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Research UpDATE

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College of Education and Human Services • Office of Research Services

From the Associate Dean

This month's Research Update features research of several faculty in the Department of Family, Consumer, and Human Development. The highly productive department was awarded more than \$4.5 million in outside funding this past fiscal year and produced or participated in more than 100 publications and presentations. -Jim Dorward

Announcement

The College of Education and Human Services is ranked 35th in the nation, based on the 2006 U.S. News and World Report Surveys of Graduate Schools of Education. Of particular note is the fact our College was third in the amount of external funding (behind Teachers College-Columbia and UCLA). This level of productivity is simply outstanding!

Early Literacy Skills

Ann Berghout Austin, FCHD professor, is the PI of a sizeable grant funded by the National Institute of Health. The project, Enhancing Language and Literacy (ELL), focuses on the enhancement of early literacy skills of day care children in Cache, Box Elder, and Rich Counties.

Child care providers participating in ELL complete a 10 hour course on encouraging

children's development of phonological awareness, expressive and receptive language, emergent writing, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. Providers receive materials to be used in their day care program to promote language and literacy. Each month they are visited by a literacy mentor, and twice yearly they attend a local professional conference on language and literacy.



Once a month, providers, their client children, and other interested community members have the opportunity to attend *Books and Buddies*, a community literacy event. This program, held at various community locations, has a story time component and literacy related activities for children. Each time a child participates in *Books and Buddies* she/he receives a new book.

Classes for parents on language and literacy development are also offered through ELL. And, organizations serving preschool children in Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties have received book grants through the ELL project.

Growing Old

The Cache County Study on Memory Health and Aging is in its

12th year (awarded by the National Institute on Aging to Duke University with major subcontract to Utah State University). Dr. Maria Norton is Principal Investigator of the Utah State subcontract (approximately \$1million/year).

Initially designed to investigate genetic and environmental factors that influence risk for Alzheimer's disease (AD) and other dementias, the study has expanded its focus to include mild forms of late-life cognitive impairment (MCI). Many factors are being studied to determine whether they distinguish individuals with MCI who will later develop dementia from those who will not. These factors include genes, vascular health such as stroke, heart attack, high blood pressure, late-life depression, medications, hormone replacement therapy, diet and exercise.

The study is also looking at factors related to longevity and healthy aging. Researchers are in the early stages of submitting plans



for expanding the population to include younger individuals. Future studies will investigate other candidate genes that are potentially related to AD, and an examination of social support networks, as well as stressful life events and their potential impact.

Revisiting Men's Role in Father Involvement



By: *Jerry L. Cook, Randall M. Jones, Andrew J. Dick, and Archana Singh.* In *Fathering*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Spring 2005, 165-178.

A recent article by Randall Jones, associate professor in the Department of Family, Consumer, and Human Development, coauthored with three of his graduate students (current and former), explores the importance of personal expectations in fathers' involvement with their children. The authors also consider demographic variables related to parental involvement.

Using fathers' and mothers' reports of expectations for father involvement (measured prenatally) and actual father involvement (measured postnatally), the authors examined how both parents influence the likelihood that new fathers would be involved in instrumental (feeding, bathing, and changing the infant)

and affective (playing and reading to the infant) caregiving activities.

Results indicate that both parents' expectations are substantial predictors of new fathers' instrumental involvement (as reported by both fathers and mothers), and that fathers' expectations are stronger than mothers' expectations for predicting new fathers' affective involvement. The authors draw the conclusion that how involved fathers become is a balancing act between mothers' expectations (that sometimes encourage traditional roles) and fathers' expectations (that appear to promote egalitarian forms of involvement).

Analysis of demographic variables found that fathers' employment was predictive of less involvement; as employment hours increased, fathers' reports of their instrumental and affective involvement decreased. Mothers reported more instrumental but less affective involvement among new fathers when they (the moms) worked more hours. Older fathers reported greater instrumental involvement, but age was unrelated to levels of affective involvement. Older mothers, on the other hand, reported greater father involvement in instrumental tasks, but less affective father involvement.

Baby Boomers and Home Equity Borrowing

By: *Yoon Lee.* In *Financial Counseling and Planning*. 16(2), 2005, 49-61.

As the Baby Boomers (those people born between 1946 and 1964) approach retirement, their fi-

nancial security has become an issue in the policy arena. Using data from the 2001 American Housing Survey, this study found that boomer homeowners with higher incomes, with investment incomes, with greater numbers of mortgages, with a higher amount of mortgage borrowed, with more expensive homes, and those with longer years lived in the housing unit, were more likely to take out home equity loans than their counterparts.



Home equity has been the largest component of the typical household's net worth. Consumers are constantly bombarded with advertisements to use up their home equity. However, the combination of higher home equity value, tax advantages, economic volatility, and increased availability of home-secured loans warrants a watchful eye on the financial well-being of American households.

Teaching homeowners about the possible economic impact of home equity usage for current consumption on the financial wellness in later life could be an important subject for financial counselors and educators.

www.cehs.usu.edu/ors/home.htm

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