The Schubert Center for Child Development supports multidisciplinary research and education on children and childhood at Case Western Reserve University. Initiatives of the SCCD promote understandings of child development from infancy through adolescence, and in local, national, and international contexts.
Hansels and Help-Seeking in Inner-City Cleveland

Jim Spilsbury just completed his doctoral dissertation in the Department of Anthropology at CWRU. Dr. Spilsbury’s research was supported by grants (with advisor Jill Korbin, Ph.D.) from the Schubert Center and the Clinic Foundation’s Department of Communication Sciences.

Spilsbury

Lyn Turkstra, Ph.D., Department of Communication Sciences, has conducted research aimed at improving the social and communication skills of adolescents with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Currently, Professor Turkstra and doctoral candidate Angela Caccia are investigating the effects of TBI on adolescents’ abilities to make judgments about the social behaviors of others (e.g., is this person being sincere or sarcastic?). These investigators used Schubert Center funds to generate digitized video stimuli showing adolescent actors engaged in conversation. Their present study, directed by Ms. Caccia and in collaboration with the functional imaging team of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation’s Department of Radiology, uses the video stimuli in conjunction with functional magnetic resonance-imaging technology to reveal areas of the brain that are involved in making social judgments. The study addresses a significant gap in knowledge about adolescent social skills and has important implications for the treatment of adolescents with TBI.

Turkstra

Social and Communication Skills of Adolescents with Traumatic Brain Injury

Promoting Adherence to Medical Treatment in Chronic Childhood Illness

A recent book edited by Dennis Drotar, Ph.D., addresses a problem familiar to health care providers: children’s compliance with treatment regimens. Promoting Adherence to Medical Treatment in Chronic Childhood Illness: Concepts, Methods, and Interventions (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000) is a compendium of 20 contributions that synthesize current knowledge and identify promising interventions and research directions.

The book grew out of an interdisciplinary 2-day conference held at CWRU in October 1998. The conference was sponsored by the Genentech Foundation for Growth and Development. It highlighted the many challenges that child and family non-compliance pose to the treatment of chronic childhood conditions such as diabetes, asthma, cystic fibrosis, rheumatic diseases, and growth disorders. Noncompliance with treatment is recognized as a significant cause of health problems in this population.

Ironically, advances in the treatment of these and other burdensome conditions have served to exacerbate, not reduce, compliance problems. More intrusive techniques often require more intensive medical management and, consequently, place greater responsibility on the child and family. In order to manage these responsibilities effectively, families require many specific interventions to facilitate adherence to treatment.

Promoting Adherence to Medical Treatment in Chronic Childhood Illness

The Schubert Center website now includes an updated list of research projects it has supported, as well as other child-related research projects at CWRU. Please visit our website and learn about new research on children: www.cwru.edu/artsci/schubert/clearinghouse.htm

Schubert Center “Clearinghouse” On Website

In each newsletter, we highlight a recent publication of a faculty member at CWRU that relates to child or adolescent development. In this issue, we introduce an edited book by Dennis Drotar, Professor of Pediatrics and Psychology, CWRU School of Medicine and Division Chief, Division of Behavioral Pediatrics and Psychology, Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital.

IN EACH NEWSLETTER, WE HIGHLIGHT A RECENT PUBLICATION OF A FACULTY MEMBER AT CWRU THAT RELATES TO CHILD OR ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT. THIS ISSUE, WE INTRODUCE AN EDITED BOOK BY DENNIS DROTAR, PROFESSOR OF PEDIATRICS AND PSYCHOLOGY, CWRU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, AND DIVISION CHIEF, DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL PEDIATRICS AND PSYCHOLOGY, RAINBOW BABIES AND CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL.

Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, and Lyn Turkstra, Ph.D., Department of Communication Sciences. It also illustrated how children process information about strangers as they make decisions about whether and how to ask strangers for help. In these instances, the physical and behavioral characteristics of strangers become especially important. An article based on this research, “If I don’t know them, I’ll get killed probably: How children’s concerns about safety shape help-seeking behavior,” will appear in Childhood (2002, 9[1], 101-117). Dr. Spilsbury recently joined the Schubert Center staff as a Research Associate.

National Sites


Board on Children, Youth, and Families (National Academy of Sciences) www4.nas.edu/cbsb/boyftweb.nsf

Children’s Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org

Child Trends www.childtrends.org

Child Welfare League of America www.cwla.org


The Future of the Children (The David and Lucille Packard Foundation) www.futureofchildren.org

Kids Count (Annie E. Casey Foundation) www.aecf.org/kidscount

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development www.nichd.nih.gov

International Sites

Clearinghouse on International Development in Child, Youth and Family Policies (Columbia University) www.childpolicyintt.org

International Save the Children Alliance www.savethechildren.net

International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect www.ispcan.org

United Nation’s Children’s Fund (UNICEF) www.unicef.org

Also, for researchers [that is also] enthusiastically recommended for professionals working with chronically ill children and their families. ©

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Promoting Interdisciplinary Research at CWRU and in the Community

In each newsletter, we highlight an individual or group at CWRU or in the community whose work has significantly shaped research or practice related to children or adolescents. In this issue, we profile John H. Kennell, M.D., Professor Emeritus, Department of Pediatrics, CWRU School of Medicine and Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital.

John Kennell: Pioneer of Modern Perinatal Practices

It is impossible to consider modern perinatal practices without invoking the name of John H. Kennell, M.D. Among the most important concepts in the psychology of child development is that of mother-infant emotional bonding. Amidst vast technological advances in birthing practices, the importance of keeping mothers with their babies is arguably the most important factor in fostering positive outcomes for both mother and child. Dr. Kennell's work in this area with long-time collaborator, Marshall H. Klaus, M.D., revolutionized maternal and infant care practices, including practices with medically fragile newborns.

Dr. Kennell's nearly 200 publications reflect discoveries made over a long career as a pediatrician, teacher-scholar, and advocate for children and families. As a whole, Dr. Kennell's work has demonstrated the significance of early emotional interdependence for the well being of mother and child. In the 1970s, Drs. Kennell and Klaus hypothesized that the first hours after delivery constitute a sensitive period for both mother and child. This period brings significant implications for the mother's mental and physical health, and for her ability to provide care and create an ongoing transactional relationship with the baby—which, in turn, are essential for the social-emotional development of the child.

In the 1980s, while extending breastfeeding studies begun at MacDonald House of University Hospitals to research in Guatemala, Dr. Kennell made another important discovery. A distinctive feature of birthing practices in Guatemala was the participation of a lay woman (doula) whose role was to provide continuous emotional support to the mother during labor, delivery, and post-delivery. This led to a series of controlled NIH-funded American studies of doula support during the birth of a first child. These studies revealed not only better immediate obstetric outcomes, calmer mothers, shorter labors, and fewer perinatal problems, but also enhanced mother-child interactions. Two months after delivery, observers consistently found that mothers who had had doulas were more focused on, and affectionately interactive with, their babies as, compared to mothers who had experienced standard procedures.

Dr. Kennell's professional leadership roles have included presidencies of the Northern Ohio Pediatric Society (1986-87) and the Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (1986-89). Among many honors, he was awarded the Golden Stethoscope by the Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital Clinical Faculty (1984), named Ohio Pediatrician of the Year (1995), given the Cleveland Parent Super-Hero Award (1997), and inducted into the Cleveland Medical Hall of Fame (1998).

Students and colleagues cite Dr. Kennell's humanity and wisdom, captured by the invariably invoked criterion, “How will it affect the mother, the child, the family?” CWRU Interim Provost Lynn Singer, Ph.D., says of Dr. Kennell, “Despite his iconic status, he remains a humble man with genuine caring for those of us fortunate enough to be his colleagues.” Parents today may not realize that their comfortable and supportive surroundings during childbirth can be traced directly to the work of Dr. Kennell and his colleagues.

Rainbow Center for Pediatric Ethics

The Rainbow Center for Pediatric Ethics (RCPE), of the Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital, seeks to promote a better understanding of ethical responsibilities to children. Established with the support of the Board of Trustees, this new and unique initiative provides a home for Rainbow’s activities in pediatric ethics, and serves as a resource for the hospital, university, and community. The RCPE imparts commitment, credibility, and visibility to the role of pediatric ethics at Rainbow.

The Rainbow Center for Pediatric Ethics has four primary objectives:

• To foster research and scholarship in pediatric ethics.

• To educate students, health care professionals and the public about pediatric ethics and the health care of children.

• To provide consultation to assisting clinicians, families and children confronted with ethical dilemmas in health care.

• To advocate for the well being of children by bringing attention to the ethical dimensions of pediatric health care.

The RCPE is directed by Eric Kodish, M.D. Its Associate Directors are Lauren McAliley, RN, CPNP, Nathaniel Robin, M.D., Anne Lyren, M.D., and Anita Weiss, M.D. For further information, contact the RCPE at Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital, Room 680, 11106 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44106, 216/844-8651, www.uahrainbow.com/professionals/ethics.asp

The Center for Adolescent Health

The Center for Adolescent Health, of the CWRU School of Medicine, seeks to improve the health and well being of adolescents in the Greater Cleveland area through research, education, and links to community agencies. Current research projects on local samples relate to improving access to mental health care services, reducing tobacco use, and, with funding from the Children and Families Health Service, understanding the causes and consequences of youth risk behavior.

The Center for Adolescent Health recently established a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in adolescent health. This program, based in the CWRU School of Medicine, is the first of its kind in the United States.

The Center for Adolescent Health also sponsors conferences. In November (2001), it co-sponsored a regional professional conference “Psyche and Soma: The Path Toward Total Health in the Adolescent,” which over 100 people attended. In February (2002), and in collaboration with the Adolescent Consortium, it sponsored the conference “Closing the Gap: Current Challenges in Adolescent Care,” which over 300 people attended.

The Center for Adolescent Health is directed by Barbara Cromer, M.D. For further information, please contact Ms. Janet Hlavna at the Center for Adolescent Health, CWRU School of Medicine, 10900 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland OH 44106, 216/368-3770, www.cwru.edu/med/adolescenthealth.

Mission Statement

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Conference on “Understanding the Impact of Violence on Children and Adolescents”

On Friday, October 21, 2001, the Schubert Center hosted a community conference on Understanding the Impact of Violence on Children and Adolescents. The all-day conference, held at The Forum in downtown Cleveland, drew more than 300 participants. It included two keynote addresses, morning and afternoon panel sessions, exhibits, and a book signing.

James Garbarino, Ph.D., opened the conference with a keynote address on the ecology of youth violence. Dr. Garbarino is Professor of Human Development and Co-Director of the Family Life Development Center at Cornell University. He received rave reviews from the audience for his discussion of the complex factors and conditions that promote or discourage violence in youth.

The morning panel session focused on the consequences of children’s exposure to violence. It included presentations by Daniel Flannery, Ph.D., of the Institute for the Study and Prevention of Violence at Kent State University, and Mark Singer, Ph.D., of the Mandel School for Applied Social Sciences at CWRU, both of whom are leading researchers in the field of youth violence.

The afternoon panel focused on programs for children exposed to and exhibiting violence. It included video presentations and discussion with two community leaders in violence prevention. Elsie Day, Program Coordinator for the Cuyahoga County Children Who Witness Violence Project, and Michael Walker, Director of Partnership for a Safer Cleveland, spoke about the important role that parents, professionals, advocates and ordinary citizens play in preventing violence in children’s lives.

In a special moment, Elsie Day presented a commendation from Cuyahoga County Commissioners to Donald Freedheim, Ph.D., Founding Director of the Schubert Center and Professor Emeritus of Psychology at CWRU. The Commissioners honored Professor Freedheim for his long-standing service to the community in developing services and support for children, adolescents, and their families.

Many free publications and resources were distributed, including the Surgeon General’s Report on Youth Violence. The Community Prosecution Program, the Cuyahoga County Mental Health Board, and Appletree Books had exhibits, and the day closed with a book signing by the keynote speakers.

The conference closed with a keynote address by Alvin Poussaint, M.D., Director of the Media Center of the Judge Baker Children’s Center in Boston and Faculty Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Harvard Medical School. Known for his efforts to curtail portrayals of violence in the media and his expertise on race relations in the United States, Dr. Poussaint spoke about the important role that parents, professionals, advocates and ordinary citizens play in preventing violence in children’s lives.

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Special thanks are extended to Jennifer Shaw, who skillfully organized the conference. Support was also provided by the Armington Program for Research on Social and Moral Values in Children, the Center for Biomedical Ethics, the Childhood Studies Program, the Hallinan Project, and the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, all of CWRU.

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Poussaint

Freedheim

ETHEREAL SCHAFER AWARDED BRISKY FELLOWSHIP

Each year, the Schubert Center awards the Brisky Fellowship in Psychology, supported by the Cosa Unger Brisky Endowment, to a graduate student whose research relates to child development. This year’s Brisky fellowship was awarded to Mr. Ethan Schafer, doctoral candidate and graduate teaching assistant in clinical psychology. Mr. Schafer earned a M.A. in Psychology from CWRU in 2001. He has participated in the Pediatric Psychology Research Program headed by Dennis Drotar, Ph.D., and has co-presented papers at national conferences with his advisor, Sandra Russ, Ph.D. Mr. Schafer came to CWRU with a B.A. from the University of Michigan, with High Honors in Psychology (1998).

Mr. Schafer’s dissertation, “Play or relaxation? Comparing the effectiveness of two interventions with anxious children undergoing outpatient surgery,” uses conventional behavioral relaxation techniques to investigate the relative effectiveness of two play therapy techniques designed to alleviate anxiety in children admitted for outpatient surgery. His study also investigates how children fare once they leave the hospital. Mr. Schafer’s choice of dissertation, he states, reflects his “passion for clinical work and a firm belief in the importance of developing treatments grounded in research,” principles he intends to guide his future clinical work with children.

Schafer

NEW COURSES IN CHILDHOOD STUDIES PARTNER CWRU AND LOCAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

In step with a number of universities in North America and Europe, CWRU recently created a new interdisciplinary academic Minor in Childhood Studies. Professors Jill Korbin, Department of Anthropology, and Richard Settersten, Department of Sociology, direct the program. The Childhood Studies program draws on the expertise of faculty from a wide range of departments across campus. Students choose from courses such as Family Violence and Child Abuse (Anthropology), Language and Development (Communication Sciences), Child Development and Health (Nutrition), Child Psychology (Psychology), The Life Course (Sociology). Thirteen students are now enrolled in the program.

Two new courses—Childhood through Art and Childhood Play and Learning—were developed especially for students in the Childhood Studies program and were taught this year. These courses were made possible by the support of the McGregor Fund, which provided a 3-year grant to CWRU to develop undergraduate learning experiences in partnership with University Circle institutions.

Childhood through Art (Fall 2001) was taught by Stanton Thomas, Ph.D., medieval and renaissance specialist at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and part-time lecturer in the Department of Art History. Students examined historical images of children and childhood as depicted in the holdings of the Cleveland Museum of Art and other local institutions.

Childhood Play and Learning (Spring 2002) is being taught by Jim Spilsbury, Ph.D., Research Associate of the Schubert Center and part-time lecturer in the Department of Anthropology. This course includes modules developed in collaboration with the Children’s Museum of Cleveland. Students are conducting research on how children and families use the museum’s interactive exhibits, and what they learn from them.

For more information on the Childhood Studies Program, visit www.cwru.edu/artsci/childstudies/.

Promoting Education at CWRU

For information about the Schubert Center for Child Development, visit www.cwru.edu/artsci/schubert/