



FIU
Center for
Children and Families

2019
Annual
Report



there is no door
I can't open



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am proud to share with you a glimpse of the exciting work that the 2019 fiscal year saw happen at our Center for Children and Families. These efforts, all made possible by the hard work of our faculty, staff, and students, continued to support our mission of advancing the field of mental health and of providing the highest-quality care for children and adolescents affected by mental illness.

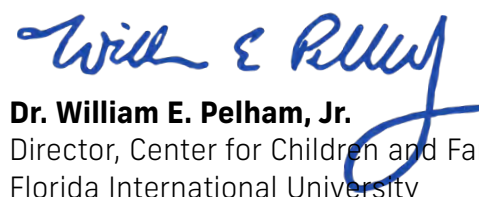
Our faculty's scholarly activity remains exemplary. Thanks to their dedication and efforts, the year brought significant federal funding to support innovative research, which reinforced our objective of gaining new insights into the causes, processes, effects and treatment of child and adolescent mental health disorders. We received a total of \$38.8 million in federal grants through a combined effort of more than 30 multidisciplinary faculty, increasing the total amount received to \$131.1 million since our founding in 2010. Additionally, our faculty published 168 research papers in scientific journals and received multiple awards for research excellence, expanding our footprint as child mental health care leaders.

We are especially proud of having offered evidence-based services to approximately 3,427 families in our community through clinical and clinical research programs. These services had a positive impact in the lives of the many families who struggle with mental illness. Over the summer alone, we helped

nearly 300 families through our nationally acclaimed summer programs.

Our efforts to educate existing professionals and students who will one day be the leaders in the field yielded impressive results. During the FY 2019 year, our center provided more than 771 hours of training to thousands of educators and other professionals in our community and offered nearly 2,385 Continuing Education credits to licensed mental health professionals. Furthermore, we provided training to more than 478 undergraduate students, 142 doctoral and master's-level students, and 202 undergraduate and graduate students that interned in our Summer Treatment Program, molding the next generation of mental health professionals.

The work celebrated in this report would not be possible without our dedicated faculty, staff, and students, who continue to promote excellence for child mental health and who are committed to putting children and families first. I ask that you take a few moments to examine our impact on families, educators, students, and professionals, both local and nationwide and to share the work we do at FIU with others who might be interested. We hope that you are inspired by our efforts to create a brighter future for our children through the research we are conducting, the training we are providing and the families we continue to help.


Dr. William E. Pelham, Jr.
Director, Center for Children and Families
Florida International University

FACULTY & STAFF

AFFILIATED FACULTY

Allen, Timothy A.	Furr, Jami	Ng, Mei Yi	Sibley, Margaret
Azaret, Janellie	Gonzalez Jr., Raul	Page, Timothy	Soto Caro, Fabian
Bagner, Daniel	Graziano, Paulo	Parent, Justin	Timmons, Adela C.
Bahrack, Lorraine	Hart, Katie	Pelham, William E., Jr.	Trucco, Elisa
Baralt, Melissa	Hawes, Samuel W.	Pettit, Jeremy	Valente, Matthew J.
Bickman, Leonard B.	Hayes, Timothy	Pruden, Shannon	
Coles, Erika	Li, Tan	Raiker, Joseph	
Comer, Jonathan	Mattfeld, Aaron	Reeb-Sutherland, Bethany	
Coxe, Stefany	McMakin, Dana	Schatz, Nicole	
Dick, Anthony	Musser, Erica	Schwartz, Jaclyn	
Fava, Nicole	Nichols-Lopez, Kristin		

ADMINISTRATIVE & RESEARCH STAFF

Acosta, Bianca	Cardoso, Rossana	Lurry, Sashay	Ruiz, Ericka
Ahle, Matthew	Castro, Rosalia	Madan, Brigitte	Salem, Hanan
Almutairi, Aldana	Castro, Rosanna	Mas, Helen	Sanchez Garcia, Carlos
Alvarez, Carina	Contino, Kaityn	Mira, Sandra	Santos Soto, Tamara
Aristide, Stephanie	Cortina, Jennifer	Morales, Gabriela	Shumway, Philip
Bager, Arwa	Fernandez, Odette	Moreira, Enid	Silva, Karina
Barresi, Carmen	Frech, Natalie	Patriarca, Guadalupe	Sotolongo, Lissandra
Beauboeuf, Regine	Gil, Lissette	Paula, Dayana	Troya, Sarah
Bejarano, Andrea	Gnagy, Elizabeth	Pita, Katherine	Valdes, Bernardina
Betancourt, Camila	Gomez, William	Plata, Carolina	Valledor, Valerie
Beyer, Christopher	Gonzalez, Yeilem	Pulido, William	Vanegas, David
Bisono-Gonzalez, Sarah	Granja, Karen	Purvis, Maria	Vargas Rodriguez, Maria
Bonventre, Nicholas	Greiner, Andrew	Ramirez, Ana Regina	Vicente, Elina
Bowley, Hannah	Hernandez, Melissa	Rey, Yasmin	Villar, Michelle
Briceno, Delmy	Herrera, Aileen	Rodriguez, Isabel	Villates, Francisco
Brijmohan, Nisha	Hidmi, Nasreen	Rodriguez, Mabel	Wang, Suyan
Cadet, Geraldine	Isaac, Natalie	Rodriguez, Mariangela	Wilson, Maria
Camacho Gonzalez, Alejandro	Leon, Erika	Rodriguez, Yesenia	Zuraw-Moya, Ruth
	Limia, Jorge	Roman Gonzalez, Yaimara	
	Lozano, Cinthya		

POSTDOCS

Altszuler, Amy	Fosco, Whitney	Maharaj, Andre	Mikhail, Sarah
Del Busto, Cristina	Gillam, Ilke	Martinez Pedraza, Frances	Schultheiss, Nathan
Eschman, Bret	Griffith, Shayl		

WHAT WE DO



We are a **world-class clinical research center** dedicated to improving the lives of children and families struggling with mental health problems by:

Advancing evidence-based knowledge of the causes, mechanisms, outcomes, and interventions for mental health and learning problems of youth.

Promoting the development of effective treatments & prevention through scholarly research.

Providing state-of-the-art prevention and treatment services to children and families in South Florida.*

Disseminating knowledge to students, consumers, and professionals in mental health, education, and primary care.

*** Through our clinical and clinical research programs, we help families with the following concerns:**

ADHD / Anxiety & fears / Conduct & behavioral problems

Family stress & parenting support / Mood problems & depression

Problems with academic & social skills / Trauma

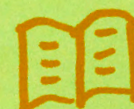
2019 IN NUMBERS



3,427 families helped



\$38.8 million in total new funding awarded in 2019



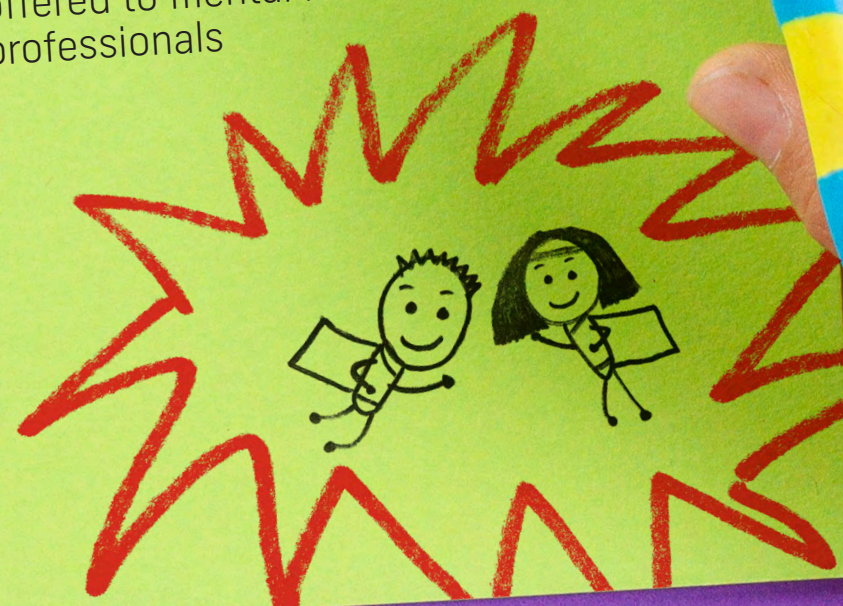
168 research publications by faculty



More than **771** hours of training, consultation & community outreach



2,385 Continuing Education opportunities offered to mental health professionals



INNOVATION THROUGH RESEARCH



With a team of **more than 35 of the nation's best researchers and experts**, the assistance of federal funding and university partnerships, we continue to gain new insights about the cause, process, effects and treatment of child and adolescent mental health disorders.

Since our establishment in 2010, we have secured more than **\$131.1 million in external funding for research** from sources like the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the National Science Foundation (NSF), The Children's Trust and the State of Florida, among others.

168

research
publications by
faculty

**\$38.8
million**

in total new
funding awarded
in 2019

More than
**\$131.1
million**

in research
funding to-date



AWARD-WINNING FACULTY



Timothy Allen, Ph.D.

Top Scholar Award, Junior Faculty with Significant Funding,
Florida International University, 2019
Top Scholar Award, Notable External Appointments,
Florida International University, 2019
Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Erika Coles, Ph.D.

Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Jonathan Comer, Ph.D.

Top Scholar Award, Research and Creative Activities,
Florida International University, 2019



Anthony Dick, Ph.D.

Top Scholar Award, Research and Creative Activities,
Florida International University, 2019
Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Paulo Graziano, Ph.D.

Top Scholar Award, Excellence in Research, Florida International
University, 2019
Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Katie Hart, Ph.D.

Faculty Convocation Award, College of Arts, Sciences & Education
Florida International University, 2018



Aaron Mattfeld, Ph.D.

Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Dana McMakin, Ph.D.

Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



William E. Pelham, Jr., Ph.D., ABPP

Faculty Award for Engagement, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Jeremy Pettit, Ph.D.

Top Scholar Award, Excellence in Research & Creative Activities,
Florida International University, 2017



Joseph Raiker, Ph.D.

Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Margaret Sibley, Ph.D.

Faculty Award for Research, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Matthew Sutherland, Ph.D.

Faculty Convocation Award, College of Arts, Sciences & Education,
Florida International University, 2018



Researchers seek how to best treat kids with ADHD in schools

by Rosanna Castro

Researchers at FIU's Center for Children and Families (CCF) are evaluating the most effective classroom interventions for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) through a \$3.3 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences.

The Adaptive Supports Provided in Regular Education Settings (ASPIRES) study, led by FIU researchers William E. Pelham, Jr., Nicole Schatz and Amy Altszuler, is a three-year study seeking to recruit 300 elementary-aged students who have either been diagnosed with ADHD/ADD or are at-risk of being diagnosed due to distractibility, difficulties completing school work and frequent classroom rule violations. Enrollment for the ASPIRES study is currently open for the 2019-2020 school year for children entering first through fifth grade.

The majority of students with ADHD are educated in general education settings; however, most students with ADHD require additional support to keep up with their peers. Schools currently use a problem-solving process known as Response to Intervention (RTI) to identify and intervene with students who require additional support in general education settings. RTI is a tiered treatment approach in which support increases in intensity based on the student's individual needs, prior to providing a referral to special education.

"While RTI may seem like a great approach, it has not been well studied to address the particular needs of students with ADHD," added Pelham. "This study takes evidence-based classroom interventions for ADHD, including behavioral approaches and stimulant medication, and places them within an RTI framework to understand how to best treat students with ADHD in general education settings and whether starting with low-level behavioral interventions can prevent the need for more intensive

services, including special education referrals."

Eligible students are randomly assigned to be monitored throughout the school year in the classroom without any additional intervention or to receive RTI classroom interventions during the school year. A behavioral consultant works with teachers of children that are randomly assigned to receive intervention to implement classroom-wide behavior management strategies such as establishing good classroom rules, praising well-behaving students, and setting up and maintaining a class-wide reward system.

If the child does not improve with the low-level tier one intervention, the behavioral consultant works with the child's teacher to set up a Daily Report Card, a tool that establishes individualized classroom goals for the child to target areas such as completing assignments and following classroom rules. The consultant also works with the child's parents to set up a home reward system to provide and/or restrict privileges at home based on school behavior. If that intervention is not enough, they are randomized to receive either a more intensive behavioral intervention or stimulant medication, before being referred to special education.

Parents who would like to learn more or find out if their child is eligible to participate, may call 305-348-1026. Students that currently have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) related to ADD/ADHD or who are already taking medication for ADD/ADHD are not eligible to participate.

The Center for Children and Families is collaborating with Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Family Support Services to recruit participants and implement the program.

Behavioral intervention reduces need to medicate kids with ADHD

by *rosanna castro*

Most children with ADHD who receive behavioral intervention do not need medication, according to a new study by researchers at FIU's Center for Children and Families.

Researchers evaluated 127 unmedicated children with ADHD, ages 5 to 13, during the school year, following their participation in the center's Summer Treatment Program, a comprehensive summer camp program for children with ADHD and related behavioral, emotional and learning challenges. Children were randomly assigned after the end of the program to receive low or high behavioral intervention, or no behavioral intervention, and were evaluated by teachers and parents each week to determine if medication was needed.

Researchers found that the children who received continued behavioral intervention after the end of the Summer Treatment Program were about half as likely as those who did not receive intervention to initiate medication use each week at school or

at home, and used lower doses when medicated at school.

Behavioral interventions included a Daily Report Card— a tool that helps manage the behavior and academic performance of students. Other classroom interventions included school-based rewards, response-cost systems, point systems, escalating-deescalating time out procedures, and additional individualized behavioral interventions.

"These results add to a growing literature of research suggesting that the use of low-intensity behavioral intervention as a first-line treatment for children with ADHD reduces or eliminates the need for medication," said Erika Coles, lead author and clinical director at the Center for Children and Families.

Researchers also found that treatment costs did not significantly differ, regardless of whether the child was receiving behavioral therapy or medication.

In the study, parents of children who received low or high behavioral intervention met with a clinician at the beginning of the school year to establish a Daily Report Card. Parents also had the option of receiving additional support through monthly parenting group sessions and one-on-one consultations if they faced difficult parenting situations at home.

The teachers of the children receiving intervention also had support to implement the Daily Report Card and received additional consultations to establish classroom interventions.

"Parents and teachers play a key role in how well a child responds to the behavioral intervention," Coles said. "It's crucial for them to learn effective strategies that will benefit the child long-term because medication alone does not provide any long-term benefits."

The study was published in the *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*.





Research rules out mental flexibility, attention as advantages for some bilingual children

by ayleen barbel fattal

Bilingual children are on equal footing with monolingual children when it comes to regulating their behavior, planning and problem-solving, according to a new FIU study.

For more than 20 years, research has suggested children who are bilingual have an advantage when it comes to executive functions, which are the cognitive processes that have to do with managing behaviors and attention. But researchers at the FIU Center for Children and Families say that is not the case for American 9- and 10-year-olds.

"In one of the largest studies to date addressing this question, we failed to find consistent evidence for a bilingual advantage for executive function," said FIU psychologist and lead author Anthony Dick.


Executive function is responsible for self-monitoring, paying attention, organizing and planning, initiating and completing tasks, and regulating behavior. While parents shouldn't look to bilingualism as a way to create an advantage for executive function, knowing a second language does offer other benefits including better family relationships, improved cross-cultural communication and in some cases enhanced economic opportunities.

"Although our study indicated slightly lower English vocabulary for bilingual children, I think the benefits to learning a second

language far outweigh any of the costs," Dick said. "Parents should take advantage of opportunities for their children to learn a second language and should continue practices that promote language development more generally, such as reading nightly with their children." Using data from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study (ABCD) — the largest long-term study of brain development and child health in the United States — researchers evaluated a demographically representative sample of 4,524 children ages 9 and 10 across the United States. While they were able to replicate some findings related to language development, when they investigated whether there were additional advantages across executive function tasks, they failed to find any evidence favoring bilingual children. They suggested prior findings showing a bilingual advantage might have been due to chance because smaller numbers of children were investigated in those studies.

Results from the current study point to opportunities for further research into ways to mitigate the deficiencies. Dick explains that future research may identify specific circumstances where a bilingual advantage in executive function may be present in some children and determine if the current results apply to a broader range of ages.

The study was published in the journal *Nature Human Behaviour*.



Childhood trauma affects brain and increases risk of substance use in adolescence, study finds

by Rosanna Castro

A new study led by FIU researchers at the Center for Children and Families found that traumatic childhood experiences like domestic violence, abuse and parental incarceration impact brain functioning and increase the risk of substance use during adolescence.

The study was led by social work professor Nicole Fava, from the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, and psychology professor Elisa Trucco, from the College of Arts, Sciences & Education, in collaboration with researchers at the University of Michigan. They assessed 465 children that experienced adversity beginning at ages 3-5 and followed them through early adolescence. Researchers were interested in understanding why children exposed to adversity in early childhood are more likely to misuse substances later in life.

They found that the negative childhood experiences may disrupt functioning of brain regions associated with impulse control. The children's difficulties in regulating their impulses leads to increased deviant behaviors, such as stealing and aggression, in early adolescence, which in turn increases alcohol, cigarette, and drug use in late adolescence.

"Understanding early precursors to later behavior problems and substance use can provide important information for developing more effective preventive interventions," Fava said. "When we understand the experiences that shape a person's behaviors, we can address the root cause instead of the symptoms to help

bring about sustained health and well-being."

In the study, 88 percent of participants witnessed their parents hitting each other, 62 percent did not have enough money for bills and 55 percent were being physically punished or abused.

"This study supports that early intervention for children exposed to trauma is crucial in preventing this pathway of risk towards substance use," Trucco said. "More specifically, interventions focused on improving self-regulation training, such as mindfulness and neurofeedback, may be especially helpful for these children."

Fava is also currently leading efforts through the Center for Children and Families and other community agencies to provide trauma-specific, evidence-based interventions for youth and families throughout Miami-Dade through a project funded by The Children's Trust. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) helps children and caregivers cope with the aftermath of traumatic experiences and teaches them skills like emotion regulation and cognitive coping. These are skills that could reduce the children's risk of using substances in adolescence.

The study was published in the Development & Psychopathology Journal.

THE HIGHEST QUALITY

Carl



The **Advancing Child Competencies by Extending Supported Services (ACCESS) for Families program** bridges the gap by providing online treatment for families with children aging out of Early Steps to learn more about managing their child's behavior from the comfort of their own home. The program is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and led by psychologists Daniel Bagner and Jonathan S. Comer.

The **ATLAS Project** is one of the first substance-use prevention programs in the U.S. designed for adolescents with ADHD. Led by psychologists William E. Pelham, Jr. and Nicole Schatz, the ATLAS Project helps teens with ADHD build the skills they need to make the best decisions when facing tough issues and common challenges with relationships, school, alcohol or other drugs, and more.

Our **After-School Treatment Program (ATP)** is designed for children ages 6-12 at-risk for attention, behavior and academic problems at Dr. Carlos J. Finlay Elementary School. Led by psychologist Joseph Raiker and funded by The Children's Trust, the program works directly

with children, their caregivers, administrative staff, and their teachers to improve across multiple settings, including the home, school, and interactions with peers.

Led by psychologist Jeremy Pettit, the **Child Anxiety and Phobia Program (CAPP)** provides cognitive-behavioral therapy and computer-based attention training programs to treat fears related to being separated from parents, sleeping alone, going to school, social situations, or specific objects or events. This program also provides services for children and adolescents who are experiencing depression.

Our individual **Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) program** funded by The Children's Trust and led by social worker Nicole Fava, provides evidence-based treatment for youth ages 3-17. The program teaches youth healthy ways of coping with their feelings, while caregivers learn stress management, parenting and behavior management skills, and communication skills.

The **CCF Clinic**, led by psychologist Erika Coles, provides individually tailored treatment for

a child or family, including parenting, depression, anxiety, anger management, disruptive behavior and divorce intervention.

Led by psychologist Jonathan S. Comer, the **Mental Health Interventions and Technology (MINT) program** offers cognitive-behavioral therapy for childhood anxiety disorders, selective mutism, and OCD. Service options include in-clinic and telehealth treatments, which use secure videoconferencing to deliver real-time, therapist-led treatment directly to families in their own homes.

Led by our clinical staff, our **Parenting Strategies Group and Saturday Treatment Program** gives both the child and caregivers the opportunity to learn new skills that will improve the quality of family life. In the program, caregivers learn effective techniques to reduce their child's negative behaviors and promote positive changes at school and the home. At the same time, children learn to develop social skills that promote positive peer relationships by participating in classroom and recreational activities.

Led by our clinical staff, our **Parenting Strategies Group and Saturday Treatment Program** gives both the child and caregivers the opportunity to learn new skills that will improve the quality of family life. In the program, caregivers learn effective techniques to reduce their child's negative behaviors and promote positive changes at school and the home. At the same time, children learn to develop social skills that promote positive peer relationships by participating in classroom and recreational activities.

The center offers **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy** for children ages 2-6 who are experiencing behavioral difficulties and emotional disorders. Led by psychologist Paulo Graziano, the program places emphasis on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship and changing parent-child interaction patterns.

Our clinic offers low-cost **psycho-educational evaluations** for families with children ages 5-16 to help with diagnostic status and educational planning. Parents receive a detailed report and diagnostic feedback, as well as recommendations for further testing or intervention.

Led by psychologist Jami Furr, our center offers individual weekly, intensive, and group-based treatment programs for children with **selective mutism and other anxiety disorders**. Using cognitive behavioral therapy, our programs target

the difficulties of speaking in social or school situations with familiar and unfamiliar peers and adults.

Led by our clinical staff, our center provides **school consultation meetings** with a child's school staff and parents to develop individualized interventions for school-based problems.

The **Supporting Teens Academic Needs Daily (STAND) program** is led by psychologist Margaret Sibley and provides family-based services that teaches parents and adolescents with attention, organization and behavioral problems, to work together to improve organization and academic skills, parent-teen conflict and teen independence.

The **Teen Helping Overcome Perceptual Expectations (HOPE) program** offers group cognitive behavioral therapy led by clinical staff, for adolescents displaying depression and/or anxiety symptoms.

Led by clinical staff, our **Teens Power program** helps teens to build effective communication skills, social skills, improve problem-solving skills and learn how to manage challenging situations.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

SUMMER TREATMENT PROGRAM (STP)

Led by psychologist Erika Coles, our nationally acclaimed Summer Treatment Program (STP) is a comprehensive summer camp program for kids ages 5-12 with ADHD and related behavioral, emotional and learning challenges.

During the eight-week camp, children receive 360 hours of treatment—the equivalent to seven years of weekly one-hour sessions.

Children receive group and tailored individual treatment plans to improve on their academic functioning, problem-solving and social skills, as well as their ability to follow instructions, complete tasks and comply with requests.

STP also encourages parent involvement with weekly parent training sessions, where they develop the skills needed to change their child's behavior at home and assist in their progress.

SUMMER TREATMENT PROGRAM - PREK (STP PREK)

Led by psychologists Katie Hart and Paulo Graziano, the STP PreK is a comprehensive school readiness program for children entering kindergarten with behavioral, attention, and/or emotional difficulties.

This eight-week summer camp helps pre-kindergartners improve problem-solving, social & academic skills; their ability to focus and follow classroom rules and routines; as well as emotional functioning, self-control skills and self-esteem.

The program also helps kids build a positive attitude towards learning and school, build teamwork, good sportsmanship, and basic sports skills.

The STP-PreK encourages parent involvement with weekly parent training sessions to develop the skills needed to prepare their child for kindergarten, change their behavior at home/school, and assist in their camp progress.

SUMMER ACADEMY IN LIBERTY CITY

Led by psychologist Katie Hart, the Summer Academy in Liberty City is a comprehensive school readiness program adapted from the STP for Pre-Kindergartners. FIU Summer Academy is fully funded by The Children's Trust and operates in Liberty City at Thena Crowder Early Childhood Diagnostic and Special Education Center.

The program assists kids to:

- Surpass moderate to severe learning and behavioral needs
- Overcome academic shortfalls and underachievement
- Learn school readiness skills
- Positively transition and succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

BRAVE BUNCH SUMMER CAMP

Led by psychologist Jami Furr, the Brave Bunch one-week summer camp is the only SM program in the Southeast region of the U.S. and simulates a classroom environment along with parent training to provide guided opportunities for children with SM to:

- Interact with a number of new children and adults
- Participate in classroom-like activities (e.g., morning meeting, circle time, show & tell, group creative projects)
- Engage in field trips (e.g., to the library, the park)
- Play socializing games that promote verbal participation ("brave talking") and spontaneous speaking.

READING EXPLORERS PROGRAM

Funded by The Children's Trust & led by psychologist Katie Hart, the Reading Explorers Program helps rising kindergarten, first, & second graders improve their reading skills. The free program is managed and operated by the CCF, in partnership with Nova Southeastern University.

The services provided by Reading Explorers include:

- Parent School Readiness Workshops
- Book giveaways
- Reading assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the summer with personalized feedback for parents about child's oral reading/pre-reading progress
- Structured and interactive reading instruction tailored to child's ability levels, delivered 30 minutes/day, 4 days/week for 6 to 8 weeks.

The Reading Explorers Program helped
2,088 families
this past summer!

Gov. DeSantis announces FIU research collaboration with Israel

by *angela nicoletti*

Today Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced a \$5.2 million National Institute of Mental Health grant to fund a collaboration between researchers at FIU and Tel Aviv University (TAU). The grant will test a novel treatment for child social anxiety disorder and has the potential to open new therapies to help children with this condition.

"This trip to Israel headed by Governor Ron DeSantis is key in helping us at FIU create and deepen important partnerships in a number of strategic areas," said FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg, who is part of the Florida delegation visiting Israel this week. "At FIU, we look for partners interested in leveraging our respective strengths to break new scientific ground and bring economic activity to Florida and Miami-Dade County. Israel is entrepreneurial and ripe for this kind of collaboration."

The National Institute of Mental Health study is headed by FIU Psychology Professor Jeremy Pettit and Yale Psychiatry Professor Wendy Silverman, in collaboration with Yair Bar-Haim from Tel Aviv University. Researchers at FIU's Center for Children and Families and Yale's Child Study Center will recruit 260 children 10 to 14 years old. Anxiety disorders are among the most common and impairing child mental health problems, affecting more than 10 percent of children. The project is expected to provide a new, effective treatment for the impacted population, by developing groundbreaking computer-based interventions.

"This study leverages our expertise in clinical trials for child anxiety at FIU and Yale with expertise in computer-based treatments at TAU," said Pettit, who heads the Child Anxiety and Phobia Program in the FIU Center for Children and Families. "We

are confident that combining our respective areas of expertise will result in a new and effective treatment for children who suffer from social anxiety disorder."

While in Israel, President Rosenberg is also signing agreements with other partners to explore the possibility of collaboration between FIU and TAU in areas such as autism-related research and disaster and emergency management. FIU has unique and highly regarded programs in each of these areas: FIU Embrace and the Academy for International Disaster Preparedness.

During the visit to Israel, President Rosenberg also met with a group of FIU students who were on a birthright trip.



MAKING AN IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY

2019 HIGHLIGHTS:

Partnered with
more than
500
Miami-Dade County
Public Schools

More than
771
hours of training,
consultation and
community outreach

Nearly
2,385
Continuing Education units
were provided to mental
health professionals

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Training that helps educators to identify and understand childhood and adolescent learning and mental health problems; and learn practical strategies to manage difficulties in the classroom.

SCHOOL CONSULTATION

Consultation with teachers and staff to collaboratively assist in the establishment and maintenance of a school-based, system-wide intervention; both school-wide for the prevention of behavior problems as well as interventions for individual children for mental health problems that interfere with children's academic and social functioning in school.

SPEAKER SERIES

Presentations designed to offer health and mental health professionals, educators, and students with current strategies for understanding, identifying, and treating children and adolescents with mental health problems. All sessions are free and provide continuing education credits for mental health professionals.

ONLINE TRAINING

Educational website that offers free high-quality learning resources for both parents and professionals about evidence-based practices that promote child and adolescent mental health. In addition, professionals have the opportunity to earn free continuing education units.

MICAMH 2019

Leading child mental health experts tackle bullying, suicide, school shootings and more

by rosanna castro

More than 550 mental health professionals from across the nation convened at the 2019 Miami International Child & Adolescent Mental Health (MICAMH) Conference to address some of today's most timely topics and pressing concerns in youth mental health, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, bullying, school shootings, suicide, L.G.B.T. mental health and more.

During the three-day annual conference hosted by the FIU Center for Children and Families (CCF), practitioners attended keynote talks and workshops, where they learned hands-on evidence-based strategies to improve the way they treat children and adolescents with mental health problems.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ADHD, behavior problems, anxiety and depression are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in children. In addition, half of all adult mental health disorders begin by age 14, and 75 percent begin by age 24, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

"These critical youth mental health issues are affecting communities everywhere," said Jonathan S. Comer, psychology professor

and chairman of the annual MICAMH Conference. "Our goal is for attendees to come away from this conference better prepared to provide families in their communities with the best treatments possible for these problems."

Other topics addressed at the conference included resilience in the face of adversity, treatment engagement, social anxiety and selective mutism, and better incorporating cultural factors into psychotherapy.

"Partnering with entities like The Children's Trust, Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Society of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology allows us to educate as many clinicians, practitioners and students as possible on the most effective ways to treat child and adolescent mental health problems," said William E. Pelham, Jr., director of the CCF and founder of the MICAMH Conference. "If we intervene early and we teach effective strategies to parents and teachers, not only can we help child mental health, we can actually prevent most mental health issues in adulthood."



Raising a child with ADHD costs five times more than raising a child without ADHD, study finds

by Rosanna Castro

Raising a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) costs American families an estimated \$5.8 billion every year—five times more than raising a child without ADHD—according to a new study by researchers at FIU’s Center for Children and Families.

This is the first study to calculate children’s social, behavioral and academic difficulties into a family’s cost of raising a child with ADHD.

“Despite the extensive research that has been done on the impairments related to ADHD, not much research has been done on the financial burden it has had on families,” said Xin Alisa Zhao, lead author of the study and doctoral student in the FIU Department of Psychology. “A comprehensive understanding of the financial burden of raising a child with ADHD is a vital aspect of advocating for, justifying, and planning interventions for families of children with ADHD.”

Children with ADHD often have academic and behavioral difficulties in the classroom that lead to additional costs for families, including private tutoring, summer classes, computer software or other learning services beyond those provided by the education system. These children also frequently lose belongings and school supplies requiring replacement, experience dismissal from extracurricular activities, and miss lessons or extracurricular activities after parents have already paid fees or purchased equipment.

“On average, families of kids with ADHD spent \$15,036 per child—not including treatment—and families of kids without ADHD spent \$2,848 over the course of a child’s development,” said economist Timothy F. Page of the Department of Health Policy and Management in the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work. “There are other sources of

elevated cost to families above and beyond medication and services directly related to treatment for ADHD that were not being accounted for in previous estimates.”

In addition, teens diagnosed with ADHD in childhood have a higher rate of car accidents, likely resulting in out-of-pocket expenses due to damaged vehicles, fines, tickets and increased costs of automobile insurance. Some families may also experience high economic burden associated with delinquency including costs of legal defense.

The study also looked at other costs related to caregiver strain and found that parents reported income loss due to being fired and changed job responsibilities, income loss from missed work, additional childcare expenses, and treatment for the parent’s mental health concerns. Besides financial and occupational impact, caregivers also experienced socio-emotional burden including strained relationships between parenting partners, difficulty engaging in pleasurable social activities, high parenting stress, and substance or alcohol problems.

“ADHD is the most common childhood mental health problem, which if left untreated, allows for children with mental health issues to grow into adults with more prevalent, complex and costly problems that affect the whole family,” said William E. Pelham, Jr., director of FIU’s Center for Children and Families. “The most important thing parents of children with ADHD can do is get help as early as possible to learn effective behavioral strategies that will help to offset some of these costs and prevent more serious issues in adulthood.”

This study was published in the Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology and was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

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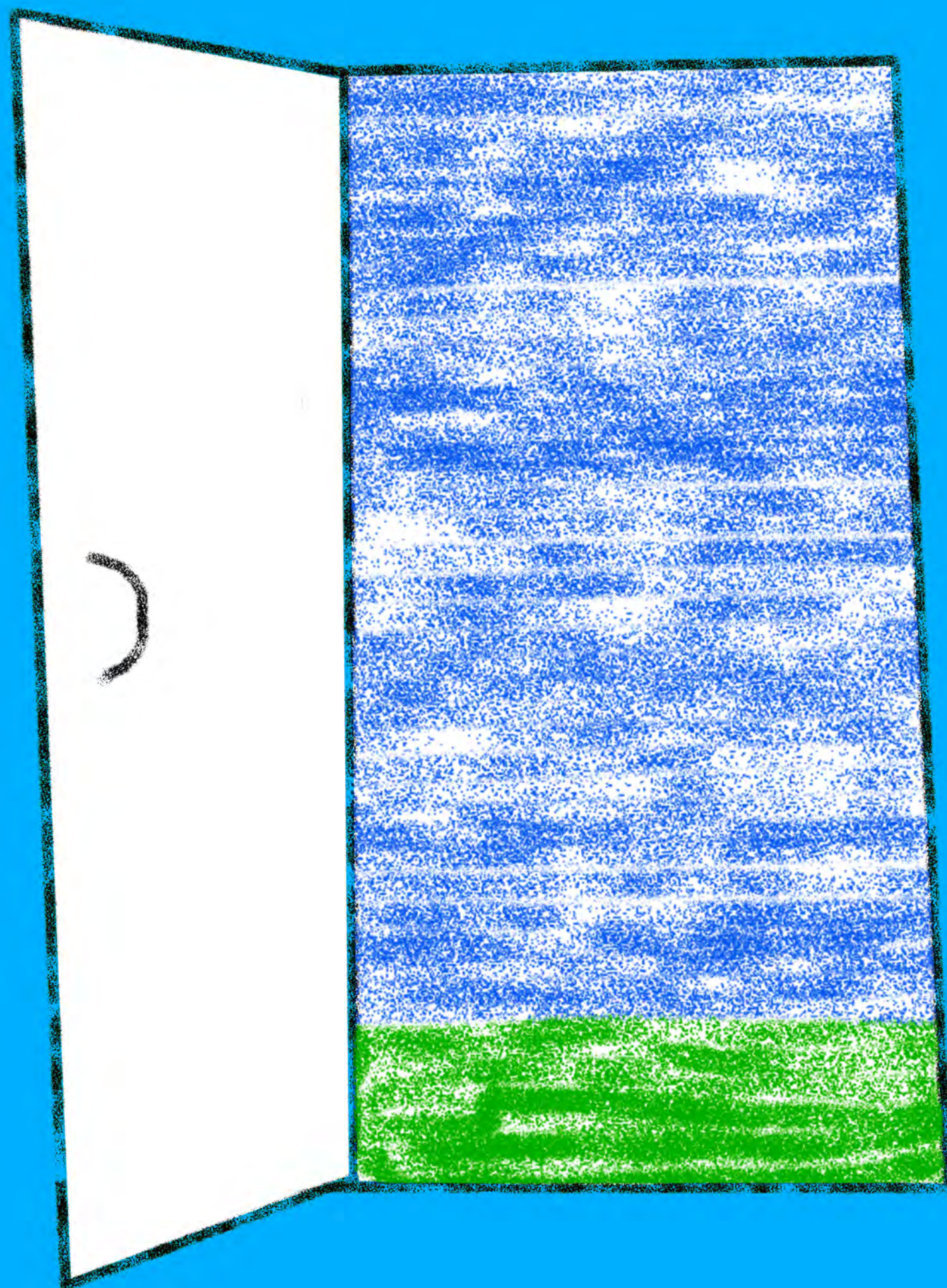
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