict management and communication; and (3) the Parents-as-Teachers program, which is a home visiting program that helps parents to engage with their children in positive ways to facilitate the achievement of developmental milestones.

**The Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars**

Principal Investigator: [Karen Bogenschneider, Ph.D.](#) Human Development and Family Studies

Funded by the William T. Grant Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation and various gifts

The Family Impact Seminars are a proven, replicable, and rapidly expandable model for building better public policies for families. The Seminars are a series of presentations, discussion sessions, and briefing reports that provide high-quality, objective information to policymakers including legislators, legislative aides, Governor’s Office staff, state agency officials, nonpartisan legislative service agency analysts, etc. The Seminars are unique in addressing topics identified by legislators; providing objective, nonpartisan information; encouraging policymakers to examine policies through the family impact lens; and offering a neutral, off-the-record setting for dialogue across the partisan divide. Since 1993, Professor and Extension Specialist Karen Bogenschneider has directed the Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars that has convened 30 Seminars on topics such as early childhood care and education, economic development, education and school finance, evidence-based budgeting, family violence, health care, jobs, juvenile crime, teenage pregnancy, welfare reform, and workforce development. (for more information, see: [www.familyimpactseminars.org](http://www.familyimpactseminars.org).) The Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars have a new home. The seminars are now being sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Chancellor’s Office and the School of Human Ecology. The seminars are directed by Karen Bogenschneider, Rothermel Bascom Professor of Human Ecology, UW-Madison and coordinated by Jennifer Seubert, designer and editor, UW-Madison. Past support has been received from the College of Letters and Science, the Division of Continuing Studies, and the School of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Cooperative Extension at the University of Wisconsin-Extension, the A.L. Mailman Foundation, the Brittingham Foundation, the Harry and Lynde Bradley Foundation, the Helen Bader Foundation, the Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment, the Joyce Foundation, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Governors Association, the Population Health Institute at the University of Wisconsin, the Sonderegger Research Center, the W. K.
This program is rooted in the belief that good government ought to be based on hard evidence drawn from rigorous research and analysis. Recently policymakers have begun to ask more frequently for evidence-based information to guide their decisions. Yet policymakers do not have the staff or time to gather all the relevant data on the many complex issues that confront them. The information that policymakers receive is often fragmented, biased, and less focused on family issues. In response, the Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars provide high-quality, objective information to policymakers and examine policies through a family impact lens.

Family Impact Seminars are a series of presentations, briefing reports, and discussion sessions for state policymakers including legislators, legislative aides, Governor’s office staff, legislative service agency analysts, and state agency officials. Seminars targeted to local policymakers are also being conducted by county Family Living Educators on topics such as aging, health care, housing, and mental health policy.

Understanding the Role of Schools, State Policies, and Economic Conditions in Explaining Recent Trends in Education Mobility

Principal Investigator: Jason Fletcher, Ph.D. Public Affairs

Rising levels of economic inequality over the past four decades raise many questions about the intergenerational transmission of advantage and the effects of rising inequality on social mobility. Scholars have analyzed IRS data on earnings correlations across generations and concluded that there has been little change in income mobility in the recent past, although they document substantial geographic variation in mobility. Most research on social mobility has focused on economic indicators and much remains to be resolved about the mechanisms that underlie the intergenerational transmission of advantage. Because increased education remains important as a perceived path to social and economic mobility, and because educational mobility seems relevant as a mechanism for understanding trends in economic mobility, an increased understanding of educational mobility is important. Given the relative lack of evidence about educational mobility, and the role of different and multiple factors in facilitating or impeding it, a comprehensive examination is much needed.

Professor Jason Fletcher proposes to analyze three school-based longitudinal data sets from the past three decades to provide an assessment of educational mobility by focusing on three issues. First, he will estimate trends in the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status in education across three decades at the national, state, and sub-state levels. Next, he will leverage the unique school-based sampling strategy of each data set to examine the impacts of shared school environments on intergenerational transmission and examine how these effects vary over time and across states. And finally, he will examine differences in the intergenerational transmission estimates based on state policy variation (e.g. graduation requirements, funding), school characteristics, and state economic conditions and policies (e.g. taxes, tax bases).

Compassionate Parenting to Enhance Child and Family Well-Being

Principal Investigator: Julie Poehlmann, Ph.D. Human Development and Family Studies; collaborator, Chuck Raison, Ph.D., University of Arizona

Funded by gifts from Mary Sue Shannon and the Mai Family Foundation and a grant from the Mayer Family Foundation.
Sensitive parenting promotes positive child development such as children’s empathy, compassion, and emerging self-regulation skills. Compassionate parenting involves a form of mindfulness training that promotes sensitive parenting by paying attention intentionally and non-judgmentally and reducing automatic reactions in addition to cultivating a sense of kindness and empathy for ourselves as parents and for our child(ren).

By participating in this research, you can help us understand if learning cognitive based compassion skills will improve parent-child relationships and decrease parent anxiety and stress. The research is a pilot randomized controlled trial that adapts Cognitively-Based Compassion Training for parents of young children.

**Young Children with Incarcerated Parents**

Principal Investigator: Julie Poehlmann-Tynan, Ph.D. Human Development and Family Studies

Funded by NICHD

Having an incarcerated parent has become one of the most common and significant public health concerns for U.S. children, more common than autism, maltreatment, or juvenile diabetes. Estimates indicate that nearly 1.8 million U.S. children had a parent in prison in 2007 and millions of additional children have a parent in jail although actual numbers are unknown because corrections, schools, and child welfare systems do not systematically collect this information. Children of incarcerated parents are at risk for developing negative outcomes, including substance abuse, externalizing problems, academic difficulties and school failure, truancy, criminal activity, persistent internalizing problems, and incarceration. We know little about children of jailed parents, however; indeed, no prior studies have documented the current developmental functioning of young children of jailed parents.

The current study has 4 aims: 1) To determine the feasibility of collecting short-term longitudinal data from jailed parents, their young children, and children’s caregivers (including behavioral reports from teachers/daycare providers), 2) To document children’s attachment to caregivers, behavior problems, vocabulary, cognitive skills, and experience of general risks when a parent is in jail, 3) To examine family processes as potential protective factors for young children with jailed parents, and 4) To examine potential differences in children’s development associated with jailed parent characteristics.

These aims will generate information that will lay the groundwork for 3 long-term goals: 1.) developing recommendations for children’s visits with jailed parents, 2.) developing interventions that help prepare children for such visits, and 3.) implementing developmental screening protocols with young children in jail settings.

**The Sesame Street Initiative: Little Children, BIG Challenges: Incarceration**

Principal Investigator: Julie Poehlmann-Tynan, Ph.D. Human Development and Family Studies

Funded by ICTR (Institute for Clinical and Translational Research)
Few resources exist to support young children and families coping with the life-changing circumstance of having a parent incarcerated. Children need tools to express their emotions, while their caregivers need help maintaining routines and establishing age-appropriate communication around incarceration. Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration is designed to support, comfort, and reduce anxiety, sadness, and confusion that young children (ages 3-8) may experience during the incarceration of a parent, provide at-home caregivers with strategies, tips, and age-appropriate language they can use to help communicate with their children about incarceration, and inform incarcerated parents that they can parent from anywhere, and provide them with simple parenting tips highlighting the importance of communication. The randomized controlled study that is being conducted in Wisconsin and Minnesota involves assessing children during visits at 4 county jails. We are targeting 100 children as participants. Thus far, 200 incarcerated parents have participated.

**Epidemiology of Sleep-Disordered Breathing in Adults**

Principal Investigator: Whitney Witt, Ph.D., M.P.H.

The research is designed to address the gap in understanding the burden of untreated SDB. With 5-year continuation of the Wisconsin Sleep Cohort Study, a longitudinal study of SDB and other sleep disorders, we will continue to follow a community sample (n=1522) of men and women, 30-60 years of age at baseline, who will have aged to 56-86 years over the continuation. With data spanning up to 26 years, with individual trajectories of data on SDB and other factors from middle to older age, we will optimally estimate the role of untreated SDB in preclinical and clinically evident cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease (CVD/stroke), cognitive impairment, and chronic daytime dysfunction. We will also investigate the impact of age-related risk factors on sleep disorders. To achieve these goals, we will conduct follow-up protocols with overnight polysomnography, echocardiography and vascular imaging, 12-lead ECGs, neuropsychologic test batteries, balance testing, and other tests to extend our rich data on SDB status, risk factors, and outcomes.

**Impact of Preconception and Contextual Factors on Birth and Child Health Outcomes**

Principal Investigator: Whitney Witt, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Pregnancy complications and poor birth outcomes can affect the survival and long-term health of children. The preconception period may represent an opportunity to intervene and improve outcomes; however little is known about women’s life events and health prior to pregnancy as predictors of such outcomes. Moreover, it is unknown if neighborhood-level factors impact these preconception effects on obstetric and child health outcomes. This proposed study aims to determine if and to what extent women’s stressful life events, preconception health behaviors, and neighborhood health and disadvantage influence pregnancy, birth, and child health outcomes using a nationally representative, population-based sample.

**Wisconsin CARES Creating A Responsive and Effective System for Promoting and Protecting our Children’s Well-being**

Principal Investigator: Stephen Small, Ph.D., Human Development and Family Studies

The Wisconsin CARES initiative was spearheaded by Human Development and Family Studies professor, Stephen Small and UW-Human Ecology Extension Specialist Rebecca Mather, in partnership with UW
Extension county Family Living Educators Patti Herman, Pam Peterson, Joan Sprain and Lori Zierl. Wisconsin CARES represents a collaborative effort between the University of Wisconsin-Madison, UWCooperative Extension, county child and family serving agencies and community leaders all united to enhance a county’s capacity to protect and promote child wellbeing. Counties involved in this effort are examining the status and quality of their spectrum of services, resources and approaches that support child wellbeing and keep children safe. In these financially challenging times, Wisconsin CARES also seeks to provide counties with evidence-based criteria by which to make choices for spending their resources most effectively.

The Wisconsin CARES project is currently in its first year of implementation in Columbia, Door, Pierce and St. Croix counties. Each county has been supported and encouraged as they develop a unique approach to their Wisconsin CARES effort that matches their own character and needs. In April and May of 2012 all four counties engaged in a County CARES Summit. The goals of the summits included the building of shared understanding of the state of child wellbeing within the county and identifying areas where improvements could be made. Partners have begun to identify larger goals for their county, examine current successful approaches and existing services, and identify gaps and ineffective services. As a result of the initial summits, county WI CARES councils were formed. These councils are currently finalizing their goals and mission and deciding on future action steps.

Parenthetical Online Parenting Education and Support Program

Principal Investigator: Stephen Small, Ph.D. Human Development and Family Studies

Human Development and Family Studies professor Stephen Small, Outreach Specialist Rebecca Mather, and Human Development and Family Studies doctoral student Anne Samuelson are in the process of developing a unique online platform and program for parent education and support. Whereas many websites already provide high quality information regarding parenting and child development, they do not take full advantage of current web usage trends and capabilities. Small’s team has created the parent education and support platform, called Parenthetical, to offer ongoing, interactive, online programs for parents that merge high quality research-based education, co-learning among parents, and the emotional support and networking of a trusted community.

Parenthetical is aimed at providing a supportive online setting where parents can develop trusting relationships with one another and site facilitators, have opportunities to discuss and share their experiences as parents, access well-researched information, and participate in intentionally designed education about effective parenting. While the first programmatic use of the platform is aimed at mothers of early adolescents, future versions of Parenthetical will be designed for other types of parent audiences, such as parents of newborns, families experiencing divorce or parents of special needs children. A statewide pilot and evaluation of Parenthetical is currently underway. For more information online parenting, please visit http://myparenthetical.com/.

Family Transitions, Marital Functioning and Health: Longitudinal and Dyadic Links

Principal Investigator: Lauren M. Papp, PhD Funded by the National Institute on Aging

Experiencing family transitions involving grown children, including the empty nest, during marriage is highly normative in middle adulthood in the United States, yet scant longitudinal marital research has been conducted during this period. Establishing how spouses and marriages fare during family transitions is important because marital functioning predicts an extensive set of older adults’ outcomes in the later years of life, including physical, psychological, and financial health, and mortality. As well, midlife health and well-being reliably predict the developmental transition to old age. In this project, I set forth two specific aims to address gaps in our understanding of the role of the empty nest in middle adulthood marital functioning and health. First, I
propose to examine empty nest status as a predictor of both marital functioning (quality and course) and health (mental and physical) for men and women over time, and to then test moderators of the longitudinal associations. Second, I propose to use dyadic data obtained from participants and their spouses to test within-couple associations between concurrent empty nest status and husbands’ and wives’ marital quality and health, respectively, and to again test moderators of these linkages. This proposal seeks to conduct these aims with value-added secondary analysis of the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS). The WLS is uniquely suited to accomplish the proposed aims for several reasons. First, detailed interviews that spanned middle adulthood tracked participants’ empty nest status, relationship functioning, and health over time. Here, sophisticated qualitative methods will appropriately handle longitudinal data. Additionally, the WLS incorporates marital functioning indicators of quality and course in a single study, offering the potential to reconcile disparate findings in the existing empty nest literature. Second, the WLS includes a spousal sub-sample, which will facilitate direct statistical tests comparing effects of the empty nest on marital quality and health for husbands versus wives. Again, appropriate dyadic quantitative modeling will be employed. Third, a broad array of theoretically-informed spouse and marriage characteristics will be tested as covariates and potential moderators, thereby elucidating protective and risk factors. Thus, the proposed research holds important implications for translational efforts designed to prevent and alleviate distress in partners and relationships. Identifying protective factors that encourage some spouses and marriages to thrive and endure in middle adulthood is critical to understanding the determinants of healthy aging and promoting public health.

**Improving Child Safety and Well-Being in Foster and Relative Placements**

Principal Investigator: [Kristen Johnson, Ph.D.](#) National Council on Crime and Delinquency

Johnson (PI) and other NCCD Children’s Research Center (CRC) researchers are exploring how best to improve the safety and well-being of children placed in relative and foster care placements in collaboration with Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) foster care program staff and Casey Family Programs. We started by examining cases of foster child maltreatment, to better understand the nature and context of foster child maltreatment. Toward this objective, we (1) examined recent literature and research to identify promising efforts to ensure the safety of children in foster care by preventing child maltreatment by relative and foster caregivers; and (2) analyzed existing data, administrative and paper file, from investigations of licensed foster care and relative care providers substantiated in fiscal year (FY) 2012 to determine the nature of foster parent child maltreatment in Michigan. One task was to observe the prevalence of risk factors that can be helpful in targeting prevention efforts toward high-risk placements.

**Estimating Youth Risk of Homelessness and Aging out of Care**

Principal Investigator: [Kristen Johnson, Ph.D.](#) National Council on Crime and Delinquency

A second effort engaged in by NCCD and Kristen (PI) is development of predictive models is to help the Department of Children and Families’ Office of Youth Services (OYS) staff target foster youth at greatest risk of aging out and homeless in order to most effectively target them with intensive resources and service planning. The US Health and Human Services’ Administration on Children, Youth and Families selected Wisconsin to receive the Youth Homelessness Prevention Planning Grant in October 2013. This two-year, $700,000 planning grant funds planning and capacity-building efforts to prevent and respond to youth homelessness among those in or aged out of foster care. A critical piece of this effort is the development of predictive models to estimate the likelihood of youth becoming homeless or aging out of foster care. The purpose of the predictive models is to help DCF staff target youth at greatest risk in order to most effectively target them with intensive resources and service planning.
CENTER (NON-PROJECT-FUNDED) FINANCES

Income and Donations:
Expendable Center Endowment income: $11,726
Donation from Drew Goldsmith (Youth On! Film Festival award winner): $50
Dorothy O’Brien Healthy Minds Initiative: $157
Nutrition Education Fund: $27,318

Expenses:
- **Families and Well-Being Seminar Series**
  - Kristen Shook Slack talk = $39.50 (food)
  - Barbara Fiese talk = $39.50 (food) + $140.00 [hotel 2 nights] + $160 [mileage]
  - Arnold Sameroff talk = $39.50 (food)
  - All other talks = $30 each (food)
  - **Total = $834.50**

- **Youth On! Film Festival**
  - Catering for opening reception: $703.60
  - Misc. supplies (including soda, chips, water, etc.): $97.35
  - Awards: $600 ($50 donated back to Center)
  - Hotel for Tribal Youth Media participants and families, 3 rooms for 1 night: $210
  - (our partner, Youth On Assignment, provided website design and hosting, mileage and meals for Tribal Youth Media participants, totaling approximately $1000)
  - **Total = $1460.95**

- **RePlay: Sustainable Kidswear Fashion Show**
  - Clothing: $110.78
  - Catering: $463.85 + $87.01
  - Craft and Food Play Materials: $61.38
  - Hooks to hold tent: $28.00
  - **Total = $751.02**

- **CCFW Parking Spot for Lehman Lab Participants = $1664**
- **2014 Center awards (faculty, community, graduate student) = $1500**

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