

STAART Child and Family Project
Studies to Advance Autism Research and Treatment
Boston University School of Medicine
<http://www.bu.edu/autism>
Fall/Winter 2005



Child and Family Project Staff: C. Connolly; A. Rayno; K. Dame; K. Stanford; H. Tager-Flusberg; A. Carter; M. B. Kadlec; L. Mongillo

NAAR WALK 2005

If you were able to come to this year's WALK F.A.R. for N.A.A.R. (National Alliance for Autism Research) on Sunday, September 25, you couldn't miss our team's bright red shirts. We had a wonderful time meeting families and sharing information about our studies while helping to raise funds for autism research. Members of our lab, along with fellow researchers and staff from the Lab of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience, walked 3.1 miles and collectively raised over **\$11,500!** This is almost twice as much as we raised last year. Thanks very much to all who participated this year, especially team leaders **Kristin Dame, Kristen Lindgren** and **Nancy Shaffer**. Kristin Dame spoke about the NAAR-funded research in the lab and the Child and Family Project at the Walk F.A.R. for NAAR Awards Reception on December 2 at Boston University's Agganis Arena.

YEAR THREE OF OUR STUDY

We have begun contacting families to schedule their third year visit! Please watch your mailbox for a postcard from project staff. We look forward to seeing you and learning how your children have grown and changed.

PROJECT NEWS

The Child and Family Project has been up and running for two years! As many of you know, we are very interested in learning more about the development of young children with autism and how raising a child with autism is affecting families.

To date we have had:

- over **130 families** involved in the study
- **38** active families for Year 2
- **84** children have moved onto preschool

It is wonderful to see so many new families joining our study. However, we are still planning on enrolling 300 families in our study! If you know of a family who might like to participate, we would love for you to recommend our study to them.

We continue to enroll **families and their child who may have a diagnosis of autism, an autism spectrum disorder, PDD, or who are suspected as having a diagnosis and are between the ages of 18 and 33 months.**

To learn more about this important research project please contact:

Kristin Dame, LMHC, Family Coordinator, at (617) 414-2358 or at kdame@bu.edu

Website: www.bu.edu/autism

Summer Highlights from the American Psychological Association Conference, Wash., D.C.

Dr. Alice Carter, Principal Investigator, was invited to chair a symposium on the topic of "Social-Emotional and Behavior Problems and Competencies, Sensory Processing, and Family Functioning in Toddlers with Autism."

The symposium included presentations by two project staff members, **Mary Beth Kadlec** and **Naomi Ornstein Davis**. Mary Beth presented on the types and frequencies of sensory processing behaviors reported by parents. Naomi presented on the relations between child competencies and the well-being of mothers and fathers.

RECRUITMENT UPDATES

In a continuing effort to combine recruitment with education, we have traveled across the state sharing information about the project and giving our **“Early Markers of Autism”** presentation to the following fantastic Early Intervention Programs (EIP).

Cambridge-Somerville EIP
Criterion Child Enhancement Center: Framingham
Enable, Inc. EIP
Health Foundation EIP
Jewish Family & Children Services EIP
Kennedy Donovan Center EIP: Southbridge
Kennedy Donovan Center EIP: New Bedford
Lipton EIP
MSCPCC-Good Start EIP: Worcester
North Shore Infant Toddler Development Program
South Bay EIP: Brockton
South Bay EIP: Lowell
Taunton Area EIP
Wayside/Beaverbrook EIP

We want to give special thanks and acknowledgment to the following providers and centers for their continuing support in spreading the word about our study:

- * Drs. Albert Scheiner and Robin Adair, Pediatricians, Infant & Toddler Clinic, UMASS Medical Center, Worcester
- * Susan Kraemer, Director of LEAP
- * Valerie Chase, Director of Clinical Services, Seven Hills Academy
- * Dr. Karen Levine and the staff at Building Blocks
- * Dr. Ellen Perrin, Pediatrician, New England Medical Center
- * The May Institute
- * Horace Mann
- * BEACON Services
- * Children Making Strides
- * Educational Consultants of New England
- * New England Center for Children

Thanks to everyone who has helped families to participate in the project!

NAAR-Funded Research Opportunity

An exciting opportunity for children between 4 and 7 years of age with a diagnosis of autism or PDD to participate in innovative research!

Dr. Robert Joseph is investigating the relationship between brain structure and language development in children with autism through brain imaging (MRI) and language assessments. To learn more about participating in this important research, please call:

**Nancy Schaffer, Project Coordinator
at 617-414-2348**



We welcome **David Black**, clinical psychologist, to the Child and Family Project! David attended George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. He did his post-doctoral training at University of California, Los Angeles where he studied pediatric neuropsychology and autism. For the Child and Family Project, he provides training and oversees clinical aspects of evaluations. Among his research interests are how neurocognitive development, self-regulation and language influence social functioning.



We are also pleased to welcome new research assistants **Nicole Edwards** (left) and **Angelina Rayno** (right) to our project this year. Nicole joins us from the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied psychology and linguistics. Angelina received her education at the University of Rochester, NY, where she studied psychology and American Sign Language Education.

We also welcome student research assistants **Kristen Stanford** and **Hilary Habershaw**. Kristen is currently in her senior year in the Communication Disorders Department and Hilary is in her last year in the master's program in the Occupational Therapy Department, both at Sargent College, Boston University. We hope that you will have a chance to meet and work with these talented new team members soon!

PROJECT STAFF

Alice Carter, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
Helen Tager-Flusberg, Ph.D., STAART Center Director
Mary Beth Kadlec, Sc.D., OTR/L, Project Manager
Kristin Dame, M.A., LMHC, Family Coordinator
Naomi Ornstein Davis, M.A., Assistant Family Coordinator
Nicole Edwards, B.A., Research Assistant
Angelina Rayno, B.A., Research Assistant
Christine Connolly, B.S., Data Manager