



# ADVANCING CHILDREN'S OPTIMAL DEVELOPMENT

*Center for Children and Families  
2023 Annual Report*





## A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

In 2008, Dean Bert Moore had a dream to establish the Center for Children and Families at UT Dallas. I have served as its director for the past 14 years, providing nearly 5,000 children and parents with skills, knowledge, and experiences to promote children's optimal development, while simultaneously training hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students applying developmental science to work with children and parents. Starting in January 2024, Dr. Mandy Maguire will be named as the next director of CCF. Dr. Maguire's vision for CCF is inspiring and will build on our firm foundation. I feel tremendous pride in what we've accomplished over the years and look forward to supporting CCF through its bright future!

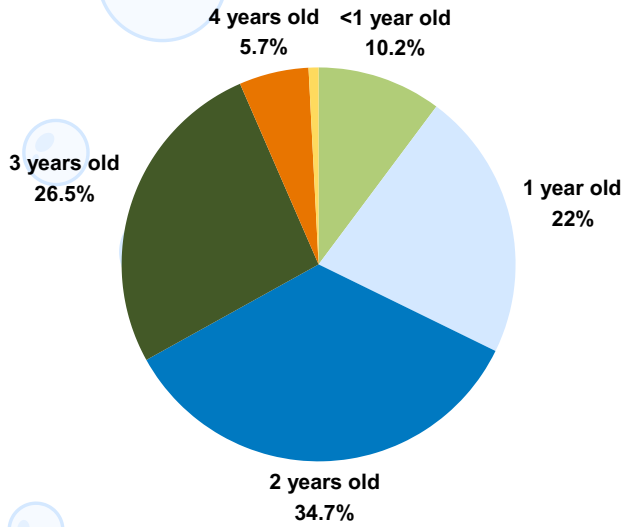


**Margaret Tresch Owen, PhD**  
Director, Center for Children and Families,  
2009 - 2023  
Robinson Family Professor of Psychology  
The University of Texas at Dallas

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# Our Families

## Ages of Children Served



**91%** of children speak Spanish or Spanish/English in the home

**76%** of families reside in Dallas County

**68%** of parents served are married

**93%** of parents served are mothers



# Impact of CCF's Outreach Programs



## Play with Me

Playful learning program for children ages 0-3 together with their parents

**144** Children attended the program

**17** Older siblings participated

Parents reported that their children developed **improved social skills** after attending the program for 12 weeks

Parents reported **more confidence** in their parenting

Parents reported being able to manage the **stresses** of parenting better after attending

Parents reported **improvements in the effectiveness** of their parenting strategies

## Grow with Me

Developmental screening and referral program for children ages 0-5

**202** Children were screened

**76**

Children were referred for early intervention services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.)

**81%**

Of parents reported improvements in their understanding of their child's development

**76%**

Of parents gained knowledge of resources available to support their child

# Our Faculty Impact

## Selected Faculty Research and Accolades

### **Accolades:**

**Dr. Pumpki Lei Su** was among 11 researchers chosen by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) for the 2023 Advancing Academic-Research Careers (AARC) Award. **Drs. Emily Touchstone** and **Andrea Warner-Czyz** were among senior collaborators named to those receiving awards. In May, **Dr. Mandy Maguire** was honored with the faculty leader award at the Women Leading in Diversity event at UTD.



### **Grants:**

**Drs. Mandy Maguire** and **Jackie Nelson** received an \$802,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study resilience and risk in word inferencing and vocabulary growth for grade schoolers from low socioeconomic status homes. The project uses brain and behavioral measures to identify which children struggle vs excel at word learning, in which context (auditory vs written), and why. Results of the study could be used to provide tailored learning plans to help support vocabulary growth for all children in grade school, allowing them to reach their full potential.



## Selected Faculty Publications

Denicola-Prechtl, K.M., Abel, A.D., & **Maguire, M.J.** (2023). What do children's errors tell us about the strategies used during a word inferencing task? *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2023.105705>.

**Nelson, J.A.**, Hafiz, M., Compton, C.L., & Villarreal, D.L. (2023). Household chaos and mother-adolescent communication. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 37(4), 547-553. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0001074>.

**Owen, M. T.**, Dyer, N., Pacheco, D., Barnes, J. C., Von Hatten, L., & Caughy, M. O. (2023). Stability of parenting profiles in early childhood among African American mothers experiencing poverty. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 65, 295-305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2023.07.006>.

**Rollins, P.R.**, Rangel-Urbe, C., Rojas, R., & Brantley, S. (2023). Examining cultural and linguistic sensitivity of Pathways early autism intervention with Hispanic families. *J Autism Dev Disord*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-023-06003-9>.

Sands, K.R., Monroe, A.J., & **Mills, C.M.** (2023). "How do fish breathe underwater?": Young children's ability to evaluate and remember different types of explanations regarding biological phenomena. *Cognitive Development*, 66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2023.101330>

# Our Student Impact

## Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Program Site

Sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the REU is a 42-week paid internship that provides students the opportunity to work in community-based developmental research.



2022-2023 Cohort



2023-2024 Cohort

100%

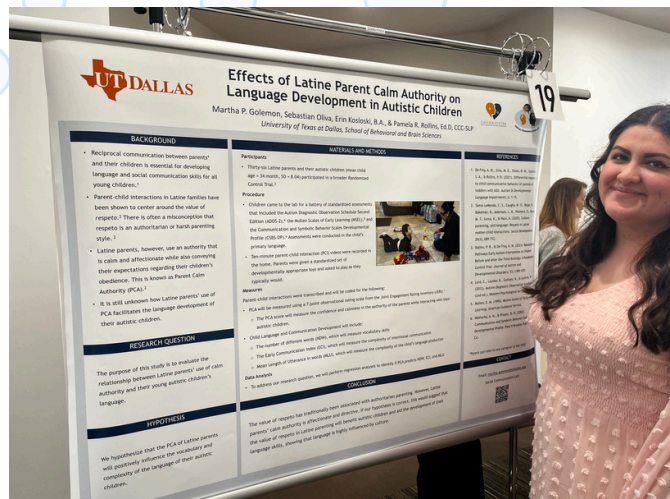
Of students said they were “confident” or “highly confident” in their ability to: **discuss research with professors, explain their research** to people within and outside of their field, and **design a research poster** for presentation, after the program ended.

## Student Accolades

### SPUR Awards 2023

Students from our 2022-23 REU Cohort, as well as CCF students in CCF faculty research labs won awards for their poster presentations at the UTD Summer Platform for Undergraduate Research event. Congratulations to the following students:

- Yanet Admasu
- Bella Burda
- Paola Golemon
- Vivian Le
- Sebastian Oliva
- Marley Richter
- Janine Settle



# Grants and Gifts

CCF received two local foundation grants in 2023 for support of our outreach programming. **The Rees-Jones Foundation** awarded CCF \$125,000 over two years to support the expansion of our Grow With Me and Play With Me programs. The grant supports an additional staff member to increase the amount of developmental screenings, referrals, and support for early intervention services provided to at-risk Dallas area children. CCF also received a one-year, \$30,000 grant from the **Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation** for the expansion of our Play With Me program in Pleasant Grove. In addition to supporting at-risk children and families, the expansion of CCF outreach programs also supports additional research and student training opportunities.



THE REES-JONES FOUNDATION

**Dr. Lynne Kirk**, widow of the late Dean Bert Moore, made a \$50,000 gift to the Center for Children and Families in honor of her late husband. "Early childhood education is a cornerstone of a child's development, laying the foundation for lifelong learning and success," Kirk said. "CCF has demonstrated a commitment to engaging families with young children to create a supportive family environment for learning. In addition, they are immersed in training students to become professionals who may carry on this work. I am pleased to be able to continue my late husband's legacy in supporting CCF." The gift was designated to the Bert S. Moore Center for Children and Families endowment fund.

## Support

### 2023 Revenue and Expenses

Revenue: \$474,467

Expenses: \$467,052



87% of funds raised supported our education and outreach programs

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The Founders Society (f) celebrates those who contribute at least \$1,000 annually. The Sustainers Society (s) honors those who donate year after year. (\*) denotes a 2023-2024 Advisory Council or Legacy Member. Donors listed gave \$50 or more.

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