

# CSC Child Study Center

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## Fall 2021 Newsletter



**PennState**  
College of the Liberal Arts

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

KAREN BIERMAN  
EVAN PUGH UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR  
DIRECTOR, CHILD STUDY CENTER  
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

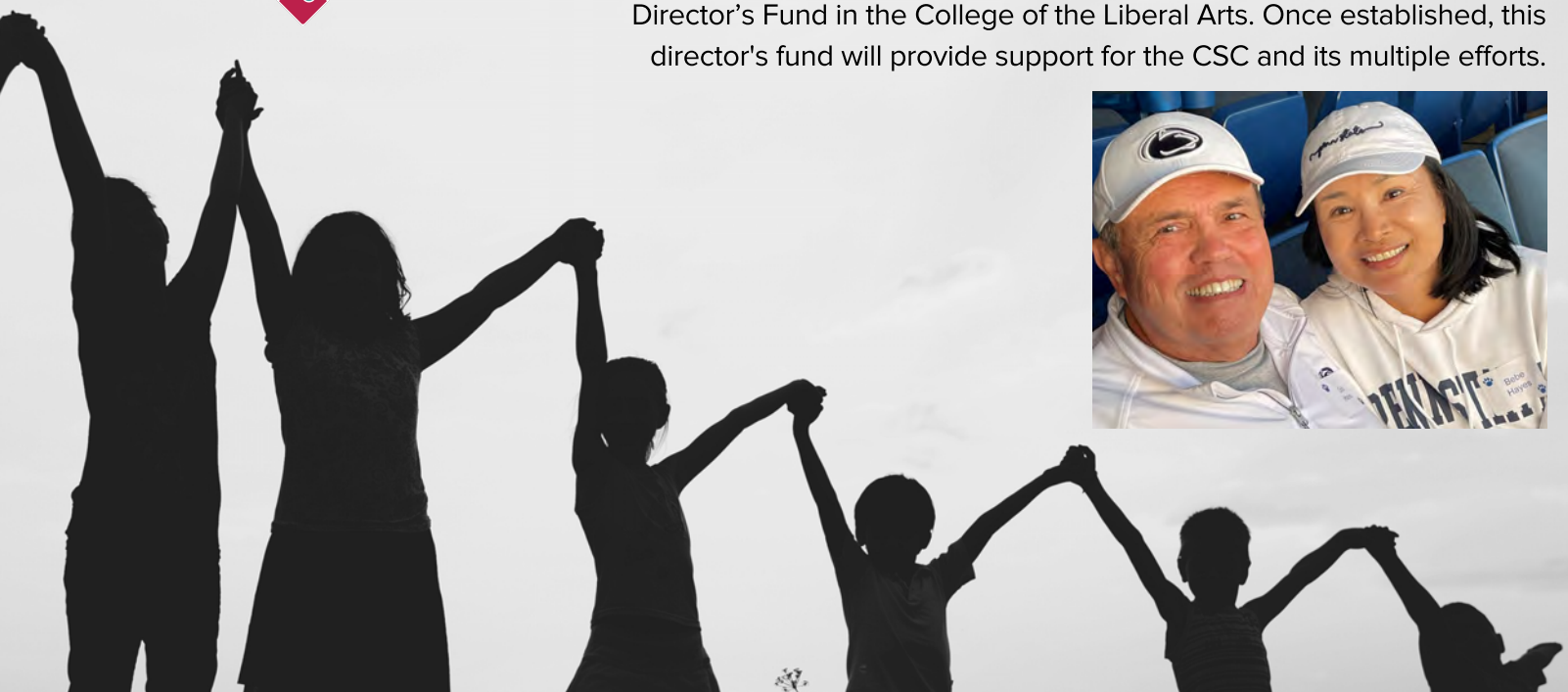


At the Child Study Center (CSC), faculty and students from psychology, education, human development, and other disciplines join with community partners to promote the well-being of children and families. We rely on four guiding principles: collaboration across disciplines and with community partners, innovation in research, and education for undergraduate and graduate students, integrated with action to bridge the gap between research and practice. The pandemic-related challenges of the past year tested the flexibility, creative problem-solving, and overall resilience of our students, faculty, and staff, as well as our community partners and the families and children with whom we work. Like the rest of Penn State, the CSC took many precautions to protect the health and safety of its stakeholders last year. Our faculty adapted their research, teaching, and outreach activities to virtual platforms. As a result, CSC accomplishments and contributions have remained vibrant. This newsletter highlights key CSC activities during the 2020–2021 academic year and previews upcoming initiatives now that we are back on campus. Thank you for being our partner in all of these efforts! – Karen

## CONTINUING COMMITMENT



Dick and Bebe Hayes have long been committed to supporting community engagement at the CSC and helping to translate foundational research into practices, programs, and policies that enhance the lives and well-being of at-risk children, youth, and families. They recently made an estate commitment to create the Richard and Young Mi Hayes Child Study Center Director's Fund in the College of the Liberal Arts. Once established, this director's fund will provide support for the CSC and its multiple efforts.



# TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOLARS IN CHILD MALTREATMENT



This year marked the end of the Training Interdisciplinary Education Scientists (TIES) grant at the CSC and the beginning of the Training the Next Generation of Scholars in Child Maltreatment (CM) grant. Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, during the past five years, TIES supported 21 graduate students from six different graduate programs including Psychology, Human Development and Family Studies, School Psychology, and Special Education. These students received stipends and specialized training to prepare them to conduct needs analyses and design solutions to educational issues in three priority areas: social and behavioral contexts for academic learning, early learning programs and policies, and effective teachers and teaching. We wish these young scholars well as they finish their Penn State degrees and move into positions in universities, research institutions, government agencies, and educational systems, where they will work to address the educational needs of the next generation. At the same time, the CSC is thrilled to co-sponsor the aforementioned CM training grant awarded to Penn State's Child Maltreatment Solutions Network. Funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, this training grant will provide graduate students and post-doctoral fellows with specialized training in the developmental processes, prevention, and treatment of children affected by maltreatment.





## A SEED THAT BLOOMED



In 2013, Dick Lippin provided a team of researchers at the CSC and Penn State's Rock Ethics Institute with seed money to create and test innovative resources to be used by caregivers and teachers of preschool children. These resources were intended to support the children's development of social and emotional management skills and promote moral and ethical behavior. During the next six years, with the generous support of the Lippin Family Fund, a full program was developed, tested, and refined. Parents and preschool teachers in the Centre, Mifflin, and Dauphin counties have tried out program storybooks, games, and learning activities, providing invaluable feedback. This past year, the Institute of Education Sciences invested nearly \$4 million to support the wider distribution of resources and a more rigorous evaluation of program impact. That evaluation study is set to start this fall. During the next three years, 360 families with preschool children will participate in the study, which will examine the benefits of program use on parent-child relationships and children's social-emotional development, school readiness, and kindergarten adjustment and performance. We are excited to launch this effort to help families support the development of their young children, especially in this eventful period of time, and we are indebted to the Lippin Family Fund for the seed money that fueled program development.



## HEAD START TO HIGH SCHOOL



One of the CSC's longest-standing grants is the Head Start Research-Based, Developmentally Informed (REDI) project, which began in 2002. This project aimed to enrich Head Start classrooms (and subsequently Head Start home visit services) with research-based programming designed to increase the lasting benefits of Head Start in the areas of language and social-emotional development. The initial study showed benefits for children placed in Head Start classrooms enriched with the REDI programming relative to children placed in "usual practice" Head Start classrooms. With funding from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, CSC researchers followed the children and their families for 15 years as the children moved through school. Positive effects were still evident in high school, with the children who had received the REDI enrichment during Head Start showing lower rates of antisocial behavior and emotional distress in adolescence. A new grant awarded this past July will allow the CSC team to follow the study participants for five more years as they navigate the transition into adulthood.





# FANTASTIC FACULTY, RELEVANT RESEARCH



The CSC is both fortunate and proud to boast some of the most celebrated and innovative faculty and affiliates across the university. Their dedication to the dynamic integration of research, undergraduate and graduate training, and engaged community outreach is unmatched. Every day, they work tirelessly to improve the lives of children and families. While it is impossible to list all of the CSC's faculty and affiliates, here is a snapshot.



CSC affiliate Dr. Janet Van Hell was the recipient of Penn State's 2021 Outstanding Postdoctoral Mentor Award. Dr. Van Hell is a professor of psychology and linguistics, and her research combines neuropsychological, behavioral, and linguistic techniques to study patterns of cross-language interaction and transfer in child and adult second-language learners.

Dr. Koraly Pérez-Edgar was appointed as editor-in-chief of Developmental Psychology. She will also be a guest editor for a special issue of the journal *Infancy*, which addresses the impact of COVID-19 on infant development. This special issue is focused on capturing the range of impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of infants.

Dr. Dawn Witherspoon, director of the CSC initiative Parents and Children Together (PACT), collaborated with colleagues on a study that found multicultural psychology courses can effectively promote multicultural knowledge and ethnic identity.

Dr. Martha Wadsworth recently began the RiseUpTown project. Focused on the UpTown neighborhood of Harrisburg, PA, this project's goals include: (1) identifying and eradicating crime hotspots and blight; (2) addressing the need for transformative educational practices and preventive mental health services in public schools; and (3) mobilizing community coalitions of parents and youth to work together on solutions for crime hotspots.

Dr. Rina Das Eiden's Development, Risk, and Resilience Laboratory is currently engaged in multiple research projects that focus on how prenatal and early-life adversity shape the development of children's self-regulation. The projects also investigate how these associations may be mediated or moderated by parenting quality and how to apply this understanding to preventive interventions.

Dr. Amy Marshall's Children, Intimate Relationships, Conflictual Life Events, and Stress (CIRCLES) Study aims to shed light on how past stressful experiences and current stress levels impact men's and women's experiences of family conflict.



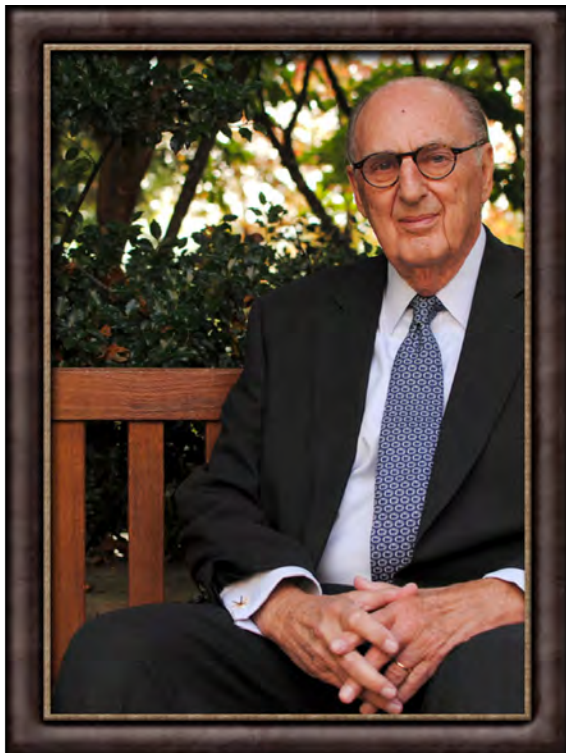
## STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS



Fourth-year doctoral student Kayla Brown became interested in developmental psychology during her undergraduate and post-baccalaureate experiences in the laboratories of Dr. Kristin Buss and Dr. Koralý Pérez-Edgar. While Kayla was initially drawn to pediatric neurology, she found that she enjoyed collecting data, interacting with children, and seeing how they develop over time, and she became more more interested in investigating parent-child interactions. Today, as a graduate student in the Department of Psychology, Kayla is strengthening her knowledge of children's development in Dr. Erika Lunkenheimer's Parent-Child Dynamics Laboratory. The recipient of a predoctoral fellowship as part of Penn State's Child Maltreatment Solutions Network T32 training grant, Training the Next Generation of Scholars in Child Maltreatment, Kayla is passionate about helping translate research into policy by using linked child protective services' administrative data. After graduation, she plans to continue investigating how to best assist children affected by maltreatment, including by working with parent-child dyads to inform policies that effect positive familial change.



Liu Bai is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. During her bachelor's and master's studies in China, she investigated how early childhood experiences influence individuals' ability to regulate their emotions as parents. This work shaped her interest in the family environment and the work of Dr. Douglas Teti. As a student in Dr. Teti's laboratory, Liu performs behavioral coding of parenting quality during bedtime. To broaden her knowledge of and experience with children's social and emotional development, Liu has also joined Dr. Kristin Buss's Emotion Development Laboratory in the Department of Psychology. Under Dr. Buss's mentorship, Liu is examining different biological measures of stress and autonomic nervous system activity to predict child behavior problems in toddlerhood.



## MOURNING THE LOSS OF A CSC FRIEND

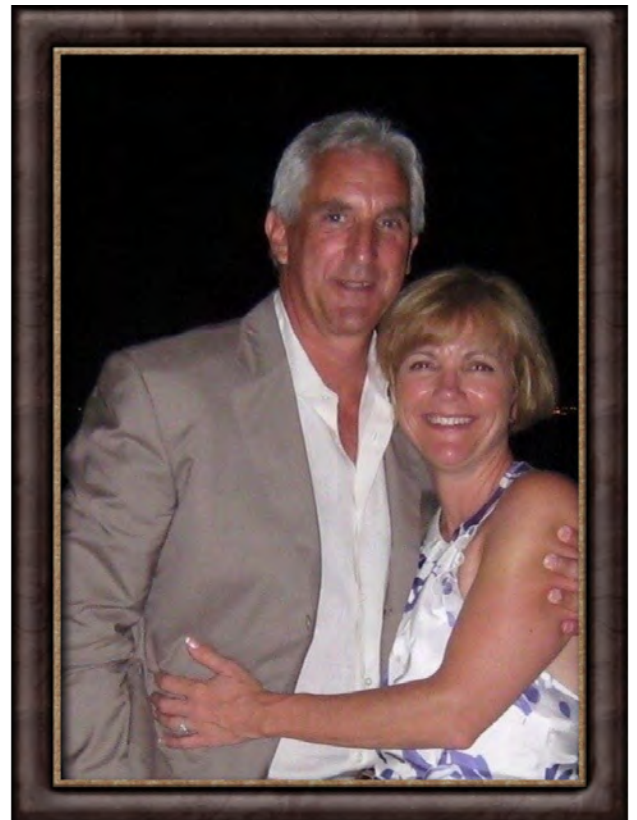


The faculty and staff of the CSC offer their sincere condolences to the family of Arnold "Arn" Hoffman. A Penn State alumnus, Arn passed away on August 4, 2021, in Sarasota, FL. As two of the CSC's most generous benefactors, Arn and his widow Bette made a \$2 million estate commitment to endow the directorship of the Child Study Center; they subsequently committed an additional \$1 million to endow the center. Eventually, the CSC will be known as the Arnold S. and Bette G. Hoffman Child Study Center. The CSC will always be grateful for Arn's tremendous generosity and commitment.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST BENEFACTORS



Moved by their concern for victims of child sexual abuse and their commitment to its prevention, alumnus Donn Rappaport and his wife Susan made a \$100,000 commitment to create the Donn and Susan Rappaport Child Study Center Fund. The fund will be used to identify factors that lead to child sexual abuse and lay the foundation for exploring strategies and practices for mitigating child sexual abuse risk. The Donn and Susan Rappaport Child Study Center Fund helps to advance the University's current fundraising campaign, "A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence," which aims to advance Penn State's position as a leading public research university in a world defined by rapid change and growing global connections.







## Thank you to our friends and donors!



Your support plays a critical role in the CSC's success. Special thanks to Lois Bloom, Ruth Faris and her late husband Robert, Dick and Bebe Hayes, Bette Hoffman and her late husband Arn, Dick Lippin, Don Miller and his late wife Carol, Tracy and Ted McCourtney, Donn and Susan Rappaport, Rick and Susan Sokolov, and Jonathan and Linda Brodsky Strumpf.



**279 BRUCE V. MOORE BUILDING  
UNIVERSITY PARK, PA 16802  
814-863-5656**

**[CSC.LA.PSU.EDU](http://CSC.LA.PSU.EDU)  
[CHILDSTUDYCENTER@PSU.EDU](mailto:CHILDSTUDYCENTER@PSU.EDU)**



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