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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Since its inception in 2001, the Atkinson Centre has actively engaged in early years research, policy development and promoting innovative best practice for educators and family practitioners. Stronger institutional partnerships with ongoing support from our funders has made this past year particularly rewarding. The working partnership between George Brown College’s School of Early Childhood, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute for Child Study (ICS) ensures that early years research is influenced by the important work of practitioners and that teaching practice is informed by evidenced-based research. Our work is collaborative in nature and encompasses community-based organizations, other educational institutions and policymakers to ensure that our outputs are current and are informed by community needs. The Atkinson Centre builds capacity through its internship program that is supported by a variety of tertiary institutions across Canada. Through the Early Years Education Report we encourage governments to think about and improve the services that they provide to young children. We are also working with the Forum for Early Childhood Development Monitoring to develop an instrument for the screening of 18 month old children that can be used at the population level. Our approach to knowledge mobilization puts the Atkinson Centre in a unique position to build on the strength of the interconnectedness between research, policy and practice.

One of our new initiatives is to provide evidence-based support for early intervention strategies for public policy and investment. We are implementing intervention trials with partners in primary care settings to provide evidence for the efficacy of childcare initiatives and early parenting supports to change early brain development and behavior of children.

On behalf of our partners, I would like to thank the Atkinson Charitable Foundation and the Margaret and Wallace McCain Foundation for their generous contribution to the work of the Atkinson Centre.

Jenny Jenkins, Chair
RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE

Early childhood and family support initiatives are undergoing a significant transformation in Ontario, across Canada and internationally. The Atkinson Centre is a leading activist research centre that provides evidence-based research to inform public policy development and to support best practices in early childhood education and family supports. In collaboration with school boards, regional governments, other universities and colleges, the work of the Atkinson Centre is grounded on the premise that public policy and practice based on evidence, supports the best outcomes for children and their families.

Based on international and Canadian best practice the Atkinson Centre supports the development of a publicly funded, comprehensive, accessible and accountable early childhood education and family support system. This is best accomplished when public policy provides coherent direction, support and oversight. Seven provinces and territories have now moved the responsibility of early childhood and family support into their Ministries of Education. This trend, which more closely aligns early childhood services with public education and therefore public accountability, is supported by the work of Atkinson Centre.

The centre works with a team of multidisciplinary researchers, policy influencers and experts. They engage in research committed to support the development of best practice in the professional education of educators at both the undergraduate and graduate level. They investigate the naturally occurring processes in families, neighbourhoods, schools and early childhood programs that predict good outcomes in children so that this information may be used in intervention studies. They develop and evaluate intervention programs for children, parents and teachers with the goal of applying the most effective scientific methods to improving our understanding about how environmental circumstances influence brain and behavioural development in young children. We are committed to ensuring that our findings are shared with families and professionals working with families to inform best practice in child and family policy and programming. Atkinson Centre researchers also maintain a research agenda that monitors early childhood and family support policy, funding, curriculum and human resource plans across the country.

RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION

The Atkinson Centre maintains a strong commitment to research that is supported by scientifically rigorous design (random assignment to control and intervention groups) that allows us to be certain that the intervention causes change to the outcome of interest. Although most social programs and social policy are not always based on rigorous scientific data, at the Atkinson Centre we believe that the best way of improving the lives of young children is to base our social programs and policy on incontrovertible evidence. We are currently running intervention studies that are designed to show that by improving the environments of children we can improve children’s outcomes. Our first study (Akbari, Fleming, Jenkins, Janmohamed, Lee, Madigan, Plamondon) focuses on changing parental responsiveness. Parental responsiveness is known to be very important for children’s early cognitive and socio emotional development. Through interventions in the home delivered by early childhood educators, we seek to improve parental responses. We expect to see improvements in children’s brain function, their language and behaviour. We have designed the delivery of the program to fit into existing structures for young children. This ensures that our program can be made available to children and parents, once its effectiveness is demonstrated.
Katreena Scott, Joe Ducharme and Jennifer Jenkins have completed another intervention trial that focuses on helping teachers to effectively manage emotional and behavioural problems in classrooms. The results of this study show the importance of this kind of instruction for teacher effectiveness and as a consequence we are delivering this more widely to teacher candidates, with the goal of improving children’s classroom behaviour and learning. Over the next couple of years our goal is carry out several more intervention studies related to licensed childcare settings (Michal Perlman) and home environments to ensure that we have a strong knowledge base about how to optimize the environments of young children.

**KIDS, FAMILIES AND PLACES STUDY**

KFP is a longitudinal study of 501 families that was funded for nine years by the Canadian Institute of Health Research. Families with a newborn and an older child were recruited through public health units when the youngest child was born. The sample includes 47% new immigrants and is representative of the personal income and family size of Toronto families. Children have been followed until school age. Findings have focused on the effect of neighbourhood and socioeconomic disadvantage on family life parenting factors that are influential in early learning, social understanding, self control and emotional and behavioural regulation and the role of immigration and ethnicity in family life and in children’s outcomes. Findings are being reported at national and international meetings and form the basis for new initiatives in parenting programs and in schools to reduce behavioural problems and increase cognitive functioning.

**THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION REPORT**

The ECE Report provides a snapshot of emerging early childhood education systems across Canada. The Atkinson Centre monitors and updates provincial and territorial profiles reflecting five categories of the policy lessons that emerged from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s review of the early education and care in its member states. The ECE report addresses the following questions:

- Governance: Is oversight for ECE split between multiple provincial departments, or does it have coherent direction and sound service delivery?
- Funding: Is it adequate to support program quality and access?
- Access: Full day kindergarten is becoming the norm – is it offered? Do at least half of children 2 to 4 years regularly attend an ECE program? Is the accommodation of children with special needs a condition of public funding?
- Learning Environment: Here we look at the density of ECE qualifications and the professionalization of the workforce. Has a provincial curriculum been developed, and are ECE salaries reflective of the value of the work?
- Accountability: Are provinces meeting their reporting requirements? Is program quality assessed in all ECE settings and is the EDI or similar tool used at entry to kindergarten?

The benchmarks in each category have been adapted to Canadian circumstances. The ECE report is updated every three years. The next report is due November 2014.

Findings are shared with policy makers and early childhood academics, researchers and practitioners.
Between reports, interim updates are developed and released on the individual benchmarks in the report. The Centre also maintains a policy monitor which tracks federal, provincial and territorial early childhood policy initiatives.

http://earlyyearsstudy.ca/en/index/

**FULL-DAY EARLY LEARNING/KINDERGARTEN**

Full-Day Early Learning/Kindergarten builds on research of Peel Best Start and examines the implementation and the impact of Ontario’s FDK program on staff teams, parents and children. First-year results, available on the Atkinson Centre’s website, show significant benefits for parents and children and describe ways in which staff teams of early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers are working together to create an integrated team and curriculum approach that includes parents. Second-year data have been collected and are currently being analyzed.

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Publications/Peel_Year_1_FDELK_Summary_Report.pdf

For many years, Dr. Pelletier’s research team has been developing, implementing and carrying out research on family literacy programs at schools in the Peel region. Some of the research has involved randomized control trials. In all cases, there have been demonstrated benefits to parents as evidenced by parent testimonials and by changes in home literacy practices. Likewise, significant benefits to children have been evidenced by greater gains in early literacy development for children involved in the intervention than for a matched control group. A longitudinal follow-up study, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), is underway to determine whether early benefits are maintained.

**FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD PRACTICE TO EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP: A STUDY OF THE CAREER PATHS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP DEGREE GRADUATES IN ONTARIO**

There is a growing interest in building the capacity of early childhood leaders through advanced education. This study will explore the career and education paths of the first group of graduates from the new early childhood leadership degree programs. The study will examine the factors that influence the graduates’ career trajectories and explore if the early childhood leadership program provides adequate training and resources to support their leadership goals.

**EMIS AKBARI, PhD**

**Summary of Atkinson Fellowship**

As a postdoctoral fellow with the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development and The Fraser Mustard Institute of Human Development here at OISE, the primary goal of my position is to provide evidence-based support for early intervention strategies for public policy and investment. Since the onset of my appointment in January 2013, I have been involved in reviewing existing early parenting intervention strategies in their effectiveness to positively influence child social, emotional and cognitive outcomes. The success of these strategies is demonstrated in randomized control trials (RCTs) and public dissemination trials, with excellent transportability across culture, levels of income, family composition and educational background. I have had the opportunity to present this extensive review to various audiences including the Atkinson Task Force, provincial groups interested in improving their intervention strategies and a group of...
scientists involved in different facets of early intervention with the intention of conducting overlapping RCTs in the field. Our goal at the Atkinson Centre is to mount a series of intervention trials, within primary care and child care settings, that will inform us about a system of care and family support to improve the learning and mental health outcomes for young children. Our immediate goal is to seek funds for a trial in primary health care, in collaboration with general practitioners to improve the emotional and cognitive sensitivity of high-risk mothers. The intervention that we are trialing has been shown to improve the language and health outcomes of preschool children. Follow-up of the children will continue into school.

Lastly, I am currently involved in the 10th Annual Summer Institute on Early Childhood Development in collaboration with George Brown College where I will be leading a workshop on evidence-based parenting interventions for early learning and positive mental health. Taking place on June 12, 2013, this institute will help guide the integration of key parenting support programs with the Ministry of Education’s Early Learning Division in a policy framework.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The Atkinson Centre generates, collects and analyzes data to inform public policy decisions at all levels. The Centre produces and disseminates materials, i.e., reports, briefing papers, action guides, legislative alerts and updates, to assist the early childhood sector and other community leaders in defining, influencing and monitoring public policy issues that affect children and families. It shares the best available evidence with officials to assist them in developing their policy agendas.

The Atkinson Centre maintains partnerships with colleges and universities across Canada to build strong alliances between the professional education of family support practitioners, early childhood educators and elementary school teachers. The Atkinson Centre builds these partnerships though public education seminars, joint research projects, leadership and capacity development.

Our Supporters

The Atkinson Centre is a partnership between the Ontario Institute for Studies and Education, George Brown College School of Early Childhood Education and the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study. We gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation and contributions to our work from the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and the Lawson Foundation.
EVENTS

The Atkinson Centre has established strong university-community research alliances and contributes to the field of early childhood through key events that support knowledge mobilization that extend our “community” provincially, nationally and internationally.

The Atkinson Centre regularly sponsors events with our partners to support public education and professional learning in early childhood education that meet the commitment to excellence in research and academic programs at OISE.

FINDINGS FROM THE UK’S EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION STUDY: CANADIAN TOUR WITH DR. EDWARD MELHUISH

April 25-May 2, 2013

Effective provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) is the first major study in the United Kingdom to focus specifically on the effectiveness of early years education. The large-scale, longitudinal study follows the progress and development of 4,000 children in various types of home and pre-school settings. It explores the characteristics of different kinds of early years settings and their influences on children’s development and later progress. It is now reporting at age 16. Dr. Melhuish’s work explores the effects of student variables (gender, health status), family (parental SES, qualifications, home learning, etc.) and neighbourhood characteristics on student’s secondary school attendance, attitudes, social, behavioural and academic outcomes.

FIRST ANNUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM: SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

April 12, 2013

This event celebrated the first graduating class from the Bachelor of Early Childhood Leadership Degree Program at Sheridan, George Brown and Fanshawe colleges. The students were given the opportunity to share their research findings on several diverse topics related to early childhood and family support.

Dr. Carl Corter, keynote speaker, addressed the importance of leadership in the early learning profession, linking research and policy with practice.

PRESENTATION TO EARLY YEARS STEERING GROUP, GOVERNMENT NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, YELLOWKNIFE

February 13, 2013

This presentation to the Government of the Northwest Territories, provided an overview of the Early Childhood Education Report, as well as the development of a curriculum framework for the Northwest Territories, and an overview of SECD.
EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTRUMENT (EDI): FROM DATA TO ACTION

February 2, 2013

This one-day event provided an opportunity to share experiences and plans on how to optimize the dissemination and use of early childhood development data to promote change and action.

The objectives were to:

- To increase our knowledge of the related scope, limits and opportunities in order to enhance use of early childhood development data by a range of stakeholders: the general public, local groups and coalitions, advocates, regional, provincial and national decision-makers and the media;
- To share examples of effective use of early childhood indicators that led to action and change.
- To explore how early childhood indicators can be used in conjunction with other sources of data to mobilize stakeholders around planning (situational and needs analysis, priority-setting), implementation and action, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

LEARNING TO CARE: LESSONS FOR THE TRANSITION TO INTEGRATED EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM DELIVERY

October 22-23, 2012

This conference examined models of early childhood service integration and their impact on ECE practice and public policy; with experts from across Canada, the UK, Australia and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

EARLY YEARS SYMPOSIUM 2012 - PLAY BASED APPROACHES TO LITERACY & NUMERACY

October 13, 2012

The 2nd Annual Early Years Symposium was a one day symposium for teachers, ECE educators, administrators and teaching assistants working in full day early learning kindergarten programs. It featured speakers and breakout sessions with school teams across Ontario, and OISE faculty who are deeply immersed in all aspects of early learning.

SUMMER INSTITUTE - FROM 0-3 YEARS: RESEARCH THAT INFORMS POLICY AND PRACTICE

June 8, 2012

The 9th Summer Institute on Early Child Development brought together experts, practitioners, policymakers and key stakeholders to examine evidence-based approaches to developing a comprehensive children and family support system.
STUDENT PROFILES

NADIA D’ANGELO

Nadia is entering the third year of her PhD in the Developmental Psychology and Education program at OISE/UT. She completed her MA in Developmental Psychology at Carleton University. Her research interests are in bilingual education, language and literacy development. In particular, her research longitudinally examines models of English and French reading growth for multilingual children enrolled in early French immersion programs. For her dissertation, Nadia will investigate the suitability of French immersion for children identified as at-risk for reading difficulties. She will compare the development of reading comprehension for at-risk immersion and non-immersion students. Her research will have practical implications by assisting parents and educators in making informed decisions regarding French immersion placement.

DILLON BROWNE

Dillon is a Vanier Scholar with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and a PhD Student in School and Clinical Child Psychology at OISE/UT. Broadly, his research is concerned with exploring the social, economic and contextual influences on early child development. Specifically, he is interested in the ways in which environmental adversity and psychosocial risk impacts developmental health via family processes such as parenting and interpersonal relationships. He also conducts research on the health and social service utilization patterns of high-risk families. Both clinically and in research, Dillon is interested in the provision of services that optimize individual and family outcomes while reducing the economic impact of mental health problems. He has worked with children and families in educational, healthcare and community mental health contexts.

LESLIE KOPF-JOHNSON

Leslie Kopf-Johnson coordinates and teaches in the early childhood education program at Algonquin College. She is currently in her third year of the Early Learning Cohort Ph.D. program offered in the department of Human Development and Applied Psychology. The focus of her research is on coaching as a strategy for improving quality in early learning programs. The research will examine whether or not the use of coaches will result in greater program quality improvements within licensed preschool programs and if the use of coaches will influence educators’ perceptions of a quality improvement process.

CARLOS PEREIRA

Carlos Pereira is a full-time professor in the Early Childhood Education program at Algonquin College in Ottawa. He has been involved in the early learning field for over 22 years working with children from infancy through to school-age, and for the last ten years as a faculty member at Algonquin and Sheridan College. Carlos is in the third year of the flex-time PhD. Program in Developmental Psychology and Education at OISE/UT. As one of the three percent of males who work in ECE in Canadian early learning environments, Carlos’ research will be aimed at examining the variables that influence some male’s initial attraction to and long-term persistence in working in these types of educational programs. While research on why more men don’t choose these types of careers is fairly well documented, trying to determine why some males do find satisfying long term careers in the field has not been addressed. Potential variables
supporting men’s engagement will be used to develop potential recruitment and retention strategies for supporting men’s involvement in early learning and young children’s lives.

ERICA OKEZIE-PHILLIPS

Erica Okezie-Phillips is a senior-level Program Officer in the Education Program at the McCormick Foundation in Chicago, IL. The Foundation is a philanthropic organization that funds early care and education systems policy and advocacy initiatives at the state and federal levels. Erica Okezie-Phillips is in her third year of the Flex-time Ph.D. Program in Developmental Psychology and Education at OISE/UT. The focus of her research is the application of a case study method to examine U.S. and Canadian private foundations to explore the extent philanthropic organizations have played a role in the development of early education policy and systems development, while determining if there are different approaches between the two countries. The study will also consider contextual factors that have helped to shape education funding environments and guide how Canadian and American early childhood education funders view and fund early education public policy. Few studies have explored how foundations come to define their theory of impact in funding education public policy, and even less is known about how foundations develop the processes by which they evaluate success. This work will build on the existing literature by drawing lessons learned from highlighted cases where private resources have been perceived to have leveraged public sector investments in early childhood education.

KRISTY TIMMONS

Kristy Timmons is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and a certified teacher. In April 2013 she completed her MA in OISE’s Child Study and Education program. Kristy will be entering the first year of the PhD program in Developmental Psychology and Education at OISE/UT in September of this year.

Kristy is a Lab Manager in Dr. Janette Pelletier’s research lab where she is primarily working on two research projects. One of these projects is a longitudinal research project, which is examining the implementation and impact of Full-Day Early learning Kindergarten. The second project is a longitudinal study of family literacy programs.

In addition to her work at the University of Toronto, she is also working on a project with Dr. Aurelia Di Santo (Ryerson University), which is investigating the effects of a family literacy program for mothers and their children living in a transitional shelter.

ALFREDO TINAJERO

Alfredo Tinajero is a PhD. candidate in the DPE Early Learning Flex-time program. Alfredo is coordinating a study that combines data from early developmental health measures and health surveys with data from population studies that measure school achievement in third and sixth grade students in Nuevo Leon, Mexico. The purpose of the study is to determine if developmental health data from early childhood can be used to predict academic achievement in primary school. This study also looks for school factors that may affect academic achievement scores. The data sets to be used in the analysis are: 1) The Early Development Inventory (Janus and Offord, 2007); 2) school surveys; and 3) the Second Regional comparative Study of Reading, Mathematics, and Social Sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO-LLECE, 2008). Alfredo hopes the study will strengthen awareness about the link between early human development and academic achievement scores and will prove the viability of linking developmental health and education data sets at a population level.
JANET ASTINGTON

Janet Wilde Astington is Professor Emerita at the Institute of Child Study, Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, where she has held a faculty position since 1990.

Astonington obtained a Ph.D. in Applied Cognitive Science from the University of Toronto (OISE) in 1985, after which she played an important role in the development of the field of children’s theories of mind (ToM). She is author of The Child’s Discovery of the Mind (Harvard University Press, 1993), which is published in French, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean translations and editor or co-editor of four other volumes, including Developing Theories of Mind (Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Why Language Matters for Theory of Mind (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Astonington’s research interest is in children’s theory of mind (that is, social understanding and self-reflection) with a particular focus on the role of language in theory-of-mind development. Her applied interest is in helping student teachers use theory-of-mind research findings in order to develop materials and approaches that engage children in mindful learning.

Representative publications


JANE BERTRAND

Jane Bertrand is the Program Director for the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and a member of the Directing Committee of the Centre for Excellence for Early Childhood Development. She is a former Professor at the School of Early Childhood at George Brown College, Toronto. Jane is the author of the textbook, Essentials of Early Childhood Education (Canadian Editions). Jane was the principal researcher/writer on the Early Years Study 1, 2 and 3. She is a contributing author of the Science of Early Child Development (www.scienceofecd.com) and was a member of the Toronto First Duty Research and Development team from the Atkinson Centre.

Representative publications

XI (BECKY) CHEN-BUMGARDNER

Dr. Chen-Bumgardner is an Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, OISE, University of Toronto. Her research focuses on bilingual children’s language and literacy development. So far, her research has examined Chinese-English bilinguals, Spanish-English bilinguals and children in French immersion programs. She is interested in how children develop language and literacy skills (e.g. morphological awareness, phonological awareness, orthographic processing, visual perception and memory, vocabulary, word reading and reading comprehension) simultaneously in their first language and second language and how these skills transfer between the two languages.

Representative publications


**Current research grants & contracts**

2013-2018 SSHRC Insight Grant, Ensuring reading success for all students in early French immersion, PI, with Helene Deacon, Stefka Marinova-Todd (Co-PIs), and Donald Compton (Collaborator), $303,323.

2012-2013 Evaluation of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board English/Mandarin Bilingual Language Transition Program-Follow up, Co-PI, with Jim Cummins (Co-PI), $29,883.

2012 Clifford B. Kinley Trust Award, The Effects of Dual Language Instruction on Children’s Academic Growth, Co-PI, with Alejandro Cuza at Purdue University (PI), $20,000.

2011-2014 SSHRC Standard Research Grant, Altering the Academic Achievement Trajectory of Recent Adolescent immigrants: An After School Community-Based Intervention Targeting Language and Reading Related Strategic Knowledge, Co-PI, with Esther Geva (PI), Fataneh Farnia, and Alexandra Gottardo, $159,717.

2010-2013 SSHRC Standard Research Grant, Literacy Development of English Language Learners, PI, with Gloria Ramirez, Esther Geva (Co-PIs), and Teresa Pérez-Leroux (collaborator), $87,754.

**JULIE COMAY**

Julie Comay is a Teacher/Researcher at the Institute of Child Study Laboratory School, University of Toronto. Her current areas of interest include children’s theory of mind, narrative development, early literacy, play, and early mathematics development. She is also interested in working with teachers to explore more effective ways of applying developmental research in designing classroom curricula. The bulk of her research has focused on the developmental relations among language, theory of mind and narrative skill. For several years, she has been part of a longitudinal research study (with Mary Thelander) investigating the impact of a story-based curriculum on children’s language and theory-of-mind development. She has recently become involved with the Math for Young Children initiative, a research partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Education aiming to enhance mathematics education in early years classrooms.

**Representative publications**


**CARL CORTER**

Carl Corter is interested in improving policy and professional education to support children and families. His research has focused on integrated early childhood services in the community, including child care and kindergarten as well as on parenting and parental involvement in schools and other services. His current research examines policy and practice directed at the development of self- and social-regulation in early learning settings. He is Professor of Applied Psychology and Human Development at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study.

**Representative publications**


**Current research grants & contracts**


**PATRICIA GANEA**

Patricia Ganea is Assistant Professor at the Dr. Jackman Institute of Child Study and the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development at OISE, University of Toronto. Dr. Ganea is a developmental psychologist who studies children’s learning, language development and symbolic development. At the Language and Learning Lab at ICS, Dr. Ganea and her research team investigate the processes involved in young children's learning about the world through symbolic means, such as language, pictures, videos and replica objects.

**Representative publications**


**ZEENAT JANMOHAMED**

Zeenat Janmohamed is the Executive Director of the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the University of Toronto. She is cross-appointed to the School of Early Childhood at George Brown College. Her research explores the impact of a blended early learning program that includes teachers and early childhood educators on children’s development, family engagement and educational policy.

Her other area of expertise examines the implementation of ideas related to diversity, equity and difference. Her research aims to bring a focus on the limitations of a term that is regularly espoused in training, policy and practice challenging educators and researcher to think more broadly and critically about how children and families are categorized in early learning.

In collaboration with other researchers, Zeenat is exploring the career paths of recent graduates from early childhood leadership programs.

**Representative publications**


**JENNIFER JENKINS**

Professor Jennifer Jenkins is the Atkinson Chair of Early Child Development and Education and Director of the Atkinson Centre at the University of Toronto. She is a clinical and developmental psychologist. Her research has examined the influence of marital, parental and sibling relationships on developmental health. She studies why some children are more resilient than others when growing up in high-risk environments and is particularly interested in within-family differences in development. She is the Director of Kids, Families, Places, a longitudinal, birth-cohort study that includes older siblings. Its goal is to understand the interaction of biological, family and broader contextual risk in children’s socio-emotional trajectories. She is a co-author, with Dacher Keltner and Keith Oatley of Understanding Emotions, 3rd Edition.
Representative publications


Current research grants & contracts


KERRY MCCUAIG

Kerry McCuaig is the Atkinson Charitable Foundation’s Fellow in Early Childhood Policy, working with the Atkinson Centre at OISE. She is co-author of Early Years Study 3, Making Decisions, Taking Action with Margaret McCain and Fraser Mustard. Kerry has had a long involvement in early childhood policy development including as communications manager for Toronto First Duty, a pioneer in the integrated delivery of early childhood programming and supports similar integrated ECE service models in Atlantic Canada.

Kerry has many years of advocacy, public education and communication experience, speaking widely on a variety of early childhood policy issues. She has authored several publications and articles including From Patchwork to Framework: An Early Learning and Child Care Strategy for Canada and Zero to Six: The Foundation for School Success published by The Learning Partnership. She was a principal researcher/writer for the Early Years Study 2, the Commission on Early Learning and Child Care for the City of Toronto, and Early Learning and Child Care in the City, published by George Brown College and the Toronto Board of Trade. Her other work includes an examination of provincial policy initiatives on early childhood service delivery; the impact of welfare policies on family child care; an overview of workplace child care initiatives; the challenges of providing child care services outside of non-traditional hours and effective tax policies for families.

Kerry was an advisor on With Our Best Future in Mind, a policy blueprint on full day learning in Ontario. She is a sessional teacher in the ECE degree program at George Brown College and also acts as advisor to the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation and the ECD Funders Working Group.

Representative publications


Did we Elect McGuinty or Drummond? (February 2012). Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, OISE/University of Toronto.

CHARLES PASCAL

Charles has given over 40 keynote addresses and workshops in Canada, the US and Australia during this past academic year including such presentations as the annual Trudeau Foundation Policy into Action Address and the First Annual Fraser Mustard Oration in South Australia. His main focus is the development of more effective reciprocal relationships and productivity among and between researchers, policy makers and practitioners and the use of "evidence-based storytelling to achieve greater public policy impact.

- University of Toronto, Professor of Applied Psychology & Human Development and Coordinator, Flex Time PhD. program in early learning (Present)
- Special Advisor to various organizations including Good Start Early Learning in Australia) and the Chagnon Foundation in Montreal (Present)
- Early Learning Advisor to Premier of Ontario (2007-2011)
- Founding Executive Director, Atkinson Charitable Foundation (1996-2010)
- PhD. Michigan (Psychology) and five honorary doctorates and diplomas.

JANETTE PELLETIER

Janette Pelletier, Ph.D., is Professor of Applied Psychology and Human Development at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study. Janette’s research interests are in the area of early child development and education. Her current longitudinal research project is examining the implementation and impact of Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten in collaboration with the Region of Peel, the Peel District and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Boards. This work builds on research in Toronto First Duty and Peel Best Start which describe the design, implementation and evaluation of innovative integrated approaches to kindergarten, child care and parenting supports. Another major focus is parent involvement and its relation to children’s learning in kindergarten and primary classes, including a longitudinal study of family literacy programs. Her research includes participants from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, many of whom are recent immigrants to Canada. This research extends to other second language contexts such as early French immersion. A related area of her research is young children’s literacy development and communication through writing and drawing. In 2013 Janette and her colleagues Shelley Stagg Peterson and Eunice Jang received a 7-year SSHRC Partnership Grant to develop a play-based assessment of oral and written language development in northern Canadian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Applied clinical interests

Janette is a former elementary classroom teacher in English and French-immersion contexts and a former school psychologist. Her research is carried out in and applies directly to kindergarten and primary classrooms. She is also engaged in program and policy research in the area of early learning and care.

Representative publications


**Current research grants & contracts**


2011-2014 – National Science Foundation (Group grant led by Jianwei Zhang, SUNY Albany). “Fostering Collective Progress in Online Discourse for Sustained Knowledge Building.” ($550,000)


MICHAL PERLMAN

Michal’s research program revolves around two sets of questions. One attempts to identify constructs that determine quality in child care settings, developing empirically based measures of those constructs and linking child care quality to child outcomes. The other line of research focuses on understanding the origins of young children's conflict behaviours, with particular emphasis on children's perspective taking. Recently, she has begun merging these research areas by studying perspective taking and conflict resolution in child care centres. She is interested in both basic and applied research. She is also interested in the use of diverse research methodologies and is involved in research that addresses micro-level social processes based on intensive observational data as well as large-scale-survey research studies. Finally Michal is interested in public policy for children and is cross-appointed at U of T's School of Public Policy and Governance.

Representative publications

Prime, H., Perlman, M., Tackett, J.L., Jenkins, J. (accepted). *The Use of Thin-Slicing as a Method of Coding Observational Data: A Comparison With Micro-Coding*. Early Education and Development.


Current research grants & contracts & awards

The development of cooperation in relationships: Protective processes for children vulnerable to mental health problems. A $562,250 grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Awarded in 2013. Jennifer Jenkins is the PI on this grant. I am a Co-Applicant along with several others.

Testing the validity of the infant and Toddler operating Criteria. A $365,600.16 grant provided by the City of Toronto. Awarded in 2012. I am the PI on this grant.

Understanding the impact of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) program quality on children’s developmental health. A $56,000.00 grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Awarded in 2011. I am the primary investigator on this grant. Along with several Co-Applicants.

Examples of University and Community service

2013 Member of the Child Care Funding Model Advisory Committee for the City of Toronto.

2013 Reviewer for the OECD’s “Policy review of monitoring quality in early learning and development”.

KATREENA SCOTT

Katreena Scott, Ph.D. C. Psych. is an Associate Professor and Clinical Psychologist in the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology of the University of Toronto. Dr. Scott’s contributions have been recognized with an Early Researcher Award from the government of Ontario (2006) and a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Family Violence Prevention and Treatment (2008).

Areas of Interest

Dr. Scott lead an applied research program aimed at reducing violence in family relationships. Ending violence against women and children is an issue of international priority, as reflected in two of the eight Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations. It is also a priority in Canada, where there are an estimated 235,842 maltreatment-related investigations each year, and where family violence also accounts for approximately one-quarter of all violent crimes reported to police services, and for one in five solved homicides.

Dr. Scott’s specific expertise is addressing violence perpetration, particularly in men and fathers. Recognizing the overlapping nature of family violence problems, Dr. Scott’s current research has three major themes: 1) Recognizing and intervening with abusive fathers: Promoting safety in high-risk families; 2) Intervention for perpetrators of domestic violence; and 3) Recognizing and responding to maltreated children in the classroom. In her research, Dr. Scott combines information gathered through observation, interview, self-report, and physiological measures with men, women and children to try to better understand how and when interventions can be most successful in promoting change and to more precisely delineate risk factors for continued harm.

An important component of all Dr. Scott’s work is knowledge mobilization. Thus, most of her research is conducted collaboratively with community agencies that address family violence (i.e., Children’s Aid Societies, police, intervention service providers), and Dr. Scott frequently provides training and consultation to frontline service providers. Dr. Scott is known for her work developing the Caring Dads: Helping Fathers Value their Children program for fathers who have been abusive in their families. This program’s unique focus and clear principles have led to its adoption in communities across Canada and the US as well as in
the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, Japan, United States, Ireland and Hong Kong. Dr. Scott is also known for her work on improving treatment for highly resistant male batterers. In this area, Dr. Scott has worked with government ministries and the Attorney General to contribute to ongoing improvements in batterer intervention programs.

Representative publications


MARY THELANDER

Mary J. Thelander, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor (adjunct) in the Department of Speech-Language Pathology, University of Toronto. Her research and program development is concentrated on the relationship among social development, language, narrative and literacy in minority-language children between three and nine years of age. It focuses specifically on determining if direct instruction in narrative language and social reasoning through concentrated exposure to children’s stories coded for social reasoning complexity improves literacy achievement. Further, she is investigating whether social reasoning and second-language learning independently predict literacy.

FROM 3 TO 3™ is a program created by Dr. Thelander to develop children’s literacy through story. The evidence-based program is used widely throughout the Toronto District School Board. It has also been adopted by the Algoma District School Board. The program focuses on developing teacher understanding of narrative and social reasoning in the classroom and providing materials and procedures for classroom teachers that develop children’s language, narrative and social reasoning and raise level of reading achievement.

Recently using the FROM 3 TO 3™ program model as a foundation, Dr. Thelander is piloting a program for use in homeless shelters. The intention of the program is to provide a portable and sustainable approach for mothers’ who are homeless to encourage language and narrative development with young children.

Dr. Thelander’s areas of interest include development of social reasoning; narrative development; theory and teaching practice change; primary-grade curriculum development; communication and behavioural and emotional disorders; program evaluation; and community research.

Representative publications

RICHARD VOLPE

Richard’s research addresses how early experience impacts on later life. His current investigations of life-span development include shaken baby syndrome prevention, community-based broad spectrum head and spinal cord injury prevention, youth identity, theory-practice connections, and integrated services.

*Representative publications*


INTERNSHIPS

The Atkinson Centre Internships were established with the support of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation to build the knowledge capacity of students in early childhood policy development. The purpose of the Atkinson Internships includes providing students with stronger training and key skills to bolster their experience and to strengthen their understanding of policy implications on children and families. The internships are also expected to support opportunities for pre-employment experience.

ZOUBAYDA CHOUCAIR

B.A. Candidate and Atkinson Centre Intern 2012

Zoubayda completed her Early Childhood Education Diploma in 2011, and will be graduating with a B.A. in Early Childhood Leadership in June 2013 from George Brown College. During her Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in the summer of 2012, she developed an interest to investigating the journeys of early childhood leaders in the early childhood sector for her research independent study, entitled Above and beyond; pioneering pathways to leadership in early childhood education. The findings for her study demonstrated that having a skilled mentor is hugely beneficial to the career advancement of early childhood educator and the advancement of the sector. Through this experience, she has developed an interest in building her research capacity, and looks forward to the opportunity to be involved in further research during her future master and graduate study. As well, during her Atkinson Centre internship she built and strengthens her knowledge of early childhood policy development and its implications for the ecology of the child and their family.

SHERRIKA COOPER

BA Candidate & Atkinson Centre Intern 2012

Sherrika is a registered early childhood educator who graduated with her ECE from George Brown College in 2009 and will be graduating with a BA in Early Childhood Leadership in June 2013 also from George Brown College. She will be entering the initial teacher education program at OISE in the fall of 2013. Along with an interest in advocacy in Early Learning and Full Day Kindergarten and how this new program will impact the children and the families involved, she has developed an interest in mentoring relationships and how they impact children of colour. During her Atkinson Centre internship at OISE, she wants to strengthen her advocacy skills and increase her knowledge in research and public policy in early learning, in addition to strengthening her knowledge base of benefits that mentoring relationships have on children.

LISA JOHNSTON

BA Candidate, School of Early Childhood Studies, Ryerson University Atkinson Centre Intern 2013

Lisa Johnston is a registered early childhood educator at George Brown College in the Charles Street Lab School. She has worked in the early childhood profession for 10 years, working with preschool, school age and, for the past seven years, kindergarten aged children. She has developed an expertise in implementing a constructivist, play-based, emergent curriculum focusing on the fostering of self-regulation and pro-social skills among kindergarten aged children. She has also worked closely with resource consultants supporting children with autism and their families. Lisa has completed an early childhood education diploma at George Brown College and is completing requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education at Ryerson University. She completed a research related practicum with Dr. Michael Mueller that focused on
the use of a math screening tool in JK, SK and Grade 1 to help teachers assess math development in order to inform future curriculum planning. Through this experience Lisa developed an interest in building her research capacity, and thus came to the Atkinson Centre recently to complete her 4th year internship under the mentorship of Professor Zeenat Janmohamed.

Lisa’s internship experience at the Atkinson Centre was rich and varied. She was fortunate to be able to assist in a research project from the very beginning by preparing the ethics proposal and designing the survey questionnaire. She plans to continue in her role as a research assistant on this study over the next three years. The study aims to follow the career and education paths of the first cohort of graduates from the Early Childhood Degree (ECL) program at George Brown College. Lisa also worked alongside Professor Janmohamed as she taught the class of 4th year students in the ECL Degree. Lisa had opportunities to teach some of the classes and work one on one with the students offering writing support and feedback on their research papers. Other activities included attending networking meetings, guest teaching a class for the students of the Pedagogical Leadership Certificate course, and helping the ECL students prepare their research posters for their first research symposium. Throughout all of these activities Lisa was able to freely build her capacity in research and teaching with expert guidance and support. An unforgettable and most valuable experience!
The Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development is supported by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto; Dr. Eric Jackman Institute for Child Study; George Brown College, School of Early Childhood; the Atkinson Charitable Foundation; and the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation.

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