

## Board of Directors

David N. Broadbent  
*President*

Carol R. Gravetter  
*First Vice President*

Susan Phillips Gorin  
*Second Vice President*

Larry D. Perkins  
*Secretary*

Glenn Gravino  
*Treasurer*

Alida Merrill  
*Immediate Past President*

Susan E. Acker  
Sarah Amering  
Aaron E. Black  
Paula Briggs  
Bert A. Bunyan  
Donna Fielding  
Richard Finkelstein  
Adele Gregory Gorges  
Eleonore Hanson Herman  
Pamela Kimmet  
Richard Leary  
James Lewis, III  
Mike McDougall  
Wade S. Norwood  
Joy Ryen Plotnik  
Barbara Purvis  
Moiria Szilagyi  
Jonathan Trost  
Arthur L. Walton, Jr.

*Honorary Members*  
Richard Fischer  
Marie Hanson Miller  
Mary Anne Trost

*Executive Director*  
A. Dirk Hightower

## Putting Our Mission to the Test

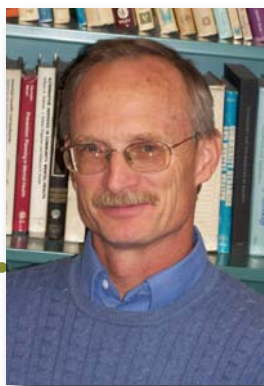


Is it possible to measure the social and emotional health of children on a national level? At Children's Institute, we know the answer is yes, thanks to a pilot of our proven and reliable measure, the Parent Appraisal of Children's Experiences, or PACE.

"Children's Institute is dedicated to measuring our mission," said Executive Director Dirk Hightower, Ph.D. "Using the PACE to measure children's social and emotional health on a national level gives us information to compare with our local data points from the Rochester City School District so that we can establish benchmarks and determine our effectiveness."

CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE

## A Note from Our Director



**A**t Children's Institute, we collect data on children, families, classrooms, services and programs. We use it to shape and direct our work, to modify and improve our strategies, programs, products and services, in order to promote the healthy development of children.

We use data to stimulate and inform those who need to make decisions that impact children and families. We use data to generate discussions from multiple points of view. We have a responsibility to guide conversations using the data, so that people understand it and use it responsibly, neither overstating nor minimizing the findings of our research.

As a partner in the Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP), we provide teachers and child care providers with the data that they use daily to improve their classrooms, which ultimately supports children's developmental and academic growth. Our ongoing assessment of these classrooms enables us to document that Rochester has among the best Pre-K programs across the country, a fact that has moved community leaders in Elmira, NY, to embrace the RECAP model in an effort to improve Elmira's Pre-K programs.

Another example is our participation in the Mayor's Literacy Initiative in the City of Rochester. Children's Institute provided a cross tabulation of data from our Parent Appraisal of Children's Experiences (PACE) measure to establish a literacy index of all kindergarteners entering the Rochester City School District. The PACE is a parent-completed measure that assesses a child's functioning within multiple domains. It augments the kindergarten screening process by providing important parent perspectives. The PACE includes questions concerning how well a child listens to books being read, repeats sentences when asked to, and retells a story that has just been read aloud. The PACE asks how many times the child has gone to a library, and how often an adult reads to the child.

In this issue of News & Views, enjoy reading about how we use data to benefit children, families and the community. You will also read news of an exciting research project for the federal government, and our pilot to determine if the local success of the PACE can be duplicated at the national level.

–A. Dirk Hightower, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

## Children's Institute Welcomes...

### New Board of Directors Member

**Pamela B. Kimmet** is retired Head of the Lower School at Harley School. As Head, she was responsible for: Instructional leadership from nursery through fourth grade, administration of annual budget, coordination of special services for children, supervision and evaluation of 35 teachers and 10 support staff, direction of the extended day, vacation camp, and after school Chinese and chess programs and supplementary support programs.



### New Staff Member

**Jane Passamonte** has joined Children's Institute as a Senior Development Associate. Jane will work with the Director of Community Partnerships & Resource Development and the Development Committee of the Board on research and cultivation of funding sources for Children's Institute's many projects and programs. Jane received her B.S. in Organizational Management from Roberts Wesleyan College and has 20 years of experience working in development and human resources.



### Building Our Future

A long-term perspective in supporting children and families is a core value at Children's Institute. We continue to build our endowment to ensure that our mission of remaining a national resource for the social and emotional health of children will continue in perpetuity. Over time, resources generated by the endowment will create new opportunities to explore unmet needs and incubate solutions, expand our geographic reach, and turn ideas into actions on behalf of children, families and the community systems that serve them.

Through the generosity of our lead donors, we have raised the first \$500,000 toward our \$2.5 million dollar goal. As we move forward, we will need your support to reach our goal. When asked, please consider making a generous gift to the Campaign for Excellence. In doing so, you will be helping to shape the lives of the children and families we serve for generations to come.

# Parent Appraisal of Children's Experiences 2.1 (PACE)



Use a No. 2 pencil only.

Fill in ovals completely.

Correct Mark

## Putting Our Mission to the Test

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Birth Date

Today's Date

Month	Day	Year
<input type="radio"/> Jan	<input type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02	<input type="radio"/> 2000
<input type="radio"/> Feb	<input type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02	<input type="radio"/> 2001
<input type="radio"/> Mar	<input type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02	<input type="radio"/> 2002
<input type="radio"/> Apr	<input type="radio"/> 01 <input type="radio"/> 02	<input type="radio"/> 2003

Month	Year
<input type="radio"/> Jan	<input type="radio"/> 2007
<input type="radio"/> Feb	<input type="radio"/> 2008
<input type="radio"/> Mar	<input type="radio"/> 2009
<input type="radio"/> Apr	<input type="radio"/> 2009

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

For the past 10 years, the Rochester City School District (RCSD) has used the Parent Appraisal of Children's Experiences (PACE) to obtain systematic information from parents regarding their children as they enter kindergarten. The data points collected have enabled the school district and the community at large to obtain a comprehensive picture of the health, family situations and school readiness skills of students entering kindergarten (see sidebar).

Children's Institute contracted with Harris Interactive to gather a national sample of parents of children entering kindergarten in 2007. Parents completed the social, emotional and behavioral functioning sections of the PACE. Data showed that Rochester is slightly below the United States and New York State averages.

"It's not surprising that Rochester lags behind the U.S. average, due to the many life-stresses faced by some children in the City of Rochester, such as poverty and violence," said Guillermo Montes, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation.

RCSD's Andrew MacGowan, who was part of the original PACE development team, notes that one of the most startling data points the PACE has revealed is that 43% of the parents of Rochester's kindergarteners did not initially finish high school. "This means nearly half our students' parents didn't have a positive educational experience themselves. If we are to help this next generation of students in poverty succeed, policy makers need to understand 'where their parents are coming from,' in order to shape policy that really helps our families," he said.

In addition, the PACE has emerged as an integral tool for a number of departments in the school district. "We knew it would be a treasure trove of data for our Grants Department," MacGowan added, "but we could not have anticipated the legal role the PACE would assume in, for example, fighting for funding equity in state and local aid to education and health services."

Seeing the positive impact of the PACE in Rochester has inspired Hightower and his team to develop new versions of the measure for use with younger and older children, including teenagers.

Elevating children's social and emotional health to national issue status is a long-term objective of the PACE pilot program. To move policy makers, Montes believes that Children's Institute would have to conduct the program for the next five years to determine the indicators that would get them on board.

"To effect real policy change at the macro level, we need indicators that reliably measure the issue or problem," said Montes. "Only then will policy makers be able to implement effective, integrated policies and programs that work. Without these indicators, they will continue to lack the big picture."

The success of the PACE pilot project clearly indicates the measure's versatility and potential, and validates that Children's Institute is fulfilling its mission in the Rochester community. According to Montes, the only thing standing in the way of organization's ability to put children's social and emotional health on the national agenda is funding.

"If we had the money tomorrow, we would be ready to go," he said.

## PACE: 10 Years of Valid and Reliable Results

The PACE project was developed by Children's Institute in conjunction with the Rochester City School District, Monroe County Department of Health and School Health Services and the University of Rochester Medical Center Department of Pediatrics. Two full years of research, including a longitudinal study of 1,350 city school students; and focus groups among pediatricians, nurses, teachers, school administrators and parents all helped make the PACE a useful tool.

Administered to parents, with assistance from school nurses, teachers and school administrators, the PACE collects:

- Demographic information, including parent education levels
- History of preschool and child care arrangements
- Child's detailed health history, including birth weight and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) interventions
- Maternal smoking and drinking behaviors during pregnancy
- Assessment of the child's fine and gross motor skills and sensory functioning
- Speech and language development
- Cognitive and learning skills
- Social, emotional and behavioral functioning
- Life experiences and family routines





## Data Findings Enhance Program & Mission

### Rochester Early Enhancement Project (REEP)

Since 1993, when the REEP collaborative was first funded by United Way, data has informed REEP's work. The geographic area and population served were selected based on community data. Poor prenatal care and birth outcomes and children entering kindergarten with multiple developmental challenges were highest in the northeast and southwest parts of the City of Rochester.

In 2000, with the support of the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation, REEP undertook an expansion. Again, extensive data were collected including school entry status, prenatal care, birth outcomes and crime statistics, as well as existing services. Only after all of these data were compiled was it determined that the northwest quadrant was the area most in need of REEP services.

REEP is governed by a Coordinating Council consisting of representatives from all the member agencies. The Council sets outcome goals for REEP. These are based on prior performance and on what the literature tells us is expected in a similar population. Agencies submit quarterly reports to Children's Institute, where they are compiled and reported to the Council. When outcome goals are met, this shows that the agencies are providing effective services. When results fall short of the targets, further information is gathered so that this shortfall is understood, and programs are adjusted accordingly.

Recently, there were several consecutive quarters when there were a number of babies born at less than the target weight. Those agencies that serve pregnant women went back to their records and found that most of those mothers had a risk factor in their medical history. A new protocol was established in which the perinatal agencies record risk factors upon intake, and support the women in mitigating this risk whenever possible. This data also supported the decision to focus on pregnant women by shortening the length of service to one year after the birth of the baby. REEP continues to hold to the principle that evaluation is to be used as a tool for continuous improvement.



Hazeldene Hercules, Executive Staff Assistant from the City of Rochester Mayor's Office, reads children's favorite, *Corduroy*, to REEP picnic goers.

### Parent Appraisal of Children's Experience (PACE)

A few months ago, Children's Institute put the finishing touches on a 70-page report detailing findings from a district-wide data collection using the PACE instrument. These forms were completed by parents at the time a child was being registered for entry into kindergarten. More precisely, 88% were completed by mothers, 9% by fathers, 2% by grandmothers and the remainder by other caregivers. The reason we know this is that we asked, and the reason we asked is that the PACE is designed to collect a wide variety of information that educational staff can use to better understand an entire incoming class – we call these "cohorts" – to document their backgrounds, their histories, their experiences and their strengths and weaknesses. We do this from an occasionally neglected source of information: parents.

No one knows children about to enter kindergarten better than their parents. Many school districts, acknowledging this, have gone to great lengths to tap into parents' knowledge, with varying degrees of success. However, school personnel often find it difficult to systematically acquire specific data from parents – or even to know which questions to ask. Using the PACE, parents can be asked about their children in a convenient setting, usually a school's main office or a child registration center. Response rates are much greater using this approach than with send-home forms, and the cost is less than with telephone contacts.

Using the PACE, we can compile a screening "snapshot" of a single cohort. A series of such data collections provides us with the ability to track important indicators across multiple cohorts, so we can see what changes occur over time. Some examples for incoming Rochester kindergarteners:

- The rate of children not having a regular dentist was 36% in 1999, 29% in 2003 and 19% in 2006.
- The reported rate of children exposed to violence at home decreased, from 13% in 2003 to 11% in 2006, a significant difference.
- The frequency of breathing problems (wheezing, coughing or shortness of breath at least once a week) has increased, from 10% in 2003 to 13% in 2006.
- The number of children taking daily medication to prevent asthma symptoms has increased, from 6% in 2003 to 9% in 2006.

Using information from the PACE, we anticipate being able to identify factors that influence children's later success in school, eventually leading to enhancements in educational programs in the early grades – just when prevention efforts are most likely to be effective.



## Taking a National Look at Families' Choices

The U. S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families awarded Children's Institute a competitive national grant to study *The impact of childhood behavior problems on child care and employment decision-making*. The Rochester Area Community Foundation provided matching funds.

This three-year grant, which began in September 2007, will set a different tone from the typical studies, noted Guillermo Montes, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation at Children's Institute. "Usually the focus is on disadvantaged groups and maternal employment, but this study will include families from all walks of life to cover the income spectrum and all types of behavioral issues," he said.

By following one group of families over three years, Montes anticipates that there will be many new and revealing twists and turns. "For example, we'll learn of the employment adjustments families make, ranging from not taking a promotion to not taking a job," he said. "We'll also see what kind of choices they make because of special needs. Some children in our group will be diagnosed during this time, so we'll be able to document how the family's pathway changes because of this."

Children's Institute partnered with the Gallup Organization because it provides a ready-made national probability sample of 1,500 families, and a small sample of families with a child with autism.

To lay the groundwork for this study, Montes and his team developed the survey instrument, which broadly defines child care to include after- and before-school care for children 0-13 years of age. He looks forward to making numerous comparisons with the data.

As with all of the research and evaluation work performed by Children's Institute, the goal is to provide this much needed information to the research and national community so that policy makers can untangle the web of child care and employment issues and put in place policies that better serve children and families across the nation.

## New Accreditation System Piloted in Rochester

Children's Institute with help from early education partners has launched Pathways: National Early Education and Care Accreditation, a locally created national accreditation system for child care centers. Two child care centers, Park Ridge Child Care Center and Kids First Childcare, are participating in the pilot project. Together the centers serve 174 children between the ages of 6 months and 4 years who will benefit from the project.

Pathways was commissioned by the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), a 17-year community-wide partnership of institutions, early childhood experts and funders charged with

raising the quality of early childhood services in Rochester and Monroe County. "All child care centers must meet the standards of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services in order to operate. Higher national accreditation standards help centers focus on quality services and ensure children are getting the highest possible early care and education experiences available," said Jacque Cady, Chairperson of ECDI. "After three years of development, Pathways has gone live. It is a rigorous, user-friendly system that blends the best thinking of many experts in the field."

Park Ridge Child Care Center and Kids First Childcare are being assessed in four comprehensive areas of their programs: education and

care, wellness, safety and administration. The child care centers will need to meet or exceed 484 criteria to meet national accreditation standards. Center directors will start with an on-line survey to help them assess their readiness to begin the process. Pathways utilizes several normed assessment tools, parent surveys, interviews with staff and administrators and site visits by highly trained assessors from Children's Institute. "This process will help to ensure that we are following best practices in early childhood education. Our children and families deserve and expect this from us," said Pam Mroczek of Park Ridge Child Care Center.

The Pathways process includes provisions for technical support to the

child care centers. Pathways places value on the experience and professional development of caregivers as well as their educational background in the scoring process. It also provides a collaborative process for corrective action in areas that need improvement. Centers that achieve Pathways accreditation will receive a 15% differential reimbursement rate from Monroe County for eligible children.

The pilot project has been underwritten by Rochester's Child, a fundraising program of The Community Foundation. It is anticipated that both pilot centers will complete the accreditation process in one year and that Pathways will be ready for full implementation in 2009.

# News & Views

NEWS & VIEWS • SUMMER 2008

A publication of Children's Institute • A not-for-profit agency  
(585) 295-1000 (phone) • (877) 888-7647 (toll-free)  
www.childrensinstitute.net

CONTRIBUTORS: Janis Cameron, Bohdan Lotyczewski, Guillermo Montes, Jane Passamonte, Dawn Pozzi, Connie Valk, Lori VanAuken, Lorraine Woerner-MacGowan

DESIGNER: Mary Maiolo

Please contact us at (877) 888-7647, ext. 256 if you would like to be added to our mailing list, or if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

## children's institute

274 N. Goodman Street, Suite D103  
Rochester, New York 14607

## News

### Research & Evaluation

*Psychological functioning and coping among mothers of children with autism: A population-based study*, authored by **Guillermo Montes**, Ph.D. and **Jill S. Halterman**, M.D., M.P.H., was published in the May 5, 2007 edition of *PEDIATRICS*, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

American Psychological Association presidential appointee **JoAnne Pedro-Carroll**, Ph.D., is collaborating with the American Bar Association to develop best practice programs, policies and standards for psychological and legal interventions for parents, children, families and courts for national dissemination.

Pedro-Carroll also conducted a continuing education program for the Monroe County Bar Association, *ACT-For the Children: How legal professionals and the judiciary can promote children's best interests and reduce the negative impact of a break-up*, in conjunction with State Supreme Court Justice Evelyn Frazee.

**Shira May Peterson**, Ph.D., recently presented papers at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting, *The impact of early educator mentoring on child care quality and children's school readiness* and *Science*

*in the preschool classroom: Using children's fascination with the everyday world to foster cognitive development, language development and early literacy skills*. She also presented, *Talking science with preschoolers: Developing vocabulary, inquiry skills and causal understanding* at the Society for Research in Child Development biennial meeting and *Is this solid?: The role of visual, auditory and haptic cues in constructing an academic discourse genre in preschool science lessons* paper at the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly for Research conference.

### National Services

National Services continues to work with local, national and international partners. Staff trainers will soon travel to Nova Scotia to train teachers in **PATHS (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies)**, an evidenced-based classroom social and emotional program. The developer of PATHS, **Mark T. Greenberg**, Ph.D. will be the featured speaker at the first local PATHS Symposium sponsored by Children's Institute, scheduled for November. Dr. Greenberg will speak on *School-based social and emotional learning: Current status and future challenges*.

**Primary Project**—Expansion efforts will start in the fall in Toronto, Ontario and Northwest Arkansas. New programs will begin in Washington, D.C. with The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education and the D.C. Department of Mental Health working together to bring Primary Project to twelve new schools. In New York, more model schools have been identified that showcase quality

programs and the numbers of nationally certified schools continues to grow.

**Training Institute in Preventive Services—Summer Play Therapy Institute**, a co-sponsorship between Children's Institute and Nazareth College, was successfully held in June, attracting area mental health professionals. A series of workshops will be offered throughout the upcoming year.

**Marketing and Sales—Parent Resources**: Now available through our website is our newest product for parents and professionals: a DVD entitled *Possibilities of Play*. This half hour DVD highlights why play is critical to healthy child development and how adults can support opportunities for play. **Web-based courses**: Parents will be able to take advantage of our first web course on **early literacy**.

### Community Partnerships

**Children's Film Festival**—Children's Institute facilitated the third annual Children's Film Festival in collaboration with RAEYC and Rochester High Falls Film Festival in April. It featured viewings of high-quality movie shorts for children accompanied by information for parents and pediatricians on making good viewing choices for children.

**A Fit Future for Children**—Children's Institute, in collaboration with Department of Pediatrics at Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong, Rochester Childfirst Network and Child Care Council, Inc., is the lead agency

of Greater Rochester Healthy Child Care 2010, an early childhood overweight and obesity prevention project serving children, parents and staff within 108 child care settings in Monroe County. This project will reach an estimated 2,592 children in urban, rural and suburban child care settings over three years and is funded by Greater Rochester Health Foundation.

**Staff Recognized by University of Rochester**—RECAP Assessment Team staff members, Walter Gramiak, Beverly Miller and Genemarie Van Wagner, were nominated for the University of Rochester Meliora Award which recognizes outstanding teamwork in the spirit of the University's motto, "Meliora," ever better. Dawn Pozzi took second place in a poster session which featured research on the *Social and academic correlates of childhood exposure to violence*. Correlations between exposure status and several health factors, demographics and parent factors were highlighted.

**Literacy Program for Family Child Care Providers Launches this Fall**—Launching in September, The Partners in Family Child Care Literacy Project is a 3-year professional development program for 90 group family child care providers. The project uses home visitors who deliver research-based curriculum, teaching child care providers to promote early literacy and social emotional development in the 750 children who are in their care. Our partners are The Family Child Care Satellites of Greater Rochester at Rochester Childfirst Network and Family Resource Centers at Crestwood.