

UNIVERSITY-BASED CHILD AND FAMILY POLICY CONSORTIUM

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Please take our Member Survey!

The Consortium has developed this survey to better understand the needs of its members. This survey should take you approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for helping to shape the future of the Consortium's important work!

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Linking Research with Policy: Perspectives from Prevention Scientists

**Melissa N. Richards, Doctoral Student, Psychology,
Georgetown University**

*In this issue of Linking Research with Policy, I interviewed scholars who specialize in preventative programs that may be able to aid in children's well-being and social emotional development. I spoke with **Dr. Mark Greenberg** and **Dr. Patricia (Tish) Jennings** at the Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Greenberg conducts research on preventing externalizing behaviors and violence in youth. Dr. Jennings studies how to improve teacher and student well-being through improving the social and emotional factors contributing to the classroom environment.*

Drs. Jennings and Greenberg both have extensive experience in conducting applied research with important policy implications. Jennings' research focuses on how to improve teacher performance in the classroom, noting that students with better teachers have higher achievement. Greenberg's prevention research work provides policymakers with information about policies, practices, and programs that are effective at improving outcomes for children around the country.

While both researchers' work is highly policy-relevant, each identified challenges to bridging research to policy. Jennings mentioned that there are "so many vested interests and layers of bureaucracy" that research often fails to get translated into policy. Similarly, Greenberg believes that there is some inherent difficulty in applying research to policy, because policy is not influenced only by research, but is also "affected by business interests

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and political gain."

Greenberg mentioned that "policy decisions are often contrary to what the best science tells us."

According to Greenberg, it takes a long time to influence policy and it is a process with "many twists and turns" that requires working with legislative people for "quite a while in order to potentially have influence." Therefore, both scholars see policymaking as a process that is neither simple nor straightforward.



Dr. Mark Greenberg

Greenberg and Jennings reported other limitations to applying research to practice. Jennings mentioned that it is challenging to implement school-based research because teachers "tend to be skeptical of researchers," as many scientists have no direct teaching experience with the populations they study and do not fully understand the classroom environment. In Jennings' opinion, one of the best ways to implement research in schools is to try to understand and reach out to the group with whom one is working. Likewise, Greenberg mentioned that the limitations of applying lab research to applied settings stems from the fact that real-world policy implementation is different than how basic research is conducted in the lab. Greenberg believes that one of the best ways for scientists to add value is to make recommendations derived from the results of their basic research.

Even though there are challenges, both scholars have had an enriching experience working to put their research results into practice. Jennings mentioned that although she is pleased when she gets positive quantitative results, she also finds reward in hearing stories of success in qualitative data, such as teachers talking about their experiences in the classroom. Greenberg mentioned that he was especially proud when the state of Pennsylvania adopted a science-based approach to prevention to benefit youth development. These experiences demonstrate that researchers can find tremendous professional satisfaction and success in conducting applied, policy-relevant research.

Greenberg offered some advice to those interested in

collaborating in the policy world and in academia - "get to know what the interests of policymakers are, but keep your own thoughts out of the equation-do not be an advocate." He believes that scientists need to "help policymakers face the problems that are already there" instead of coming up with their own research questions and hoping that it somehow fits into policymakers' needs.

In terms of next steps, both offered suggestions of how to close the gap between policymakers and researchers. Jennings suggested that policymakers should



Dr. Patricia Jennings

have a broader understanding of what 'success' is. Some school-based research may not show academic achievement, but only behavioral effects, which are often not as valued by policymakers. In Jennings' view, however, behavioral effects are critical, too. Additionally, Jennings mentioned that sometimes findings take longer than the short timespan allocated to

experiments in order to show their effects. Therefore, longer-lasting, longitudinal research should be supported. Greenberg suggested that scientists and policy makers should interact as much as possible. He believes that if we can create more ongoing exchanges between research scientists and policymakers, policymakers are more likely to intervene in effective ways.

In sum, both Jennings and Greenberg have had a large impact on developmental research and have had success in influencing policy. Although both have encountered challenges along the way, they have been able to effectively overcome these barriers and offer suggestions for ways to improve these difficulties. Hopefully social scientists conducting work in the coming years will take these suggestions and incorporate them into their own work in the future.

**Society for Research in Child
Development Conference**

Anna Markowitz, MPP Candidate & Psychology PhD Student, Georgetown University

The Society for Research in Child Development held their biennial conference from April 17-20 in Seattle, WA. More than 300 Consortium members contributed to this well-attended conference that addresses a wide and diverse array of current directions in developmental research. Members discussed papers on more than 150 panels, and presented nearly 200 posters over the course of the three-day conference, on topics ranging from early care and education, to parenting, psychopathology, sleep, and more.



Additionally, the Consortium co-sponsored the Zigler Policy Pre-Conference: The First Thousand Days-Setting the Foundation. The pre-conference featured Deborah Phillips, a founder of the Consortium and current President of the Foundation for Child Development, Megan Gunnar of the University of Minnesota, Gary Evans of Cornell University, and Consortium director Jenni Owen, who offered reflections on the importance of communication among researchers, policy makers, and practitioners in guiding our national investment in child development. Special thanks to Anna Johnson for her work on behalf of the Consortium to prepare the pre-conference. See more about the pre-conference below.

In a separate meeting, Consortium members, including member directors and students, met to discuss member engagement and new initiatives for the upcoming year. This productive conversation has led to plans for enhanced outreach efforts towards member institutions, including a focus on students, as well as a possible reorganization of and additions to existing online Consortium resources. We are excited to share these plans as the year unfolds!

Edward Zigler Biennial Policy Pre-Conference

Sarah Mancoll, Senior Associate, Office of Policy and Communications, SRCD

The Edward Zigler SRCD Biennial Policy Pre-Conference

was held in Seattle on April 17, 2013 to honor the contributions of Edward Zigler, Sterling Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, and Founder of the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University. The sold-out pre-conference, with 100 attendees (50% of whom were students and early career attendees), was sponsored by the



University-Based Child and Family Policy Consortium, SRCD's Student and Early Career Council, and SRCD's Committee for Policy and Communications.

Featuring a theme of "The First Thousand Days--Setting the Foundation," the pre-conference included keynote presentations by Megan Gunnar of the University of Minnesota and Gary Evans of Cornell University.

These presentations were followed by remarks from distinguished discussants, including Deborah Phillips of the Foundation for Child Development and Georgetown University, and David Sanders of the Seattle-based Casey Family Programs.

Afterward, pre-conference attendees broke out into small discussion groups facilitated by keynote speakers, distinguished discussants, and members of



the three sponsoring organizations to discuss how the earlier presentations and remarks relate to their own research and research/policy perspectives. The pre-conference concluded with a reception.

Announcements

Thank you, Matt Stagner!

A huge thank you to Matthew Stagner for his service to the Consortium as a founding steering committee member and much more. Since the creation of the Consortium, Matt has been a leader for the Consortium and an active member as the director of Chapin Hall. We look forward to his continued collaboration and guidance from his new position as Senior Fellow and Director of Human Services Research at Mathematica Policy Research. Thanks Matt!

Recent Consortium Conference Calls

- **Dr. Adam Winsler**, editor of *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* and *Social Development* and **Dr. Peg Burchinal**, editor of *Child Development* and *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* shared inside tips and tricks for getting published in a social science journal
- **Dr. Vivian Tseng**, Vice-President, Program at the William T. Grant Foundation addressed the Use of Research in Policy and Practice
- **Dr. Richard Fiene**, Director of the Research Institute for Key Indicators presented The Differential Monitoring Model: Rethinking How to Best Monitor Quality in Early Care and Education
- **Dr. Amy Claessens** of the Harris School of Public Policy and **Dr. Liz Davis** of the University of Minnesota addressed Using Econometric Analysis to Examine Child Development Policy Questions

To view conference call presentations and recordings, please visit the [Consortium website](#).

William T. Grant Project Update

With funding from the William T. Grant Foundation, plans are underway to convene researchers, policymakers and practitioners in Illinois, Minnesota, and North Carolina to discuss ways in which state child welfare and education systems can benefit from better collaboration and increased data-sharing. This project is being led by Sara Langworthy at the University of Minnesota, Jenni Owen at Duke University, and Cheryl Smithgall at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Goodbye and thank you, Sara Benning!

We are sad to say goodbye to Sara Benning, who has provided leadership and support to much of the Consortium's work over the past few years. Sara is the new Assistant Director at University of Minnesota's Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education. We thank Sara for bringing ideas, partners, and enthusiasm to the Consortium, and will miss her greatly. Good luck to Sara in her new role!

Consortium Membership

Consortium membership is available on institutional and individual levels. Membership includes, but is not

limited to, university-based centers and programs that represent the social, behavioral, and health sciences fields, including anthropology, economics, human development, nursing, pediatrics, political science, psychology, public health, and sociology. All persons affiliated with a member institution (i.e., university or center staff, faculty, and students) are considered Consortium members. All members are welcome to engage in Consortium calls and events and to [join](#) the Consortium list serve. For membership information, click [here](#).

For more information regarding membership, please contact [Jenni Owen](#)

New Consortium Member

Welcome to the newest Consortium member institution, the University of Oklahoma! [The Early Childhood Education Institute \(ECEI\)](#) at OU-Tulsa strives to advance and support early childhood programming and policies by generating, disseminating, and applying meaningful research.

Calendar

Monthly Consortium Calls

Join featured presenters, Consortium members, and others for the Consortium's monthly conference call! Presenter information and call-in instructions are sent to the Consortium list serve in advance of each call. Individuals who are not Consortium members are welcome to join the calls.

For more information, please contact [Erin Bumgarner](#)

Relevant Conferences

NAEYC's National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

June 9-12, 2013, San Francisco, CA

ECS National Forum on Education Policy

June 25-27, 2013, St. Louis, MO

National Pathways to Adulthood: A Convening on Youth Transition

August 7-9, 2013, Baltimore, MD

National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics

August 18-21, 2013 Chicago, IL

Global Implementation Conference

August 19-21, 2013, Washington, DC

If you would like to add an event to the calendar, please contact Paige Peltzer.

Members in the News

April 2013

In a denverpost.com article about why we should invest in Colorado's youngest children, the **National Center for Children in Poverty's** poverty statistics for children in Colorado was quoted for reasons as to why so many children do not have access to high-quality preschool.

Sheila Smith, director of the **National Center for Children in Poverty** was quoted in the article, "Here's how 3 states boosted students' reading scores," published by thetowntalk.com.

"A background check even the NRA could love?" **Philip Cook**, faculty fellow at the **Center for Child and Family Policy**, speaks to CNN about background checks for firearms.

The story, "Poverty Impacts Developing Brains," from WGBH (Boston Public Radio) details the effects of poverty on children's health and development and extensively quotes **Harvard's Center on the Developing Child Director, Jack P. Shonkoff**.

Dr. Brent McBride's Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program at the **University of Illinois** was featured in the News-Gazette as a program that provides child care for students who have children so they can finish college.

Schools teach self-control - School programs draw on research by **Duke Center for Child and Family Policy** faculty fellows **Terrie Moffitt** and **Avshalom Caspi** linking poor self-control in childhood with problems in later life as reported on

Washingtonpost.com.

In an article on online courses for entrepreneurs, Wall Street Journal notes that **David Figlio** of **Northwestern's School of Education and Social Policy**, who has conducted research on online learning, says that much of the time, students can miss out on the physical cues and communication that happen in a real-world class."

When young people commit terrible acts of violence, it's tempting to blame their parents for raising a violent child. The truth is rarely so simple, says **Duke Center for Child and Family Policy** Director, **Ken Dodge** in the US News and World Report article, "Don't blame parents for the sins of the child."

Research by **Princeton's Alejandro Portes** is cited in a New York Times piece about the challenges faced by immigrant children in the US. Consistent with other studies, Portes has found evidence of declining educational performance over time.

In the New York Times, **Marta Tienda** of **Princeton's Bendheim-Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing** discusses findings from her research. "My analysis of immigrant admissions data shows that family reunification policies adopted in the 1960s are exacerbating the graying of the US population."

University of Virginia Youth-Nex program leader, **Joseph Allen**, spoke about his new study examining adolescent peer relationships and the way they influence subsequent adult behavior-everything from alcohol consumption and criminal behavior to the quality of their adult relationships in a WVTF public radio broadcast.

May 2013

The Wall Street Journal article, "The development of the criminal mind," notes the key contributions **Duke Center for Child and Family Policy** Fellows **Avshalom Caspi** and **Terrie Moffitt** have made to the advances in genetics and neuroscience as they change our understanding of violent behavior.

The More Fun with Sisters and Brothers study by **Dr. Laurie Karmer's**, director of the **University of Illinois's Family Resiliency Center**, was featured in *USA Today*.

Opportunities

Hiring: 3 Postdocs at The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence plans to hire up to three postdoctoral associates to begin on or before July 1, 2013. Each will be assigned to work with an investigative team on a specific project to meet the team's research objectives. The three projects include: 1) Emotion, Creativity, and the Arts, 2) Assessing Emotional Development in Schools, and 3) Emotionally Intelligent Parenting. All positions are one-year appointments with renewal contingent upon satisfactory performance and availability of funding.

Interested applicants should submit via email a cover letter and CV, one or more writing samples, and a minimum of two letters of reference to: Marina Ebert at marina.ebert@yale.edu. Applications will be reviewed upon receipt. Please make "2013 Postdoctoral Application" the subject line of your email and identify the project(s) for which you wish to be considered in your cover letter.

Applications will be reviewed upon receipt, and considered until the positions are filled.

Research Funding Opportunities from OPRE/ACF

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) makes grants to support research in areas such as child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, child welfare, home visiting, welfare and employment, strengthening families and healthy marriage, and family and youth services. Currently, there are 4 open funding opportunities:

- *Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research*

Scholars Network

- *Data Center for Family Self-Sufficiency*
- *Early Care and Education Research Scholars:
Child Care Research Scholars*
- *Early Care and Education Research Scholars:
Head Start Graduate Student Research Grants*

Find more information about these opportunities and other research funded by OPRE/ACF at:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre>

**Hiring: Sociology/PRC Senior Faculty,
Population Research Center, University of Texas
at Austin**

The Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin invites applications for a senior social demographer at the rank of full professor with tenure starting in Fall 2013. The position will include an affiliation with the Population Research Center. All areas of specialization within social demography are open. Duties will include undergraduate and graduate teaching, research, publication, and service.

Applications will be screened until the position is filled.

**Hiring: Georgetown University Tenure Track
Assistant Professor of Psychology**

The Department of Psychology is seeking to fill a tenure-track assistant professor position effective August 1, 2013. They are interested in candidates whose research explores influences on educational outcomes, including those at the elementary, middle and high school levels, as well as early educational outcomes.

**Hiring: Senior faculty position in the Early
Childhood Education (ECE) program at Wayne
State University**

The successful candidate will have demonstrated leadership in interdisciplinary research and a record of scholarly achievement (e.g., research publications, grantsmanship) commensurate with appointment as an associate or full professor.

**Postdoctoral Fellowship Opening at Penn State's
Prevention and Methodology Training
Program**

The Prevention and Methodology Training (PAMT) program at Penn State has an opening for a postdoctoral fellow. PAMT, a joint effort between the Prevention Research Center and the Methodology Center, cross-trains graduate and postdoctoral researchers as prevention scientists and methodologists.

Please visit methodology.psu.edu/pamt/ for full application instructions. Application review will begin on July 15, 2013.

Upcoming Newsletters

We are always looking for Consortium news, resource information, and other relevant material to highlight in the newsletter.

Please send suggestions to [Paige Peltzer](#).

The Consortium is a national, interdisciplinary member organization of university-based child and family policy research centers, institutes, and programs.



This is a periodic newsletter of the Consortium.

We welcome your feedback and submissions for inclusion in future issues.

