

# Children, Youth & Family Consortium

## CYFC Monthly

### CYFC Monthly — April 2015

#### Family Development's Impact on Minnesota Communities

The University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development helps families make informed decisions leading to better health and well being. This spring, the Center for Family Development (FD) has been reviewing last years' work in preparation for the publication of the 2014 Annual Report. This project gives us the opportunity to reflect on the good work we have done and the impact we have had on Minnesota's communities. The Children, Youth & Family Consortium (CYFC) would like to share what our Family Development colleagues have been up to with the following three excerpts from the Annual Report.

#### Our Impact by the Numbers

- 144 Family Development faculty and staff worked together to deliver quality education programming to families and practitioners throughout Minnesota.
- 43,749 people directly participated in our programs and education opportunities, with 49 percent of adult participants representing racially and ethnically diverse populations.
- 313,519 people reached through our website, publications, social networking and more. That's enough to fill the Target Center over 16 times!
- 6,628 volunteer hours from partner organizations and individuals dedicated to helping Minnesota families.
- 103 journal articles, evaluation reports, curricula and other publications that reach thousands of people in Minnesota and nationwide.

#### Partnership Builds a Better Learning Space for Kids

Thanks to the incredible work and dedication of over 55 active partners and the generous funds provided by the Extension Issue Area Grant, our Children, Youth & Family Consortium partnered to create an innovative learning space for children at Bruce Vento Elementary School in Saint Paul. The project capitalized on the strengths of school staff and community leaders, as well as University of Minnesota faculty, staff and students, to enhance learning opportunities for students by creating a calming room at the school.

Calming rooms are used as safe places for students to practice skills aimed at regulating their behaviors and emotions when they are having difficulty in the classroom. Research suggests these spaces contribute to fewer numbers of behavioral outbursts requiring lengthy removal from classrooms and the use of other harsh disciplinary measures. College of Design students worked with the behavioral staff at Bruce Vento to design the calming room. Learn more at [z.umn.edu/ucx](http://z.umn.edu/ucx).

#### Online Divorce Education Course Grows in Popularity, Shows Results

Parents Forever™ is an 8-hour education course to give divorced or otherwise-separated parents skills and information on parent-child relationships, co-parenting, and self care. The course aims to reduce the risks associated with the family transition that occurs after divorce or other type of separation, as well as promote family resilience. In 2012, the Supreme Court of Minnesota asked the Center for Family Development to adapt the in-person Parents Forever™ program to an online format. Participation in the online program has grown every year since its creation, with 1,569 people taking the course in 2014 and larger numbers expected in 2015.

Research shows the online course is effective in helping divorced and separated parents better handle the transition. Participants who take the course are asked to take a pre-survey, a post-survey, and a 6-10 month follow-up survey. Analysis of survey responses from the launch of the online course found that 6-10 months later, participants reported significant improvements in several areas:

- Increased ability to control angry or negative responses when communicating with the other parent.
- Reduced level of conflict with the other parent, as observed by their children.
- Greater feelings of well-being compared to others going through the divorce process.
- Increased ability to cope with their own experiences of divorce.

Extension educators and staff have written and are writing more journal articles based on this data. One example is "Parents Forever™: Evaluation of an Online Divorce Education Program," which was recently accepted for publication in the Journal of Divorce and Remarriage. Learn more about Parents Forever™ at [z.umn.edu/parentsforever](http://z.umn.edu/parentsforever)

Read the entire Family Development 2014 Annual Report here. [no longer active]

## Consortium News

### **CYFC Develops New Video on Mental Health**

What do you think of when you hear the words "children's mental health?" CYFC aims to answer that question with a new video called "[Mental Health: Yours, Mine and Ours.](#)" This 6-minute video, hosted by Cari Michaels, M.P.H., Extension educator with CYFC, provides an overview of mental health in general, and then focuses on children's mental health in particular.

The video frames children's mental health as a public health issue and calls for promoting optimal mental health for all children through four pathways:

- Working with children as individuals to improve their self esteem and more.
- Engaging parents in healthy parenting practices and more.
- Incorporating mental health promotion activities into schools, social service agencies, and other organizations serving children and families.
- Changing policies to reduce stigma about mental health and mental illness and ensure that children have secure housing, healthy foods, safe neighborhoods, and access to health care.

Read more about research on children's mental in this Youth Development Issue Brief: Social and Emotional Learning: Implications for Enhancing Children's Mental Health.

## University & Community Announcements

### **The Complexities of Domestic Abuse: An Overview of Resources, Research and Effective Interventions**

Sponsor: Minnesota Council on Family Relations, Spring 2015 Conference

Date: 8 a.m.-Noon, May 1, 2015

Cost: \$10-\$40

Location: New Brighton (MN) Community Center or video conference at regional sites

This conference will feature Aaron Milgrom, M.A., L.M.F.T, Director of Therapy, and Angela Lewis-Dmello, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W., Associate Director of Therapy, at the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) in Minneapolis. They will discuss the dynamics of domestic abuse, causes of violence, effects on children who witness domestic abuse, and more. You will learn effective interventions conducted at [DAP](#), including trauma-informed treatment for victims, abusers and children. [Learn more](#); register [here](#).

### **Youth Programs as Powerful Settings for Social and Emotional Learning**

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development, Symposium

Date: 8:30 a.m.-Noon, May 15, 2015

Cost: Free

Location: U of M McNamara Alumni Center, Minneapolis, or online

[Reed Larson, Ph.D.](#), and [Lisa Bouillion Diaz, Ph.D.](#), of the University of Illinois, and [Natalie Rusk, Ph.D.](#), a research scientist with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Laboratory, will focus on promoting social and emotional learning in youth programs during this event. Hear the latest research on how youth learn strategic thinking and emotional management skills and what strategies professionals can use to facilitate this development in children. The event is free, but you need to RSVP [here](#).

### **Partnering for School Success Take and Teach Lessons available in Spanish**

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development

These "Take and Teach" lessons are designed to help volunteers and professional educators facilitate discussions and activities with parents on how to better support their children's education. The nine lessons cover setting expectations, providing structure, modeling a respect for learning, and more. Access the lessons [here](#).

### **Attachment Matters: Raising the Bar for Child Wellbeing**

Sponsor: Association for Training on Trauma and Attachment in Children

Dates: September 24-27, 2015

Location: Bloomington, MN

Save the Date! Join [Stephen Porges, Ph.D.](#), of the University of North Carolina, [Deborah Gray L.I.C.S.W.](#), founder of Nurturing Attachments, and [Jaak Panksepp, Ph.D.](#) of Northwestern University and Washington State University, for a conference addressing attachment and trauma through innovative workshop sessions. Read more here. [link no longer active]

### **Recognizing and Treating Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach for Young Children**

Occupational therapist Jasmine McGiffert of [St. David's Center for Child & Family Development](#) in Minnetonka, MN, joins [Marti Erickson, Ph.D.](#) and her daughter, Erin Erickson, to discuss Autism Spectrum

Disorders (ASD), including information on when to have a child evaluated for ASD and the kinds of services are available to help a child with ASD learn and develop. Listen to the podcast on the [Mom Enough website](#).

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