



2023-2024 Newsletter



Welcome to our end of the academic year newsletter!

The Institute for Early Childhood Well-Being (EC Institute) is thrilled to have had such a wonderful academic year filled with enlightening presentations and research activities. We hope that you enjoyed all of the events you were part of. This newsletter gives a recap on what the Institute has been up to this year and what is coming up next year.

The EC Institute’s mission is to research and transform early childhood nurturing ecosystems locally and globally to mitigate the impact of all types of adversity, including adverse childhood experiences and broad social inequities. We conduct and promote interdisciplinary community-engaged research on young children’s well-being. We hope to fulfill this mission through the activities we host, the research we conduct, and the research we fund.

We invite you to stay connected with us!

2023-2024 Activity Recap

September Research in Progress

National Latine/Hispanic Heritage Month Talk

Annual Keynote Lecture

February Research in Progress

Early Childhood Well-Being Research Connections Event

April Research in Progress

Institute for Early Childhood Well-Being Leadership:

Dr. Dina Castro, Director; Dr. Ruth Paris, Associate Director for Research

Faculty Governing Board: Dr. Gaby Cordova-Ramos, School of Medicine; Dr. Stephanie Curenton-Jolly, Wheelock College; Dr. Yoonsook Ha, School of Social Work; Dr. Lindsey Locks, Sargent College; Dr. Peter Rockers, School of Public Health; Dr. Amanda Tarullo, College of Arts and Sciences

Research in Progress



Our monthly Research in Progress meetings are an opportunity to engage early childhood researchers in cross-disciplinary conversations about their ongoing research and its impact in the community. This year we had meetings in September, February, and April. Researchers from across Boston University addressed a variety of topics on social-cognitive development, linguistic skills, bilingualism, policy, curriculum, mental health, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Featured Speakers



Kathleen Corriveau, EdD, Professor - Applied Human Development, Wheelock College



Johana Chaparro-Moreno, PhD, Postdoc - Center on the Ecology of Early Development (CEED), Wheelock College



Yoonsook Ha, PhD, Associate Professor - Social Welfare Policy, School of Social Work



Deborah Kelemen, PhD, Professor - Psychological & Brain Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences



Kimberly Crespo, PhD, Assistant Professor - Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences, Sargent College



Alicia Mendez, PhD, Research Assistant Professor - School of Social Work



Nurten Karacan Ozdemir, PhD, Visiting Professor - Counseling Psychology, Wheelock College

National Latine/Hispanic Heritage Month Talk

In October 2023, we were honored to learn about Dr. Martha Vergara Fregoso's research, "Reading and writing experiences and practices of indigenous Wixarika teachers in Jalisco, Mexico". Dr. Vergara visited from the University of Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.



Visiting Researcher from Brazil

We hosted Dr. Suzana Costa, a Pediatrician and Professor, from the University of Pernambuco, Brazil who conducted the study “Pediatricians' Perceptions on the Care of Children with Developmental Disabilities in a Child Care Outpatient Clinic in Brazil” in collaboration with EC Institute’s researchers, Dr. Dina Castro and Dr. Peter Rockers.



Annual Keynote Lecture

The Annual Keynote Lecture is an opportunity for the community to learn from leaders about critical issues in early childhood well-being. In November 2023, the Keynote Speaker was Marica Cox Mitchell, Vice President of Ealy Childhood at Bainum Family Foundation. She gave an enlightening lecture about workforce development in early childhood. Her lecture was followed by a panel discussion with the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Early Childhood, Director of Boston’s Office of Early Childhood, Senior Director of Family Child Care, Nurture Early Education, and an Early Childhood Educator.



Early Childhood Well-Being Research Connections Event

This year the EC Institute inaugurated the Early Childhood Well-Being Research Connections Event. This event allows researchers from all disciplines interested in early childhood to learn about each others’ research, network, and possibly make connections that lead to research collaborations. In April 2024, we had a group of six flash talks that included research funded by the Institute for Early Childhood Well-Being and other research conducted by EC Institute researchers. These were followed by discussion groups and a reception. The event was so well-received that it will become a yearly event.

University-Community Partnership Awardees

The University-Community Partnership Research Grants supports research addressing new approaches for sustaining young children's well-being locally and globally through collaborations among BU early childhood researchers and community partners. We are proud of the four 2024-2025 awardees.



Navigating the Transition from Early Intervention to Public School: Experiences, Assets, and Challenges of Vietnamese Families



Investigators: Zachary Rossetti, PhD - Wheelock College of Education & Human Development & Emily Feinberg, ScD - School of Medicine.

Community Partner: Oanh Bui- Founder of Circle of Vietnamese Parents, MA



Families of Color Unite & Support (FOCUS): Reducing Health Inequities with Education and Social Connection



Investigators: Simone V. Gill, PhD & Laura Driscoll, PT, DPT, GCS - Sargent College

Community Partner: Myriam Hernandez Jennings - Executive Director of Natick is United, MA.



Understanding Reasons for and Health Consequences of Non-Participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): Leveraging Multistate Data from Mother-Child Dyads for improved Program Outreach and Retention.



Investigators: Ana Poblacion, PhD - School of Medicine & Cristina Gago, PhD - School of Public Health

Community Partner: Diane Figueroa-Salazar - Senior Nutritionist, Whittier Street Health Center, MA



Upper Pointe Coupee Parent/Caregiver Ambassador Network



Investigators: Detris Honora Adelabu, EdD & Linda Banks-Santilli, EdD - Wheelock College of Education & Human Development.

Community Partner: Carolyn Wells - Principal, Upper Pointe Coupee Elementary School, Batchelor, LA.

Thanks for participating, stay connected!

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