

The Durham Child Health Study Times

Holiday 2003 Vol. 1 Issue 1

Holiday Greetings to all of the families participating in the DCHD project! We wanted to send a newsletter to you—to say THANKS for joining our exciting study and to provide information about the study and other areas related to child development. This is our first issue and we hope to send out other issues every few months or so. **Please call us if your phone or address has or will change so we can be sure to reach you for your next visit! 1-866-561-8134(toll free)**

Study Update

Drs. Martha Cox and Steve Reznick from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are conducting the DCHD project and has been in progress for a little more than a year and half. We are interested in how families from different walks of life adjust to the birth of a new child and meet the demands of raising a healthy child. We also want to learn more about children's early development. This study is funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, which is why we are able to provide compensation for visits!

As you already know, we currently visit each baby at 3, 6, 12, and 18 months. Additional visits are being planned. They will probably be at 24, 30, and 36 months.

Currently, there are about 180 families involved in the project, and we have just begun the 18-month visit for the oldest children!

18-month visit: In this visit we will learn more about your child's development of new language skills and your child's increasing abilities in several other areas. We will have this visit in the Durham Lab, which is located at 1804 Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy suite 109.

The visit takes around 90 minutes and early reviews suggest that kids and families enjoy it!

Sibling Showdown

This issue's general topic pertains to siblings. Even if you currently have just one child, you may at some point have another (and another, etc.). So, understanding children's behavior toward siblings is an important topic. Research on child development from studies like the DCHD study offers some useful suggestions for how parents can help children cope with a new sibling.

When a new sibling is born, many children go through a temporary "regression" stage. They might say things like: "I want to be a baby, too!" This is a normal reaction to the experience of you holding and cuddling your newborn. If your older child regresses into baby talk or thumb sucking, allow him or her the luxury of being babied a bit, while at the same time focusing on the benefits of being an older child in the family. Try to talk about all the fun things big kids can do but babies can't, such as "Big boys can eat ice cream, but babies can't" and "Big girls can climb monkey bars, but babies can't." Your child will gradually realize that he or she doesn't want to be a baby again.

Allow some frustration. Toddlers take it to heart when they don't get equal time. Although parents cannot always keep a child free from feeling frustrated, they can help them learn how to manage those feelings. If your toddler becomes impatient, for example, set a time when you can give him or her your attention. ("Julie, you'll have to wait until I finish nursing Bobby, but then we can go to the park.")

Be sympathetic. It's natural that your child will have some negative feelings toward the baby. Encourage your child to express her negative, as well as positive, feelings. Give her or him a sensitive opener, such as: "Sometimes I imagine you like your baby sister and sometimes you don't." Don't push, just be available. Also, your child may be more comfortable drawing or singing what he or she feels.

Have "just being" time. Help your older child feel equally important and equally valued. Take time to let your toddler just be with you — on your lap, cuddling and talking — while the new baby naps. Play favorites — equally. You can avoid the "who's best" trap ("Who do you love more, me or the baby?"), by giving the emotionally correct answer, "I love you both in special ways." Help your older child perceive that he or she is loved in an individual way, such as "You are my first child, and no one else will ever be my first child."

Help the sibling feel important. Assigning a task can help a toddler feel included: "Bring me a diaper, please," or "Let's dress and bathe Baby together." Feeling needed helps many children relish the older sibling role. Say, "Thank you for being such a good big sister (or big brother)."

Studying young children, families, and communities, to learn more about growth and development...



Meet the Staff

Martha J. Cox, PhD is Director of this study, and Director of the Center for Developmental Science. She has studied families for over 25 years and is the author of many books and articles. Her work has been cited in publications such as *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Parent Magazine*, *The New York Times* and Durham's *Herald-Sun*.

J. Steven Reznick, PhD is Co-Director of this study, and Director of the Developmental Psychology Program at UNC- Chapel Hill. He is a professor at UNC, and has held previous appointments at Harvard and Yale. His specialty is infant development, particularly memory and language.

Vicki-Lynn Brown, MSW, LCSW is the Project Coordinator of this study. She is a licensed clinical social worker who earned her degree at UNC-Chapel Hill. For the past 8 years, she has worked on various research projects at Duke University Medical Center as a Family/School Specialist and a coordinator of research studies. She is originally from Long Island, NY but has lived in this area for the past 15 years.

Ashley Hill, PhD I have recently graduated from the University of Notre Dame. I have an interest in the change and growth in children's expression of emotions and control of emotions.

Amy Ransom I graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill with a BS in Psychology. I would like to become a child psychologist specializing in 'the way families work and how different circumstances impact different kids' I've worked with babies and children since I was fifteen years old, in several day care centers than as a private nanny during college.

Cathi Propper I attended Connecticut College, a small liberal arts school located in New London, CT. After graduating with a BA and a major in psychology, I explored several career paths including working with individuals diagnosed with Schizophrenia or Alzheimer's disease. Although this work was satisfying and exciting, I had always really wanted to work with children and infants. I am currently a third year graduate student at Duke University in developmental psychology. I hope to meet all of you, and your children, over the upcoming months!

Deannndria Seavers I am a Junior at UNC-CH Junior Year, planning to get a degree in psychology and Spanish. This is the first research study I have been involved in, but I have always been interested in child development--- I think the best way to learn about ourselves and how we have developed is to study children at a very young age.

Jessica Dollar I graduated with honors from UNCG with a BA in psychology, minor in dance in May 2003. At UNCG I worked on a research project similar to this one and I was a children's ballet teacher for several years in high school. I love to work with children and families and my future plan is to go to Law School to become a Child Advocacy Lawyer.

Roger Mills-Koonce I'm a fourth year Ph.D. student with Martha Cox and Jean-Louis Garipey at UNC Chapel Hill. I am interested in early behavioral, cognitive, and psychobiological development during infancy and the formation of parent-child relationships. I have previously worked on studies investigating peer interactions, relationships and social competence in preschoolers; as well as the biological and behavioral development of mice.

Erin Jones

Mattie Richmond

Fun Family Websites

In this issue, we focus on some websites that include fun activities and games for children of various ages. In future issues, we will give you additional websites on topics such as parenting, baby health, etc.

First gov for kids! <http://www.kids.gov/>

This website created by the federal government lists tons of the best websites for kids!

PBS kids: <http://pbskids.org/>

This site has games, stories, music, and special holiday fun—plus tips for teachers and parents.

A Game A Day: <http://www.agameaday.com>

This offers puzzles, games, and related materials designed to stimulate learning, problem solving, and creative thinking.

Chateau Meddybemps:

<http://www.meddybemps.com/index.html>

All kinds of fun for families with younger kids.

Official Disney Web Site:

<http://www.disney.go.com>

Movies, animation—everything Disney! Requires Macromedia Flash Play 6 Plug-in.

Play Kids Games: <http://www.playkidsgames.com>

Check out math, alphabet, and logic games designed for younger children and their parents.

Dr. Seuss: <http://www.seussville.com/seussville>

Official site for Dr. Seuss.

DCHD website

www.cds.unc.edu/dchd/public/index/htm.

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