



ILLINOIS

Family Resiliency Center

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



2010-2019 DECADE IN REVIEW



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to introduce to you the Family Resiliency Center's (FRC) Decade in Review. Over the past 10 years, FRC has seen remarkable growth in its research, education, and outreach programs that have sought to address many of the grand challenges facing society. This report is organized around these which include: Addressing Childhood Obesity in Early Childhood, Addressing Food Insecurity in Households with Children, Immigrant and Transnational Health and Wellbeing, Protecting Children's Health in the First Thousand Days, and Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Autism Across the Spectrum.

We were able to make great strides in these areas due, in part, to our transdisciplinary research seed grant programs, with the largest one funded by the Christopher Family Foundation. Investigators were able to use seed grant funds to further develop their programs and then, in turn, secure sustainable external funding. This approach was highly successful as you will note in the description of the Food and Family program which included federal, foundation, and nonprofit organization funding. This multi-pronged approach across multiple disciplines allowed us to fulfill the land-grant mission of serving our community.

Fostering transdisciplinary teams was a focus from the start. It evolved through a series of conversations, breakfasts, lunches, colloquiums, brown bags, and two national conferences. An example is the Food for Thought colloquium series whereby scholars were challenged to present their work in eight slides or less and to talk for no more than 20 minutes so that the majority of time could be spent in discussion. These presentations preceded lightning talks so many of the presenters were challenged by what was then a new format and now is commonplace in many academic circles. These interdisciplinary gatherings taught us that it was crucial to create common language around complex issues if we were to address the grand challenges facing society.

Recent events have brought new attention to the grand societal challenge of addressing structural racism. To that end, the Family Resiliency Center has dedicated seed funds to professors Shardé Smith of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies and Carla Hunter of the Department of Psychology to expand their ASPIRE program. ASPIRE is the Ambitions and Stories of Young People Inspiring Resilience and Engagement program which works collaboratively with two youth organizations in the community. This project is significant as it will engage and illuminate the voices and experiences of middle school Black youth and co-create a youth-centered space of healing and hope.

This will be my last director's letter to you. Effective July 1, 2020, I have retired from the University of Illinois. These have been the most rewarding years of my professional career. I have worked with some of the world's top scholars, had the pleasure mentoring outstanding undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, and learned immensely from our staff. I am pleased to announce that Dr. Jacinda Dariotis, director of the Evaluation Services Center and director of research at the University of Cincinnati will be the new FRC director beginning August 2020. Please welcome her upon her arrival.

With gratitude,

Dr. Barbara Fiese

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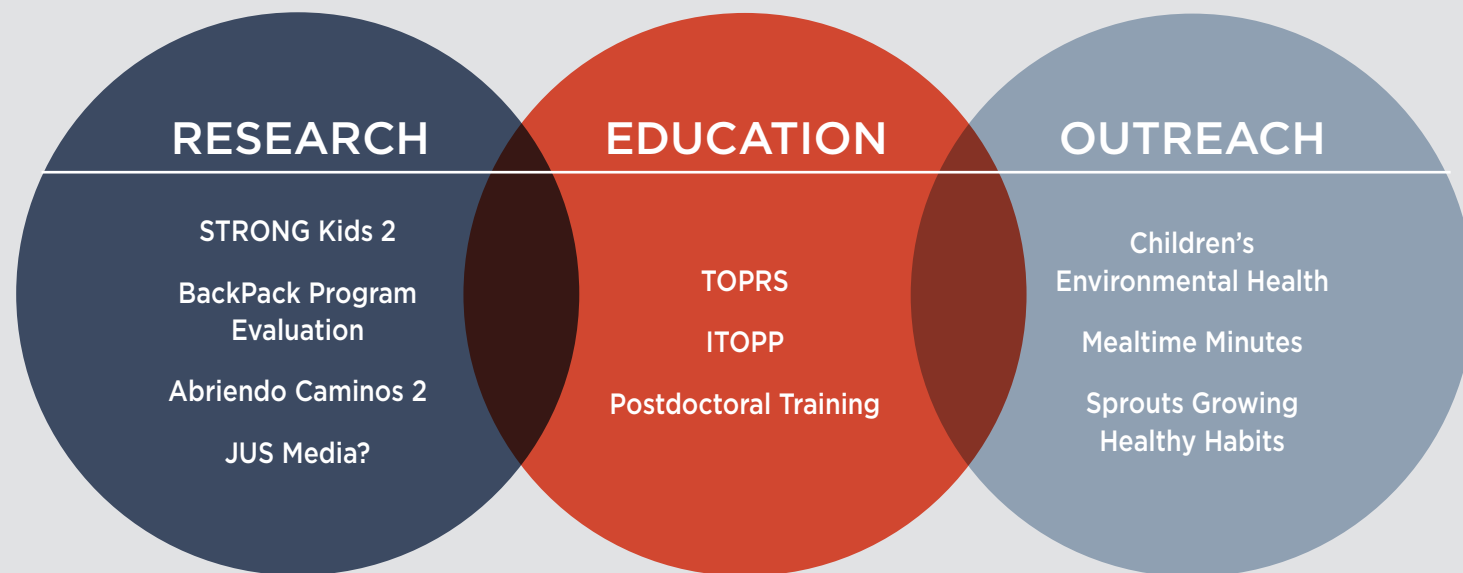
FAMILY RESILIENCY CENTER STAFF & BIOS

OUR PROGRAMS & MISSION

The Family Resiliency Center's (FRC) programs are built upon the core mission of addressing grand challenges families face in their everyday lives.

To achieve this goal, transdisciplinary teams bring together multiple areas of expertise to solve some of the urgent problems facing society over the past 10 years including rising rates of obesity during early childhood, the consequences of food insecurity on child development, immigrant health and wellbeing, and the effects of food advertising on youth diet.

Transdisciplinary Teams Addressing Grand Challenges of Family Life



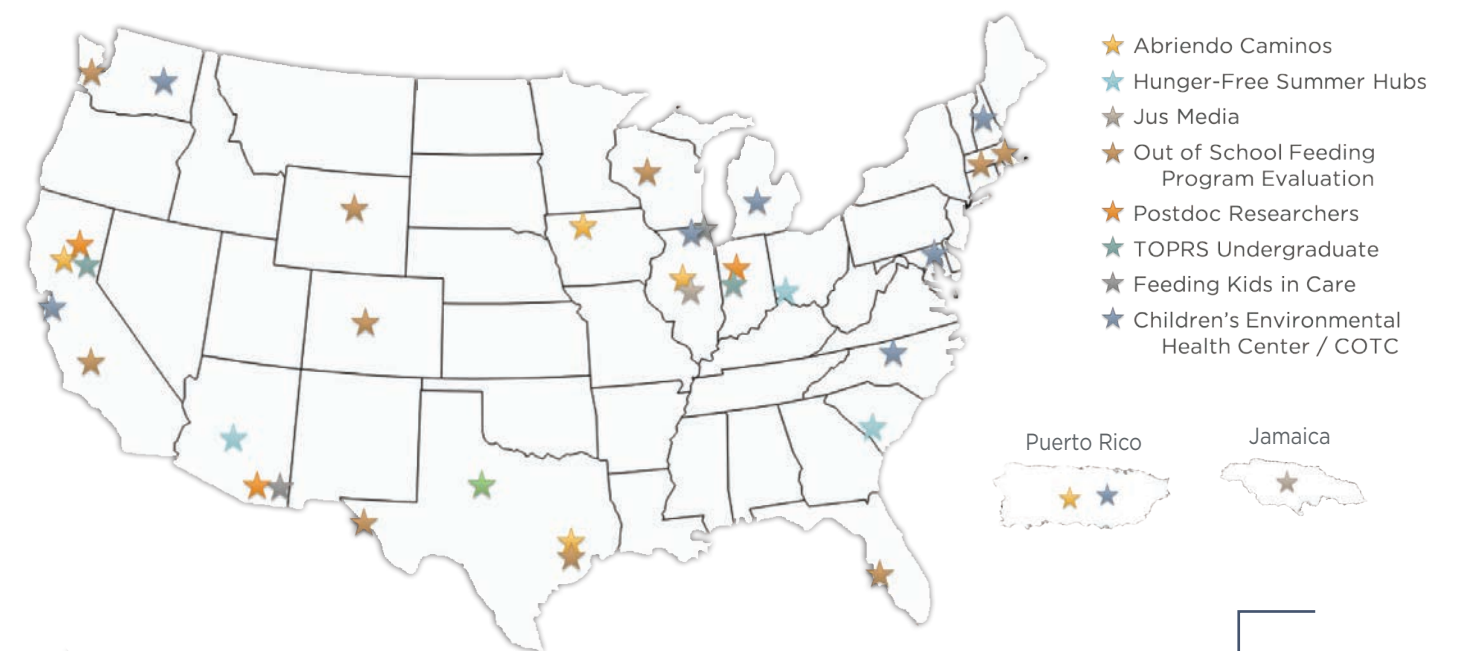
A hallmark of many of these programs is the integration of education and outreach into research activities. For example, the Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention Research Sciences (TOPRS) is an undergraduate course that offers hands-on, field-based research experience that was developed to assist in the STRONG Kids research program. The Sprouts Growing Healthy Habits curriculum was developed with assistance from undergraduate students enrolled in the Food and Family class.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REACH

FRC has been fortunate to work with over 30 affiliates who represent six schools and colleges at the University of Illinois:

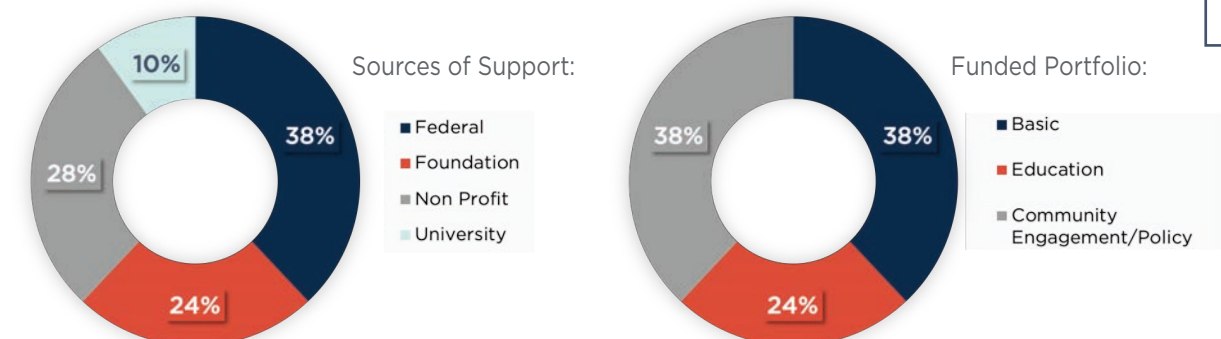
- College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES)
- College of Applied Health Sciences
- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- College of Veterinary Medicine
- Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Initiative
- School of Social Work

In addition, FRC programs have established collaborations with partners across the country and internationally. In order to sustain this work, a diverse funding portfolio has been garnered extending across federal, foundation, and non-profit organizational support.



See our full funding portfolio at familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/overview and on page 19

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING AND ACTIVITIES



CHRISTOPHER FAMILY FOUNDATION FOOD & FAMILY PROGRAM



Critical to the success of FRC was the *Christopher Family Foundation Food and Family Program*. The mission of the program was to provide faculty seed grants that could unravel the complex connections between the family food environment and healthy active lifestyles for all. Over a 10-year period, 14 proposals were funded to interdisciplinary teams that ranged in focus from the dietary needs of food-insecure cancer survivors to the effects of gardening on the gut microbiota. To date, the program has had a more than 800% return on investment and led to several large externally funded grants.

THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT:



Two *Food and Family Conferences* were held in Chicago. These conferences attracted participants from public health, nutritional sciences, extension, the food industry, medicine, and non-profit organizations. Speakers and attendees were able to engage in lively discussions about the impact of early feeding practices on children's health and wellbeing, common mealtime challenges, food insecurity, affecting change in larger systems to promote children's health, and the intersection of food media and culture. These two conferences attracted over 500 attendees.

More information about the 2019 conference can be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/outreach/food-and-family-conference-2019



From left to right: Brenda Koester, Associate Director, FRC; Doris Kelley Christopher, Founder of Pampered Chef, Ltd.; Kim Kidwell, Dean, College of ACES

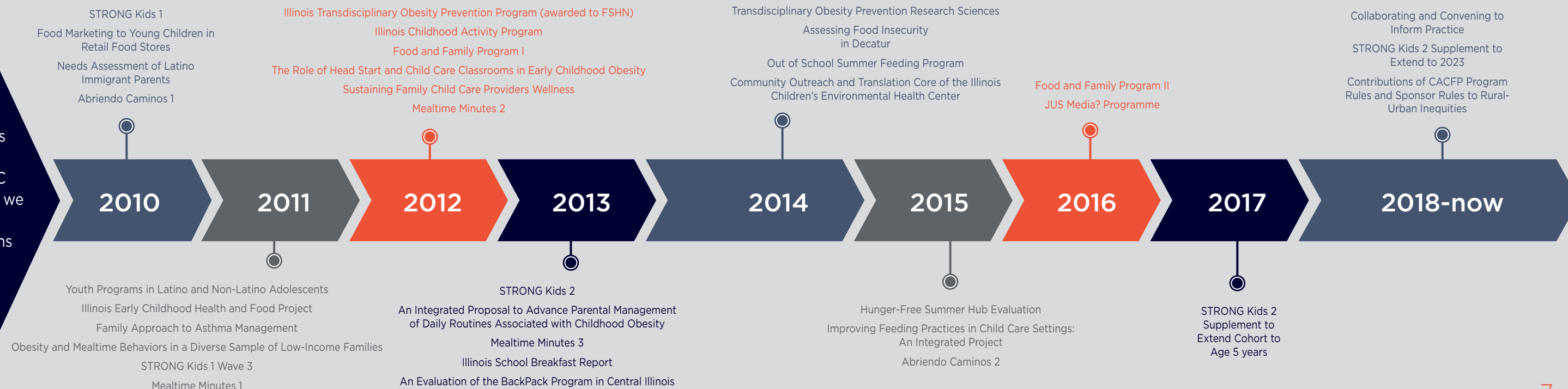


Food & Family Conference attendees at the University Club of Chicago, September 26, 2019.



TEN YEARS

In the remainder of this report we will provide highlights of some FRC programming. Though we can't write about all of our wonderful programs and collaborators, we hope you'll enjoy looking back at the progress we've made over the past decade.



Grand Challenge:

ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD



The **STRONG Kids** program began with a study of the risk factors associated with childhood obesity for children between 2.5 and 5 years of age. The team of investigators included experts in nutritional sciences, communication studies, early childhood development, family studies, social work, and community health. In the first project, the investigators learned that they started too late! Poor dietary habits, poor sleep habits, and excessive television viewing had already started by the time the children were 2.5 years of age. The investigators were then fortunate to receive funding from the National Dairy Council to launch another cohort study beginning at birth. More than 450 families are followed from the time the child is born until they reach 7 years of age. This cells-to-society approach to early nutrition will provide unique insights into how individual biology interacts with the family environment to promote healthy habits in young children. The investigators have published early findings suggesting that how the family interacts during meals and the level of chaos in the home when the child is 18-24 months of age is related to overeating. In addition, early breastfeeding practices have been demonstrated to be related to healthy outcomes for the child including adherence to Centers for Disease Control and American Academy of Pediatrics dietary practices.

More information can be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/strong-kids-2-cells-society-approach-nutrition

Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention Research Sciences (TOPRS). In 2011, HDFS 494 was approved as an Applied Research Methods course created to support the activities of the STRONG Kids program. In 2013, FRC received funding from the USDA to develop a “flip-the-classroom” format of the transdisciplinary curriculum. In collaboration with colleagues at Purdue University and California State University-Fresno, more than 20 modules were developed on obesity prevention extending from cell-to-society. Sample topics include epigenetics, feeding practices in child care, family mealtimes, neighborhood influences, federal food policy, and culturally tailored interventions.

More information may be found at:

stemedhub.org/groups/toprs

FRC affiliates were active participants in the **Illinois Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention Program (I-TOPP)** awarded by the United States Department of Agriculture to the Division of Nutritional Sciences and led by Dr. Sharon Donovan. I-TOPP was an innovative transdisciplinary MPH/Ph.D. training program in obesity prevention and included doctoral students in nutritional sciences, community health, human development and family studies, kinesiology, and social work. Through working with faculty from multiple disciplines, students were able to integrate nutrition, physical activity, public health science, family science, human development, economics, and public health practice.

More information may be found at:

i-topp.fshn.illinois.edu/about.html

Over the past 10 years, FRC was proud to sponsor five **postdoctoral associates**. Several of these highly talented colleagues were successful in obtaining Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Postdoctoral Awards from the United States Department of Agriculture. These awards allowed the postdoctoral associates to develop their own sections of HDFS 494 and a program of research that directly affected communities of interest such as parents of school age children and child care providers. The postdoctoral associates have gone on to procure faculty and research associate positions at Arizona State University, Brigham Young University, California State University-Fresno, Northern Illinois University, and University of Chicago.

The **Mealtime Minutes** initiative was created in partnership with the Pampered Chef, Ltd. Company. These are a series of public service announcements (PSAs) that provide real solutions to common family mealtime challenges. Many of the recommendations arose from research conducted by STRONG Kids investigators. Some of the common challenges addressed are managing work/life stress, sibling conflict, picky eating, and reducing screen time during meals. These PSAs were broadcast nationwide and reached millions of homes.

More information can be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/resources/mealtime-minutes



Grand Challenge:

ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

Millions of school age children in the United States are in households without access to enough food to lead a healthy active life. In response, the U.S. government has funded large-scale food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), National School Lunch and Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Programs (CACFP). FRC has been involved in multiple projects that evaluate the effectiveness of these programs as well as programs administered by food banks.

The evaluation of the **BackPack Program** was the first of many evaluation projects aimed at understanding how to reach families who did not have adequate sources of food to live a healthy active life. The project began with a conversation with the CEO of the Eastern Illinois Foodbank who described his efforts to reach as many eligible children for the program through area elementary schools and the costs involved. FRC Director, Barbara Fiese, offered to conduct a small pilot evaluation in order to demonstrate its effectiveness in increasing school attendance. After demonstrating feasibility of conducting the research in partnership with area elementary schools, FRC partnered with Feeding America to fund a larger project. This was the first large-scale evaluation of the weekend feeding program to demonstrate positive impact on school attendance.

More information can be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/evaluation-backpack-program-east-central-illinois



The **Out of School and Summer Feeding Program Evaluation** was funded by the Walmart Foundation in 2013. This program evaluation was aimed at increasing efficiencies and effectiveness of summer and out of school feeding programs. A national evaluation was launched, reaching 12 sponsoring organizations. Site visits were conducted along with in-depth interviews of program supervisors and staff. A set of best practices was identified including building partnerships with community organizations and integration of administrative data. Based on the findings from this evaluation, FRC staff were invited by Feeding America to provide technical assistance and conduct needs assessment on the expansion of Summer Feeding programs in hard-to-reach communities in Arizona, South Carolina, and Ohio. The **Summer Hubs Project** was conducted between 2015-2017, and included multiple site visits, interviews, and working closely with food banks to establish community partnerships to extend summer feeding programs.

Educational programming was developed to support these efforts, including the **Food and Family** section of HDFS 494. Students engaged in hands-on research experiences as well as community outreach activities. Several of the students conducted research through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and remarked how this experience changed their lives. Indeed, one student garnered employment at Illinois Action for Children to continue working on supporting child care providers in obtaining support on the CACFP and another received a Boren Scholarship to study social welfare policies in Brazil.

A defining characteristic of the undergraduate offerings is the multiple disciplines of the students enrolled in the class. Close to 200 students have enrolled in the two sections representing six different colleges and 27 majors.

As part of the outreach efforts of the Food and Family Program, **Sprouts Growing Healthy Habits** was developed. The goal of the curriculum is to increase awareness and knowledge of healthy routines—such as sleep and healthy eating habits—that can be implemented in everyday life. The curriculum was refined over a period of several years growing from tasting tables at the local farmers market to implementation in local kindergarten classrooms. The curriculum includes nine independent lessons ranging from “Farm to Table” to “Healthy Sleep Habits.” It is freely available and can be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/Sprouts

Grand Challenge:

IMMIGRANT AND TRANSNATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Abriendo Caminos is a multi-site intervention program aimed at promoting health in Hispanic heritage families with children between the ages of six and 18 years. This program evolved from a needs assessment of Latino immigrant parents in the surrounding community and a Robert Wood Johnson grant initially awarded in 2010. The program is currently funded by the USDA and is being delivered in California, Illinois, Iowa, Puerto Rico, and Texas. Workshops take a whole family approach to nutrition, sharing meals together, and physical activity. The program is culturally tailored and emphasizes incorporating healthy preparation of culturally relevant foods and principles of (mas o menos), a little bit more healthy foods and little less of unhealthy foods. Preliminary results indicate there are positive effects on diet quality for families who participate in the workshops in comparison to control groups.

More information may be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/abriendo-caminos



JUS? Media Programme is aimed at promoting healthier eating habits in Jamaican youth and their families through raising awareness of the effects of food advertising on diet. The investigators include experts in youth development and family studies, advertising, nutritional sciences, and community engagement. A series of workshops were conducted in Jamaica focusing on food-focused media literacy and empowering youth to be critical thinkers and effective communicators. Follow-up workshops were held with key community stakeholders across Jamaica to set a national agenda to promote healthier eating patterns in the Caribbean and raise awareness of media literacy.

More information may be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/jus-media-programme

The **Pathways Project / Proyecto Caminos** research examined how adolescents in arts, STEM, and leadership programs develop social-emotional competencies, such as responsibility, self-motivation, and emotional skills. Using longitudinal mixed methods, we followed youth (N=355), staff (N=51), and youth's parents (N=258) over a program cycle in 27 high-quality, project-based programs in Chicago, Minneapolis, and central Illinois. Approximately equal numbers of youth in the study were Latinx, African American, and White. The 31 published articles from these data show how youth's development in programs is shaped by complex interactions between youth and staff, youth and parents, and youth's highly motivated engagement in challenging projects. One important set of findings illuminates how program roles provide a powerful vehicle for youth's development of responsibility and how youth transfer this responsibility to home. Another set reveals the nuanced skills of program staff in facilitating youth's development of skills for self-direction, and shows how parents support youth's program participation. Other findings focus on parents' views of cultural dynamics within programs, and highlight how staff differ in their competencies for responding to issues related to racial injustice.

More information may be found here:

youthdev.illinois.edu



Grand Challenge:

PROTECTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH IN THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS

Community Outreach and Translation Core (COTC) is part of the Illinois Children's Environmental Health Center. Research over the past two decades finds that exposure to common elements in everyday products may impair the development of children's growing brains and organs, and alter how hormones function. Investigators at the Illinois Children's Environmental Health Center are conducting research to identify how exposure to these everyday chemicals may affect growth prenatally and into early development, as well as in animal reproductive health. The FRC COTC has developed materials for child care providers to raise awareness of exposures to everyday products in child care settings may affect children's development. A working group at the National Institutes of Environmental Health has developed a social media platform to raise awareness of these issues across the country.



More information can be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/COTC



Convening the Community includes multiple symposia and community events sponsored by FRC and other university partners in the interest of children's health and wellbeing. In 2015, FRC hosted the **Midwest Children's Health Symposia**. Researchers from the University of Illinois and the University of Michigan presented the latest in research, translation, and community outreach on how environmental exposures affect children's health and development. In 2018, FRC partnered with the College of ACES Office of Research, the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute, and Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology to host a symposium on the **First Thousand Days**. This event brought together several hundred stakeholders from health professions, early care and education, the research community, and extension to share best practices and inform policy about this critical window of development.

Grand Challenge:

MEETING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM



The Autism Program (TAP) is housed in FRC and is a resource and referral center for parents and professionals, typically serving about 600 clients per year. Over the years, it has offered programming in building social skills for teens, provided internship opportunities for 170 undergraduate students and 30 placements for graduate students, provided workshops for first responders, and helped local teachers in developing learning materials for their students. In 2018, TAP and other campus partners received an award from Microsoft Corporation to develop best practice models for working with college students and co-workers who are on the autism spectrum.

More information can be found at:

theautismprogram.illinois.edu



OUR STAFF



BARBARA H. FIESE 217-244-3967 | bhfiесе@illinois.edu

Barbara H. Fiese, Ph.D., is a clinical and developmental psychologist whose research focuses on family factors that promote health and wellbeing in children. She holds the Pampered Chef, Ltd., Endowed Chair in Family Resiliency and is a professor and Director of the Family Resiliency Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with affiliated appointments in the Departments of Pediatrics and Psychology. She is considered a national expert in the area of shared family mealtimes and the role they play in promoting health.

She is a principal investigator or co-investigator on multiple federally funded projects aimed at examining environmental and biological factors contributing to early nutritional health. These projects include the STRONG Kids 2 Project, which takes a cell-to-community approach to dietary habits from birth, and the I-TOPP program, an innovative transdisciplinary M.P.H./Ph.D. training program in obesity prevention. She is also the PI on several projects aimed at increasing the efficiencies of summer and afterschool feeding programs for food insecure children and youth.

She is past-president of the Society of Family Psychology, editor of the Journal of Family Psychology, and inaugural editor of Advances in Child and Family Policy and Practice.



BRENDA DAVIS KOESTER 217-244-6486 | bkoester@illinois.edu

Brenda Davis Koester is Associate Director of the Family Resiliency Center. Her research and policy work centers around food insecurity; children's feeding programs; effective community collaborations; and translating research into policy and practice. She also serves as co-PD and co-PI on several externally funded projects. She has experience supporting and coordinating transdisciplinary teams and co-instructs the HDFS 494 Undergraduate Transdisciplinary Research course.

As associate director, she supervises staff and directs the professional development, communication, and policy work of the center. She also provides pre- and post-grant support for FRC projects and affiliates. She holds a B.S. in communication and an M.S. in labor and employment relations from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



ELLIE FUJIMOTO efujimo2@illinois.edu

Elinor Fujimoto is a Project Coordinator for the Family Resiliency Center. She is responsible for coordinating activities for the Children's Environmental Health Center's Communication Outreach and Translation Core and several other projects. She holds a B.S. in interdisciplinary health sciences, B.F.A. in dance, and M.P.H. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she developed a passion for health equity and research translation. In prior roles, she has coordinated health science research in academic and clinical settings, working with diverse populations such as caregivers of veterans, perinatal women, and epilepsy patients. Fujimoto has also served on the Board of Directors for Champaign County Health Care Consumers since 2015.



CAROLYN SUTTER carolyns@illinois.edu

Carolyn Sutter, Ph.D. is a Postdoctoral Research Associate with the Family Resiliency Center. Her research and outreach efforts focus on how social relationships with parents and peers relate to children's developing eating behaviors and risk of childhood obesity. She received a B.A. in human development from the University of California, San Diego, and her M.S. in child development and Ph.D. in human development both from the University of California, Davis. She has experience conducting research, supporting intervention programming, and designing educational materials for parents and school settings, from preschool through high school.



CHELSEA HETHERINGTON chelsea1@illinois.edu

Dr. Chelsea Hetherington is a Research Assistant Professor in Human Development and Family Studies. She works within the Family Resiliency Center as the Project Director of the STRONG Kids program. Dr. Hetherington earned her Ph.D. in Child Development from the University of Minnesota in 2016 and previously worked as a program evaluator at Michigan State University Extension. Her interests center around using research-based information to support and enhance the lives of children and families.



KELLY UCHIMA uchima2@illinois.edu

Kelly Uchima is a Project Coordinator for the Family Resiliency Center and has been an integral part of the STRONG Kids 2 research project since 2013. As an undergraduate, she learned to conduct field work and data collection that contributed to studying childhood health and discovered a deep interest in research. Upon graduating with a B.S. in agricultural and consumer economics and a minor in communication from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Kelly became a Strong Kids family specialist and gained experience conducting research, coding, and collaborative academic publications.



LINDA TORTORELLI 217-244-1395 | ltortore@illinois.edu

Since 2005, Linda Tortorelli has been the Coordinator for The Autism Program at Illinois on the Urbana-Champaign campus, which is a collaborative initiative between the Departments of Special Education and Human Development and Family Studies. Linda is a dynamic force behind community education about autism, as well as providing direct service to families. Linda was recently the recipient of the College of ACES Professional Staff Award for Innovation and Creativity, and she is a driving force behind TAP's vibrant presence in the local community.



ANNE HALL 217-244-1395 | annehall@illinois.edu

Serving as Resource Room Coordinator for The Autism Program at Illinois, Anne Hall oversees the day-to-day operations of TAP's resource room, which is dedicated to helping individuals with autism in the local community. Integral to the TAP team, Anne also supervises the University of Illinois student interns who assist in TAP's programming for local families.



SALMA MUSAAD 217-244-0179 | smusaad@illinois.edu

Research Biostatistician Salma Musaad, M.D., Ph.D., has more than 10 years of experience in clinical research, including 1.5 years in ophthalmology and stem-cell research, 4 years in molecular epidemiology in academia, and 4 years in clinical research organizations focusing on clinical trials and public health research. She has extensive expertise in epidemiological study design and conducting field studies, with additional experience in questionnaire development, validation, and testing. In addition, she comes with strong biostatistical experience in statistical consulting and advanced methods, including quantile regression, structural equation modeling, and generalized linear models.



DIANE DAVIS 217-333-7772 | ddavis5@illinois.edu

Diane Davis assists with the day-to-day operations of FRC and is an integral member of the team. Originally from Indianapolis, Diane has been with the University of Illinois for over 30 years in a variety of roles and offices, including more than 14 years of service working for Residential Life in Student Housing, where she was able to assist various student groups like I Guides and Women of Color.

FUNDING PARTNERS

- Administration for Children and Families - Department of Health and Human Services
- Beckman Institute for Advanced Science & Technology
- Christopher Family Foundation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Feeding America
- Illinois Action for Children
- National Cancer Institute - National Institutes of Health
- National Dairy Council
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences - National Institutes of Health
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture - United States Department of Agriculture
- No Kid Hungry
- The Pampered Chef, Ltd.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- University of Illinois Cancer Center
- University of Illinois College of ACES Office of Research
- University of Illinois Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute
- Walmart Foundation

More information can be found at:

familyresiliency.illinois.edu/research/overview

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