



2016 CYFS SUMMIT ON RESEARCH IN

Early Childhood

Creating Connections Among Research, Practice & Policy

Jointly sponsored by:
CYFS, Buffett Early Childhood Institute & First Five Nebraska

April 7, 2016
The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel
Lincoln, Nebraska



Welcome



Dear Colleagues,

The Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS), the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska and First Five Nebraska welcome you to the **2016 CYFS Summit on Research in Early Childhood**. Early education and development serve as the foundation upon which children build their futures—and research, policy and practice are integral in shaping that foundation.

For more than a decade, CYFS programs have embraced many facets of early childhood research, from cognition and social-emotional development to language and behavior. Last fall, we launched the Nebraska Early Childhood Research Academy to grow our collaborative research capacities and enhance the interdisciplinary scope of our work. With its commitment to research excellence in early childhood learning, development and intervention, the academy serves as a platform for multidisciplinary perspectives that have the potential to direct innovations and transform the early childhood landscape.

These research advancements echo the progress occurring through our collective partnership. The Buffett Early Childhood Institute is leading initiatives to enhance Nebraska's early childhood workforce and reduce achievement gaps for children across the state. They recently conducted a comprehensive, representative survey with Gallup about Nebraskans' attitudes toward early care and education, and conducted a first-ever statewide survey of early childhood professionals. First Five Nebraska is educating state legislators and citizens on the importance of the early years, with outreach designed to inform and influence policy. Together, our vision has expanded yet remains rooted in a shared goal: to ensure that children have the environments, opportunities and skills they need to find fulfillment and achieve success.

Today, we're excited to share this vision—one that is only made possible through close collaboration and extends to all children in Nebraska, and beyond. Thank you for your invaluable perspectives, participation and ongoing support of early education and development. Together, we're shaping the foundation for future generations.

SUSAN M. SHERIDAN

Director, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families & Schools
George Holmes University Professor of Educational Psychology
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

SAMUEL J. MEISELS

Executive Director, Buffett Early Childhood Institute
Professor of Child, Youth & Family Studies
University of Nebraska

BECKY VEAK

Director, First Five Nebraska

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Agenda

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Registration Atrium

9:00 – 9:20 a.m. Opening & Welcome Grand Ballroom

SUSAN SHERIDAN Director, Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families & Schools | University of Nebraska–Lincoln
RENEE WESSELS Associate Executive Director, Buffett Early Childhood Institute | University of Nebraska
HANK BOUNDS President, University of Nebraska

9:20 – 10:30 a.m. Keynote Address & Moderated Discussion Grand Ballroom

Using Assessment to Inform and Promote Effective Early Learning Opportunities for Young Children
CAROL MCDONALD CONNOR Chancellor's Professor, University of California, Irvine

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Concurrent Session I

Room	Presentation Titles	Presenters
Hawthorne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">White Matter Integrity Relating to Reading AbilityInfluence of Natural Environments on Children's Cognitive Functioning	See page 3
Olive Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Studies of Self-Regulation and Social-Emotional Development in the U.S. and Turkey	See page 4
Yankee Hill I & II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers and Parents as Partners: Essential Relationships in Early ChildhoodThe PHIT Project: Pilot Study of a Childhood Obesity Intervention	See page 5
Yankee Hill III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Using Child Studies to Promote K-3 Teacher NoticingTeachers' Science Talk and Preschoolers' Science Engagement and Learning	See page 6

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Luncheon Grand Ballroom

1:40 – 2:30 p.m. Concurrent Session II

Room	Presentation Titles	Presenters
Hawthorne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Need, Development and Vision of Nebraska's Early Childhood Integrated Data System	See page 7
Olive Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Preservice Teachers' Strategies and Attitudes Toward Temperamentally Different Children	See page 7
Yankee Hill I & II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continuity between Home and School: Does it Matter for Children?	See page 8
Yankee Hill III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Predictors of Infant and Toddler Black Boys' School Readiness Skills: Determining Promotive Contexts and Environments	See page 8

2:40 – 3:30 p.m. Concurrent Session III

Room	Presentation Titles	Presenters
Hawthorne	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Initial Results of the Autism Care for Toddlers Clinic	See page 9
Olive Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Parent-Teacher Relationships in Early Childhood: A Rural and Non-Rural Comparison	See page 9
Yankee Hill I & II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cool as a Cucumber, Hot as a Pepper: Classroom Self-Regulation	See page 10
Yankee Hill III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey	See page 10

3:40 – 4:00 p.m. Closing Remarks Renaissance

MARJORIE KOSTELNIK Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences | University of Nebraska-Lincoln

4:00 – 5:30 p.m. Reception Renaissance

Early Childhood Poster Presentations with Graduate Students and Global Research Partners, See page 11

Using Assessment to Inform and Promote Effective Early Learning Opportunities for Young Children

CAROL MCDONALD CONNOR, PHD

Chancellor's Professor
University of California, Irvine

The newly funded Institute of Education Sciences' Early Learning Research Network offers an important opportunity to support children's development academically and socially from preschool through third grade. This includes the development of a new classroom observation system: Optimizing Learning Opportunities for Students. The OLOS observation system is designed to encourage assessment-informed teaching. One promise of assessment-informed teaching is that learning opportunities can be tailored to each child's unique constellation of skills and aptitudes. In this presentation, McDonald Connor will discuss how we can use child assessments, technology, and classroom observations to support more effective teaching from preschool through third grade.

Carol McDonald Connor is a Chancellor's Professor in Education at the University of California, Irvine. She is also a Distinguished Research Associate at the Florida Center for Reading Research.

McDonald Connor's research investigates individual child differences and the links between children's language and literacy development. She focuses on children who are atypical and diverse learners, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing; the goal of her research is to illuminate reasons behind the perplexing difficulties faced by these children as they develop basic and advanced literacy skills.

Most recently, her research interests have focused on how to individualize students' learning opportunities in the classroom—from preschool through fifth grade—and develop technology and interventions to improve teacher efficacy and students' literacy, math, and science outcomes.

McDonald Connor is the principal investigator for studies funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, including the Early Learning Research Network and the Reading for Understanding Network. She works closely with teachers and educational leaders and is a strong advocate of research-school partnerships.

White Matter Integrity Relating to Reading Ability

This presentation explores the benefits of neuroimaging to identify children at risk for developmental dyslexia. The presenter's research examined children's white matter integrity at pre-reading, beginning, and fluent reading stages using an automated, fiber-tract quantification method. Study findings depicted white matter alterations at the pre-reading stage in children with a family history of developmental dyslexia as compared to healthy controls. By identifying at-risk children earlier, individualized education programs can be provided before reading onset.

YINGYING WANG, PHD

Assistant Professor
Department of Special Education & Communication Disorders
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Influence of Natural Environments on Children's Cognitive Functioning

This presentation will discuss two studies examining the effect of nature on children. The first study compares children's attention, working and spatial working memory, and inhibitory control after a nature walk and an urban walk. The second study compares children's performance on cognitive tasks when indoors versus outdoors. Research findings highlight the importance of nature for children's cognitive functioning.

JULIA TORQUATI, PHD

Professor
Department of Child, Youth & Family Studies
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

ANNE SCHUTTE, PHD

Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Session I

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Olive Branch (Lower Level)

Studies of Self-Regulation and Social-Emotional Development in the U.S. and Turkey

In a series of four presentations, researchers will provide an overview of parallel studies in Nebraska and Ankara, Turkey. These studies focus on the self-regulation and social-emotional development of three- to seven-year-olds who qualify as low income. Researchers will discuss self-regulation and relationship influences; hand-held media use and its relationship to social-emotional and self-regulation; social-emotional and language development; and social-emotional development and temperament. Research findings will demonstrate how early childhood programs can benefit from considering self-regulation measurement and focus.

HELEN RAIKES, PHD

Willa Cather Professor

Department of Child, Youth & Family Studies
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

MÜBECCEL GÖNEN, PHD

Department Chair & Professor

Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

MEFHARET VEZİROĞLU ÇELİK

Assistant Professor

Istanbul Medipol University

VOLKAN SAHIN, PHD

Assistant Professor

Middle East Technical University

ŞÜKRAN UÇUŞ, PHD

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İBRAHİM ACAR

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AYSEL KORKMAZ

Graduate Student

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İPEK ÖZBAY

Graduate Student

Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

Session I

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Yankee Hill I & II (Third Level)

Teachers and Parents as Partners: Essential Relationships in Early Childhood

Young children's experiences are shaped by both home and school, which magnifies the importance of early childhood interventions that coordinate between these two learning environments. This presentation will discuss Teachers and Parents as Partners, an intervention that improves children's home and school outcomes by bolstering parent-teacher collaboration. It will specifically share the effects of TAPP for addressing behavioral concerns at home for 267 rural elementary school children, parents and parent-teacher relationships.

SUSAN SHERIDAN, PHD

George Holmes University Professor of Educational Psychology

Director

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AMANDA WITTE, PHD

Project Manager

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SAMANTHA ANGELL

Graduate Student

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University of Nebraska–Lincoln

SONYA BHATIA

Graduate Student

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University of Nebraska–Lincoln

ANDREW WHITE

Graduate Student

Department of Educational Psychology
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

The PHIT Project: Pilot Study of a Childhood Obesity Intervention

Childhood obesity starts early and maintains over time, suggesting that early intervention is critical to promoting optimal health. The PHIT intervention promotes environmental and behavioral change to address childhood obesity through a family-centered, home visitation approach. This presentation will discuss preliminary data from a current randomized efficacy trial of the PHIT intervention. Research findings will demonstrate PHIT's potential efficacy for reducing childhood obesity through improvements in dietary intake, activity levels, and overall health status.

BRANDY CLARKE, PHD, LP

Assistant Professor

Munroe-Meyer Institute
University of Nebraska Medical Center

LOREY WHEELER, PHD

Research Assistant Professor

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,
Families & Schools
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Session I

10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Yankee Hill III (Third Level)

Using Child Studies to Promote K-3 Teacher Noticing

This presentation offers insight about how teachers pay attention to and make sense of what happens during instructional contexts, known as teacher noticing. Researchers qualitatively examined 22 K-3 teachers who conducted child studies in which they aimed to uncover two students' mathematical understanding. Based on an existing framework, the study specified five levels of teacher noticing and found that, while teachers tended to provide evidence for students' learning, they did not necessarily interpret it. This adapted framework may help improve teacher noticing and provide educators with a tool to evaluate it.

LIXIN REN, PHD

Postdoctoral Research Associate

Center for Science, Mathematics & Computer Education
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

HEIDI BEATTIE, PHD

Assistant Professor

Troy University

WENDY SMITH, PHD

Research Associate Professor

Center for Science, Mathematics & Computer Education
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

RUTH HEATON, PHD

Professor

Department of Teaching, Learning, & Teacher Education
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Teachers' Science Talk and Preschoolers' Science Engagement and Learning

This presentation will share findings from a study that examined the association between teacher talk and children's science learning, and how children's engagement moderates the association. Research findings will provide practitioners with information about specific teacher talk that may benefit children's science learning. Findings will also help practitioners determine how to differentiate teacher talk depending on the level of children's engagement.

SOO-YOUNG HONG, PHD

Associate Professor

Department of Child, Youth & Family Studies
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Session II

1:40 – 2:30 p.m.

Hawthorne (Lower Level)

The Need, Development and Vision of Nebraska's Early Childhood Integrated Data System

Over the course of the past decade, a dedicated coalition has been working toward a long-term goal of improving upon current efforts to collect, share and analyze Nebraska's early childhood data. Through collaboration across and within agencies and programs, the Nebraska Early Childhood Integrated Data System will enable Nebraska to make informed decisions about programs and policies that promote positive outcomes for all children, prenatal through eight years old.

GREG WELCH, PHD

*Director, Bureau for Education Research, Evaluation & Policy
Research Associate Professor*

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,
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University of Nebraska–Lincoln

SARAH ANN KOTCHIAN, JD

Vice President of Education & Early Childhood Policy

Holland Children's Institute

SATISH IYER

Project Manager

Nebraska Department of Education

1:40 – 2:30 p.m.

Olive Branch (Lower Level)

Preservice Teachers' Strategies and Attitudes Toward Temperamentally Different Children

This presentation explores preservice teachers' strategies and attitudes when working with children who demonstrate temperamental shyness, exuberance or typical behavior. Participants responded to three hypothetical vignettes describing children displaying these behaviors. Results indicated participants would use developmental strategies most frequently for shy children and non-developmental strategies most frequently for exuberant children. Participants also showed more warmth to shy children, reported higher self-efficacy for teaching typical children, and perceived typical children to be most academically successful.

GUY TRAININ, PHD

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IRINA KALUTSKAYA, PHD

Research Scientist

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KATHLEEN MORITZ RUDASILL, PHD

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STEPHANIE WESSELS, PHD

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Department of Teaching, Learning & Teacher Education
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Session II

1:40 – 2:30 p.m. | Yankee Hill I & II (Third Level)

Continuity between Home and School: Does it Matter for Children?

The environments within which children live influence their long-term outcomes. In addition to the separate influences of home and school, theory suggests that the quality of relationships and match between them affect a child's ability to navigate experiences and benefit from exposure and opportunity. This study explores the effect of continuity and relationships between home and school on young children's school readiness. Implications for parent engagement efforts and family-school partnerships will be discussed.

LISA KNOCHE, PHD

*Director, Nebraska Early Childhood Research Academy
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AMANDA MOEN

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RACHEL MEISINGER

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Department of Educational Psychology
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SUSAN SHERIDAN, PHD

*George Holmes University Professor of Educational Psychology
Director*
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,
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University of Nebraska–Lincoln

1:40 – 2:30 p.m. | Yankee Hill III (Third Level)

Predictors of Infant and Toddler Black Boys' School Readiness Skills: Determining Promotive Contexts and Environments

This presentation examines child, family and community factors in the early years that predict cognitive and language outcomes for preschool-age black boys as compared to black girls and white boys. Research findings indicate that black children face many challenges, with black boys experiencing less sensitive parenting compared to their peers. While there are universal indicators that predict children's preschool outcomes, there are specific indicators that are more beneficial for black boys' early development. These findings uncover the important role of families, communities, and the early care and education community in supporting black boys' early development.

IHEOMA IRUKA, PHD

Director of Research & Evaluation
Buffett Early Childhood Institute
University of Nebraska

Session III

2:40 – 3:30 p.m. | Hawthorne (Lower Level)

Initial Results of the Autism Care for Toddlers Clinic

This presentation will share initial results from the first two years of early intervention treatment in 33 children with autism spectrum disorder, using the Verbal Behavior Milestones Achievement Placement Program (VB-MAPP) curriculum. The outcome measures include the VB-MAPP, Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule 2 and Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-2. Study findings, including limitations, hold implications for the expansion of services and feasibility of developing similar programs in Lincoln and rural Nebraska.

THERESE MATHEWS, PHD, APRN-NP, BCBA-D

Associate Professor
Munroe-Meyer Institute
University of Nebraska Medical Center

PAIGE MCARDLE, BCBA-D

Autism Education Coordinator
Munroe-Meyer Institute
University of Nebraska Medical Center

LAURA NEEDELMAN, LMHP, BCBA-D

Clinical Coordinator
Munroe-Meyer Institute
University of Nebraska Medical Center

MEGAN TERRY, PHD

Psychologist
Munroe-Meyer Institute
University of Nebraska Medical Center

2:40 – 3:30 p.m. | Olive Branch (Lower Level)

Parent-Teacher Relationships in Early Childhood: A Rural and Non-Rural Comparison

Home-school partnerships are critical for student behavioral and academic success, yet little is known about the relationship between community context and parent-teacher relationships. This presentation will examine differences between parent-teacher relationships across rural and non-rural communities for students with behavior problems. It will also explore rural and non-rural differences in parents' perceptions related to home-school partnerships.

AMANDA WITTE, PHD

Project Manager
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,
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MICHEALE MARCUS

Graduate Student
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

TYLER SMITH

Graduate Student
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

HENRY BASS

Graduate Student
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University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Cool as a Cucumber, Hot as a Pepper: Classroom Self-Regulation

There is evidence of the impacts of sleep and temperament characteristics of toddlers (30 to 42 months) on task performance requiring cognitive self-regulation. It is assumed that these characteristics interact with the characteristics of the preschool classroom to influence academic and social adjustment. Our preliminary evidence points to the importance of both observed teacher-child interactions in the classroom as well as observed child-initiated interactions with teachers, peers and tasks to understand early learning.

VICTORIA MOLFESE, PHD

Chancellor Professor
Co-Director of Early Development & Learning Lab
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University of Nebraska–Lincoln

AMANDA PROKASKY

Project Coordinator of Early Development & Learning Lab
Graduate Student
Department of Child, Youth & Family Studies
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

KATHLEEN MORITZ RUDASILL, PHD

Associate Professor
Co-Director of Early Development & Learning Lab
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey

This presentation investigates the needs, beliefs, skills and experiences of the early childhood workforce. The sample included 1,048 teachers and 750 early education programs and schools. Results of this study established baseline data from birth through grade 3 for workforce characteristics at the individual and setting levels. This research will support the highest quality education and care for Nebraska children through illustrating the successes, needs and barriers of the early childhood workforce.

SUSAN SARVER, PHD

Director of Workforce Planning & Development
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SCOTT BRAGG

Graduate Assistant
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IHEOMA IRUKA, PHD

Director of Research & Evaluation
Buffett Early Childhood Institute
University of Nebraska

ALEXANDRA DARO

Graduate Assistant
Buffett Early Childhood Institute
University of Nebraska

JUNGWON EUM

Graduate Student
Department of Child, Youth & Family Studies
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

The following 19 posters will be featured after closing remarks from Marjorie Kostelnik, dean of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln's College of Education and Human Sciences. Posters were selected based on their potential to (a) offer various perspectives on critical and timely issues in early childhood; (b) highlight innovative research; (c) identify extensions of research to practice; and (d) examine how research findings may relate to public policies that affect young children and their families. Posters feature a graduate student as lead author and include at least one CYFS faculty affiliate or global research partner as a co-author.

1) PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH

Mackenzie Sommerhalder; Alejandra Ayotitla; Michelle Huesca; Brandy Clarke, PhD

10) PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Courtney Boise; Lisa Knoche, PhD; Halle Miller; Morgan Holmen; Amanda Moen

2) PREDICTORS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S BODY MASS INDEX

Amy Encinger; Helen Raikes, PhD

11) FAMILY ENGAGEMENT, LEARNING MATERIALS AND HOME LANGUAGE: A RELATIONAL EXAMINATION

Amanda Moen; Lisa Knoche, PhD; Susan Sheridan, PhD; Courtney Boise

3) EXAMINING CHILD TEMPERAMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF PARENT STRESS

Amy Encinger; Amanda Prokasky; Jentry Barrett; Victoria Molfese, PhD

12) SUPPORTING PARENT USE OF RESPONSIVE LANGUAGE STRATEGIES DURING HOME VISITS

Kerry Miller; Christine Marvin, PhD; Barbara Jackson, PhD

4) CHILD TEMPERAMENT AND PARENTING: PREDICTORS OF OUTCOMES IN MALTREATED CHILDREN

Melanie Gabbert; Carolyn Pope Edwards, EdD

13) IDENTIFYING EARLY LITERACY PRACTICES THAT IMPACT BRAIN PROCESSING AND BEHAVIOR

Amanda Prokasky; Victoria Molfese, PhD; Dennis Molfese, PhD

5) THE TRAJECTORY OF CHANGE IN TODDLERS' INHIBITORY CONTROL

Andrew White; Kathleen Moritz Rudasill, PhD; Irina (Kalutskaya) Patwardhan, PhD; Jeanna Song; Sam Perez; Victoria Molfese, PhD

14) TEACHER PRESENCE, TEACHER SCAFFOLDING, AND PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S PEER INTERACTIONS

Ibrahim Acar; Soo-Young Hong, PhD; ChaoRong Wu

6) EXAMINING BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES IN TODDLERS INHIBITORY CONTROL

Jayden Nord; Ibrahim Acar; Nicole Adams; Victoria Molfese, PhD; Kathleen Moritz Rudasill, PhD; Dennis Molfese, PhD; Hannah Malcolm

15) TEACHER EFFICACY AND PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Paula Thompson; Christine Marvin, PhD

7) ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN AT-RISK PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S EMOTION REGULATION AND PARENT-CHILD CONFLICT

Amy Colgrove; Helen Raikes, PhD; Amy Encinger

16) MEASURING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS: A PILOT VALIDATION STUDY

Gayatri Jayaraman; Matthew Lambert, PhD; Christine Marvin, PhD

8) PARENT-CHILD CONFLICT AMONG U.S.-BORN AND FOREIGN-BORN

Aileen Garcia; Helen Raikes, PhD; Lixin Ren, PhD; Jan Eстераich

17) UNDERSTANDING THE NEED: A MIXED METHODS PRESCHOOL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Joseph Kapusnick; Jeannette Harder, PhD; Pamela Ashley

9) EXECUTIVE FUNCTION AND STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS IN LOW-INCOME PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Courtney Boise; Susan Sheridan, PhD; Amanda Moen; Lisa Knoche, PhD

18) INFLUENCES ON LOW-INCOME CHILDREN'S SELF-REGULATION IN THE U.S. AND TURKEY

Helen Raikes, PhD; Dawn Davis, PhD; Global Research Partners

19) FEEDING PRACTICES WITH LATINO PRESCHOOLERS IN COLOMBIA AND THE U.S.: CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

Elsa Escalante; Helen Raikes, PhD

Lead Presenter Biographies



BRANDY CLARKE, PHD, LP

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Brandy Clarke is an assistant professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute. Her research interests include early intervention and prevention, behavioral consultation, and integrated health care. Clarke has served in leadership roles on several studies investigating multi-systemic interventions that support optimal growth and development for young children and has co-authored numerous chapters and articles on these and other related topics.

SOO-YOUNG HONG, PHD

shong5@unl.edu

Soo-Young Hong is an associate professor of child, youth and family studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research focuses on early childhood professional development in the areas of science education and preschool inclusion. She is interested in studying effective ways to engage teachers and children in science and to promote teachers' understanding of children with different levels of abilities. Hong received her doctorate in child development and family studies from Purdue University.

IHEOMA IRUKA, PHD

iiruka@nebraska.edu

Iheoma Iruka is the director of research and evaluation at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska. Her research focuses on determining how early experiences affect the development of low-income and ethnic minority children, and the role of the family and educational environments in this process. She received her doctorate in applied developmental psychology from the University of Miami.

LISA KNOCHE, PHD

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Lisa Knoche is a research associate professor with the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and directs the center's Nebraska Early Childhood Research Academy. She designs and evaluates intervention and prevention programs for children and families at risk, focusing on approaches that support school readiness and family involvement in early learning. She holds a doctorate in developmental psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

THERESE MATHEWS, PHD, APRN-NP, BCBA-D

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Therese Mathews is a pediatric nurse practitioner and a clinical psychologist with joint appointments in the Departments of Developmental Medicine and Psychology at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. Her research interests involve increasing access to early intervention services for toddlers and preschoolers with autism spectrum disorders. Mathews received her doctorate from the University of Kansas.

VICTORIA MOLFESE, PHD

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Victoria Molfese is a Chancellor's Professor of child, youth and family studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Molfese focuses on brain processing and the development of executive function skills in young children, along with the impacts of sleep, health status and learning-related behaviors on early academic gains. She received her doctorate in developmental psychology from The Pennsylvania State University.

HELEN RAIKES, PHD

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Helen Raikes serves as a Willa Cather Professor of child, youth and family studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests are focused on interventions to optimize opportunity for low-income children. She has recently expanded this focus to international studies. Raikes holds a doctorate in child development from Iowa State University.

LIXIN REN, PHD

lixin.ren@huskers.unl.edu

Lixin Ren is a postdoctoral research associate with the Center for Science, Mathematics and Computer Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is interested in research on school-family partnerships in early childhood educational settings, as well as family factors and child characteristics that influence the quality of parenting and child social-emotional competence. She received her doctorate in developmental psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

SUSAN SARVER, PHD

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Susan Sarver is the director of workforce planning and development at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska. She focuses on increasing the quantity, quality, and skills of early childhood educators in Nebraska and the nation. She studies rural families living in poverty as well as continuity between parents and teachers. She received her doctorate in child and family development from the University of Georgia.

SUSAN SHERIDAN, PHD

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Susan Sheridan serves as George Holmes University Professor of educational psychology and directs the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests include early childhood social-emotional and behavioral interventions, family-school partnerships, rural education, and school readiness. She holds a doctorate in educational psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

JULIA TORQUATI, PHD

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Julia Torquati is a professor of child, youth and family studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research focuses on examining the influence of nature on children's executive functions and self-regulation, with the aim of using research evidence to design environments that promote optimal development for children. She received her doctorate in family studies from the University of Arizona.

GUY TRAININ, PHD

gtrainin2@unl.edu

Guy Trainin is an associate professor and graduate chair in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His research focus includes reading development, teacher education and literacy integration with technology and arts. He earned his doctorate from the University of California, Riverside.

YINGYING WANG, PHD

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Yingying Wang is an assistant professor of special education and communication disorders at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests include studying dynamic changes of brain networks; utilizing neuroimaging data to predict children's future reading ability; and investigating brain mechanisms of developmental dyslexia. Wang received her doctorate in biomedical engineering at the University of Cincinnati.

GREG WELCH, PHD

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Greg Welch is a research associate professor with the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and directs the center's Bureau for Education Research, Evaluation and Policy. He is focused on the implementation of rigorous methodological approaches to research and evaluation in educational settings. He received his doctorate in research methodology in education from the University of Pittsburgh.

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