UNLV’s Top Tier Initiative aims to increase high-quality research, scholarship, and creative activity as well as enhance student experiences, and continue to strengthen community partnerships. To this end, the College of Education has prioritized research across the college by increasing its faculty size with top candidates from across the country, developing an office of research and sponsored projects that supports external funding and other research activities, and integrating its goals for excellence in doctoral education and education service to enhance its research impact. The Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center (referred to in this report as the Center) is an integral aspect to achieving these university and college goals.

Center Scope and Vision
The Center, built over a decade ago, was creatively envisioned, innovatively designed, and intentionally built for combining research, educator preparation, and world-class service delivery—well ahead of its time. The Center encompasses the UNLV/CSUN Preschool and Early Childhood Assessment and Training Center. The Center’s mission is to conduct cutting edge research in early childhood education, support the development of a high-quality early childhood workforce, and provide excellent, inclusive early childhood educational opportunities to the Southern Nevada community. It annually serves approximately 200 children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old and their families. With its full-time staff of 20 and approximately 70 teaching assistants, the Center provides quality early educational experiences including comprehensive developmental assessment, group and individualized planning, and family engagement. The Center has continually achieved national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and is one of the first programs in the state to receive the top rating, 5 stars, in the Nevada Silver Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Center is a leader in innovative practices and scholarship to meaningfully include young children with disabilities. It has long-term collaborative agreements with the Clark County School District’s (CCSD) early childhood special education program for preschoolers and state and local early intervention programs for infants and toddlers (i.e., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C). Currently, 28 enrollment spaces are dedicated to preschool children with disabilities and infant/toddler playgroups are regularly held. As part of this collaboration, CCSD teachers, assistant teachers, early interventionists, and specialists (e.g., occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists) co-teach with Center staff including joint planning and implementation.

Center Research Infrastructure
The Center includes multiple learning spaces for young children (i.e., 12 separate classrooms, three outdoor spaces, one multipurpose room). Additionally, there is a family library and resource room, collaborative staff offices, and conference room. The Early Childhood Assessment and Training Center houses up-to-date assessment instruments that are available for instruction and research for faculty, review and practice for students, and use by Center staff. Many Center staff and faculty are certified in specific assessment tools and curriculums that can support researchers as needed. Currently, one research observation room allows researchers to video and audio record class activities across two classrooms. This secure space also includes computers to record and analyze

1 Nevada Silver State Stars QRIS is a state-wide evaluation system through the Nevada Department of Education’s Office of Early Learning and Development and administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Child Care Development Funds to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality of early learning programs on a tiered rating (0-5 stars). Learn more at http://www.nvsilverstatestars.org/
data and storage space for research materials. The Center regularly collects data on the participating children including demographic information and development assessment data. This de-identified data are made available to researchers whose studies meet eligibility criteria to examine different research questions. To further support research at the Center, the Research Advisory Council, composed of faculty across UNLV, family members, and students, meets regularly to review research studies and develop and implement strategies to enhance research activities. Interested researchers are required to submit a proposal including description of study purpose, method, and dissemination plan to the council and complete approval from the university’s Institutional Review Board. Once the council approves research studies, Center staff assist researchers in recruiting participants and scheduling research activities. At the completion of research studies, researchers submit a report to the council and are invited to present their findings at a council meeting.

**Center Research Outcomes**

Since 2004, 22 substantive, original research studies have been completed through the Center. Most commonly, research has addressed questions related to the social/emotional development of young children and the needs of children with disabilities and their families. The Center has been used for recruitment of participants, observational studies, and experimental studies with program staff, children, and families. Eleven of these studies have been dissertation studies by students across fields of psychology, physical therapy, special education, and educational psychology. Doctoral students conducting research at the center benefit from large recruitment bases, technology-equipped observation rooms, and supportive on-site faculty and staff. Additionally, many Center staff are certified in assessment tools and professional development programs which can aid students in conducting valid and reliable data collection. The College of Education faculty, Preschool staff, and students have disseminated research findings and high-quality early childhood practices through regular publications and presentations at state and national conferences. Since 2004, this has included over a dozen articles and 50 conference presentations. This, in addition to regular Center tours and community outreach activities, has established the Center as a pillar in Nevada for early childhood research, professional training, and community service.

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**2018-2019 Research Advisory Council**

- Dr. Jennifer Rennels, Chair
  Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
- Catherine Bacos, Family Representative
- Dr. Sean Mulvenon
  Professor, Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education
- Dr. Claire Tredwell
  Director, Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward
  Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education
Future Research Directions for Early Childhood Research

The current goals of the Center focus on continued development of procedures and programs to allow for sustained research to address important topics related to young children, their families, and the professionals that serve them. The Center welcomes all researchers to consider using the Center for their research needs.

The Center aims to support high-quality, innovative research that examines meaningful and challenging questions. A priority has been set to specifically address pressing needs in the field, state priorities, and national trends, specifically social/emotional development including preventing and addressing challenging behavior and the meaningful inclusion of young children with disabilities and their families. Social/emotional development has been increasingly seen as a key component to positive child outcomes therefore Nevada has included social/emotional learning in its State Systematic Improvement Plan across all age groups. Nevada’s Early Childhood State Strategic plan and Child Find subcommittee of the Part C Interagency Coordinating Council have including this topic area to support professionals’ knowledge and competence in this area to specifically increase identification of children in need of more social/emotional support, reduce challenging behaviors, and eliminate early childhood expulsions and suspensions. Additionally, the state’s Part C system is currently receiving technical assistance from the National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education federal technical assistance center) to provide a systematic approach to supporting this area of development in infants and toddlers. As previous research at the Center has focused on social/emotional development, staff competence, and faculty expertise, we wish to develop more comprehensive studies around this topic. Including children with disabilities has always been a primary pillar of the Center and UNLV/CSUN Preschool. Including children with disabilities and their families has been a goal in early childhood education since the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. More recently, federal offices and professional organizations have provided guidance on achieving inclusion and set a charge for increased research, particularly in community settings such as the Preschool. Research to better understand the successes of the program as well as the areas still in need of

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2 To read more about Nevada’s State Systematic Improvement Plans see http://dhhs.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dhhs.nv.gov/content/Programs/IDEA/SSIP-YearIII-April-2019.pdf
3 To read more about the Nevada Early Childhood System Strategic Plan see http://nveacac.com/nveac-reports-documents/
4 To learn more about the National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations see https://challengingbehavior.cbscs.usf.edu/
5 To read more about the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education Policy State on the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs see https://www2.ed.gov/about/innovations/earlylearning/inclusion/index.html
6 To read more about the DEC/NAEYC Joint Position Statement of Early Childhood Inclusion see https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/DEC_NAEYC_EC_updatedKS.pdf

Learn more about the Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center at https://www.unlv.edu/preschool
improvement are key to establishing the Center as THE model program for not only Nevada but the country. In addition to studying the program’s inclusive model itself, research is needed to address developmental assessment and referral processes, collaboration between Center staff and Part C providers for infants and toddlers, and embedded instructional strategies such as applied behavior analysis into daily practice for staff and families. Particularly as the Center and college provide pre-service education to many early childhood educators for Southern Nevada, conducting research related to personnel preparation and with students themselves provides a novel opportunity to address inclusion from different viewpoints.

Finally, continued review and improvement of our research infrastructure is needed to maintain and increase research activities at the Center. This includes systematically organizing the regular data collected at the Center (e.g., child assessments, child and family information) for easier short-term and longitudinal examination for researchers and updating video and audio recording systems to improve observational opportunities. Moreover, we plan to develop long-term research projects that build upon each other to provide continuous research activity at the Center and research opportunities students. To address this, we will avidly recruit researchers including faculty and students from across all university departments including the new medical school and Ackerman Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Solutions. Furthermore, we aim to strengthen our collaborative relationships across university departments and early childhood state entities (e.g., school districts, special education/early intervention, Nevada Registry, Early Childhood Advisory Council, NevAEYC, Nevada DEC, City of Las Vegas). These collaborations will allow the Center to develop more complex, multifaceted studies that can address the complex needs of early childhood education.

As recommended by federal agencies and national professional organizations, this multidisciplinary and cross-sectional approach to research can provide rich research findings that can be applied widely to future practice, professional training, policy, and additional research.

The following provides information about the research activities between 2004-2019 supported by the Center including:

- past, current, and upcoming research studies;
- selected publications;
- selected presentations; and
- Center staff highlights and honors. Additional information about the Center can be found at https://www.unlv.edu/preschool
Center-Supported Research Studies: 2004-2019

Completed Research

2018-2019  Project Collaborative Care: A Case Study of Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center
Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education; Chengcheng Li, Doctoral Student, Department of Teaching and Learning; and Pricella Morris, Doctoral Student, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education

2018-2019  Culturally Diverse Families as Gate Keepers of Information Capital
Dr. Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola, Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education

2017  Comparison of the Effects of Video Modeling Other and Peer-mediated Pivotal Response Training to Video Modeling Other on Positive Social Interaction of Young Children with Developmental Disabilities (Dissertation)
Maryssa Kucskar, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies; and Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

2016  A Comparison of the Effects of Peer Networks and Peer Video Modeling on Positive Social Interactions Performed by Young Children with Developmental Disabilities (Dissertation)
Conrad Oh Young, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies; and Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

2015  Comparison of PIPRT and VMO to Increase Social Play Skills in Children with Autism (Dissertation)
Kathleen O’Hara, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies; and Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

2013  Effects of a Social Story Intervention with a Modified Perspective Sentence on Preschool-Age Children with Autism (Dissertation)
Deliah Krasch, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies; and Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

2015  Playful Aggression and the Situational Contexts That Affect Perceptions (Dissertation)
Jennifer Hart, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies; and Dr. Jeffrey Gelfer, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

2013  How Mood Affects Children’s Recognition of Others’ Emotions (Dissertation)
Andrew Cummings, Doctoral Student, Department of Psychology; and Dr. Jennifer Rennels, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

2011  Effects of Environment on Children’s Motor Scores, Eligibility Status, and Administration Times (Dissertation)
Kirsten Pickett, Heather Temkin, Abigail Parker, & Derrick Mittelstadt, Doctoral Students, Department of Physical Therapy; and Robbin Hickman, Associate Professor, Department of Physical Therapy

2011-2012  Implementing Prevent, Teach, Reinforce in a Preschool Setting
Dr. Peggy Whitby, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

2010  Young Children’s Rough and Tumble Play and Educator Training
Dr. Michelle Tannock, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education

2010  Evaluating and Improving the Quality of Teacher’s Language Modeling in Early Childhood Classrooms (Dissertation)
Lillian White Englund, Doctoral Student, Department of Special Education; and Nancy M. Sileo, Professor, Department of Special Education

2010  Impacting Teacher and Child Interactions: Measuring Beliefs, Intentions and Practices in Early Childhood
Dr. Catherine Lyons, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education and Dr. Claire Tredwell, Director, Director UNLV/CSUN Preschool, Department of Special Education
2009  
*Influence of Therapist Interactive Behavior on Motor Performance Test Scores*

Dr. Robbin Hickman, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy; and Derrick Mittelstadt, Abigail Parker, Kristen Pickett, & Heather Temkin, Doctoral Students, Department of Physical Therapy

2009  
*Examining Play Among Young Children in Single-Age and Multi-Age Preschool Classroom Settings (Dissertation)*

Mia Song Youhne, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies; and Dr. Nancy Sileo, Associate Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

2008  
*A Comparison of Social Skills Training Approaches on Preschool Teacher and Child Behaviors (Dissertation)*

Keith Hyatt, Doctoral Student, Department of Special Education; and Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Special Education

2008-2009  
*Program-wide Positive Behavior Support in Preschool*

Dr. Deb Carter, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education; and Dr. Renee Van Norman, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education

2007-2008  
*Preschool Physical Activity Behaviors During Outdoor Time*

Dr. Doris Watson, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education

2008  
*A Multi-Dimensional Look at Young Children’s Developing Epistemology and How They Might Contribute to Theory of Mind (Dissertation)*

Denise Winsor, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Psychology; and Dr. Lisa Bendixen, Professor, Department of Educational Psychology

2006  
*Effects of Social Stories on the Prosocial Behavior of Preschool Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders*

Shannon Crozier, Director, UNLV Center of Autism Spectrum Disorders

2006  
*The Effect of Selective Attention on Preschool-Age Child Behavior (Dissertation)*

Keri Atlig, Doctoral Student, Department of Special Education; and Dr. Nancy Sileo, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education

2006  
*Colored Overlays and Symbol Identification in Preschool Children with Disabilities (Dissertation)*

Edith Naas, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies; and Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies

**Upcoming Research**

2019-2021  
*Early Education and Early Intervention Partnerships (EEIP): Developing a Model for Integrated Service Delivery for Children with Disabilities and their Families (Pending approval)*

Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education; Dr. Claire Tredwell, Director, UNLV/CSUN Preschool, Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center; Jennifer Loicano, M.Ed., Early Intervention Program Manager; Therapy Management Group; Lanisa Harveson, P.T., D.P.T., Physical Therapist, Therapy Management Group

2019-2020  
*Early Denver Start Model (EDSM) for Inclusion: Supporting Young Children with Autism (Pending approval)*

Dr. Cori More, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education
Center-Supported Publications and Presentations

Selected Publications


Other Related Publications


Recent Presentations


Wright, M. (2019, April). *Bullying, teasing & being left out: Creating a socially/emotionally inclusive classroom.* Presentation at NevAEYC Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV.


Calkins, S., Wright, M., & Deguzman. (2018, October). *Reflecting upon one’s emotional intelligence in order to support the social/emotional development of infants and toddlers.* Presentation at National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC.


Oh-Young, C., & Quinn, E. (2017, October) *Video modeling as a practical intervention for preschool-aged children with disabilities.* Presentation at Division for Early Childhood (DEC) for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)’s 33rd Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs & Their Families, Portland, OR.

Tredwell, C., Byington, T., & Quinn, E. (2017, October). *Steps to facilitate leadership for inclusive early childhood environments.* Presentation at Division for Early Childhood (DEC) for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)’s 33rd Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs & Their Families, Portland, OR.


**Center Staff Accomplishments**

**Awards and Honors**

Rose C. Engel Award for Excellence in Professional Practice, Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (2019): Dr. Claire Tredwell

Classified Service Award, College of Education (2019): Maralisa Deguzman & TeaAsha’Nique Caldwell


Classified Service Award, College of Education (2018): Marisol Cipres

Wendy Whipple Award, Nevada Division for Early Childhood (2017): Shin Silver

Hand in Hand Certificate Award, Nevada PEP (2017): Cyndy Anang

Lillian Englund Award for Community Service to Children and Families, NevAEYC (2011): Eileen Quinn
Certifications

Brigance Assessment Trainers: Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)--National Certified Coach: Mardene Wright
  • Infant/Toddler and Preschool Positive Climate Dimension
  • Understanding Social/Emotional Classroom Supports, Classroom Organization and Instructional Supports
Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale 3 Trainers: Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright
Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS) Certified Trainers: Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright
Math Talk Certified Trainer: Mardene Wright
Nevada Registry Approved Trainers: Ruxandra Draia, Eileen Quinn, Dr. Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright
Zero to Three Approved Trainer: Ruxandra Draia

Center Leadership Teams
  • Early Childhood Special Education: Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright, Eileen Quinn, Yamila DeOliveira, Shin Silver
  • Facilitating Leadership for Inclusive Early Childhood Program Model: Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright, Eileen Quinn
  • Inclusive Curriculum Development and TSG assessment: Mardene Wright, Claire Tredwell, Yamila DeOliveira, Shin Silver, Marisol Cipres, Kimberly Crossley, Charisse Adams, Teashanique Caldwell, Maralisa Deguzman, Sharmaine Quimsing, Turia Stewart, Sarah Calkins, Ruxandra Draia
  • Infant/Toddler Curriculum: Ruxandra Draia, Sarah Calkins, Maralisa DeGuzman, Turia Stewart
  • Program Operations: Josie Boyle, Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright, Eileen Quinn
  • Pyramid Model Trained: Claire Tredwell, Mardene Wright, Eileen Quinn, Yamila DeOliveira, Shin Silver; National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations Fellow: Jenna Weglarz-Ward
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<tr>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Investigators</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Study Summary</th>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>PI: Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Assistant Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education Chengcheng Li, Doctoral Student, Department of Teaching and Learning Pricella Morris, Doctoral Student, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education</td>
<td>Inclusion/children with disabilities</td>
<td>Project Collaborative Care: A Case Study of LBECEC</td>
<td>The purpose of this study was to identify key components for successful collaboration among special education and early care and education programs such as the established collaborations between the LBECEC, Clark County School District, and Part C early intervention programs. Through interviews and questionnaires with administrators, staff, and families, observations of staff collaboration, and document review, components that support and hinder collaboration were identified. Of these factors, administrators’ and staff underlying philosophy of inclusion drove the collaborative practices (e.g., formal agreements, clear staff roles, dedicated planning time, communication systems).</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>Dr. Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola, Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual and Special Education</td>
<td>Culturally diverse families</td>
<td>Culturally Diverse Families as Gate Keepers of Information Capital</td>
<td>The purpose of this study is to develop curricular materials that focus on knowledge development of preschool aged children via parent-child discussions.</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Maryssa Kueskar, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies</td>
<td>Inclusion/children with disabilities Social/emotional development</td>
<td>Comparison of the effects of Video Modeling Other and Peer-mediated Pivotal Response Training to Video Modeling Other on Positive Social Interaction of Young Children with Developmental Disabilities (Dissertation)</td>
<td>The purpose of this study was to answer two research questions. The first question examined the relative effects of Video Modeling Other and Peer-Implemented Pivotal Response Training (VMO-PIPRT) when compared to Video Modeling Other alone (VMO) at increasing the number of social play actions in young children with DD in an inclusive setting. Secondly, the study investigated whether the positive effects of the best treatment generalized to the playground for each participant. Five young children with DD were selected as research participants in the study and ten peer participants were trained on the PIPRT strategies implemented in the VMO-PIPRT treatment. Results of the study were variable between the two treatments and the participants. Visual analysis of the data suggests VMO-PIPRT was more effective for one participant with DD and the relative effect of VMO-PIPRT generalized to the playground. VMO-PIPRT was found to be minimally effective for a second participant with Autism. VMO alone was more effective for a third participant with DD and minimally effective for a fourth participant with Autism. There was no significant effect on the fifth participant with Autism. Generalization of the relative effects to the playground did not occur for the remaining four participants; however, there were increased levels of social play actions, or positive social interactions, when phases of treatment were compared. Further analysis of initiations suggests the research participants engaged in higher levels of initiations in the classroom and on the playground compared to reciprocal social play actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Conrad Oh Young, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies</td>
<td>Inclusion/children with disabilities Social/emotional development</td>
<td>A Comparison of the Effects of Peer Networks and Peer Video Modeling on Positive Social Interactions Performed by Young Children with Developmental Disabilities (Dissertation)</td>
<td>A concern that parents of children with disabilities is whether or not their children are able to interact and be accepted by children who do not have disabilities. Unfortunately, children with developmental disabilities (DD) may experience difficulties when interacting with peers. One method of addressing this issue has been to ensure that children with DD receive instruction in the same school setting as their peers. However, simply attending the same school as children who are typically developing may not be enough. Hence the need for interventions such as peer network (PN) and peer video modeling (PVM), that educators can use to help facilitate interactions between young children with disabilities and their peers. The purpose of this study was to compare the relative effect of PN versus PVM on positive social interactions performed by young children with DD in an inclusive classroom setting and determine whether or not the effect of the best treatment generalized to the playground setting. Five preschool aged children with disabilities participated in this study. Data were collected in both the classroom and playground settings. Results suggest that PN was more effective for one young child with autism and that the relative effect of that treatment generalized to the playground setting. Both interventions were found to be effective for a second child with a developmental delay but only in the classroom setting. Neither of the interventions were effective for a third child with autism nor were they effective for a fourth child with a developmental delay. Finally, though not diagnosed with a DD, the PN intervention was found to be more effective for one young child with a speech and language impairment with the relative effect of that treatment generalizing to the playground setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Kathleen O’Hara, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies</td>
<td>Inclusion/children with disabilities</td>
<td>Comparison of PIPRT and VMO to Increase Social Play Skills in Children with Autism (Dissertation)</td>
<td>Young children with autism often experience delays in social play skills. These delays result in poor relationships with adults and peers, decreased engagement, and eventually, social isolation and withdrawal. Social play skill deficits are essential to the development of self-regulation and cognitive skills. Addressing these delays is critical to improve social functioning and minimize any detrimental effects on future engagement and academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to use an alternating treatment design to determine whether PIPRT intervention or a VMO intervention would be effective in increasing social play skills in two settings for four young children with autism. The PIPRT and VMO interventions were both implemented in the classroom prior to structured play centers and on recess on the playground. Data were collected daily during structured play centers and recess. Results of this study suggest that there was a significant difference between the PIPRT and VMO interventions for all four participants, favoring the PIPRT intervention in both settings. Visual analysis of the data also indicated that the PIPRT intervention had a higher increase in social play skills for all four participants in class and at recess on the playground.</td>
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| 2013           | Deliah Krasch, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies | Inclusion/children with disabilities | Effects of a Social Story Intervention with a Modified Perspective Sentence on Preschool-Age Children with Autism (Dissertation) | Young children with autism often experience delays in social skills and social competence. These delays result in poor relationships and decreased social interactions and engagement, and eventually, social isolation and withdrawal. Social skills deficits are also correlated to behavioral and emotional difficulties. Addressing these delays is critical to minimize not only delayed social development, but also detrimental effects on academic learning and performance. Ensuring young children are proficient in a variety of prosocial skills is critical for favorable long-term outcomes and school success. The purpose of this study was to use a multiple baseline design to determine whether a Social Story intervention with a modified perspective sentence would be effective to increase verbal social initiations and decrease maladaptive behaviors in two settings for four young children with autism. The Social Story intervention was implemented in the classroom prior to structured play centers. Data were collected daily during the structured play centers and recess. Results of this study indicated a statistically significant effect for one of the students in relation to increased verbal social initiations. Visual analysis of the data also indicated a positive effect for two additional student participants in regard to verbal social initiations. The data indicated an effect for only one of the student participants related to maladaptive behaviors. However, the participating classroom teacher indicated favorable results for all student participants and positive attitudes toward use of the intervention and likelihood that she would use it again. |

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<td>2015</td>
<td>Jennifer Hart, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Playful Aggression and the Situational Contexts That Affect Perceptions (Dissertation)</td>
<td>Play is considered a fundamental tool for early childhood education practices as it provides numerous developmental benefits for young children. However, not all play is viewed by children, parents, and early childhood educators the same, especially playful aggression. It is unclear how the context of playful aggression—and contextual factors associated with observing playful aggression—affect adults’ perceptions of this form of play behavior. Therefore, this study aims to clarify which contextual components associated with observed playful aggression influence perceptions of the behavior and to what degree. Results of the current study demonstrates a hierarchy of perceived playful aggression of 3- to 5-year-olds—based on the degree of perceived “playfulness” demonstrated in their actions—that is defined by the unique combination of factors that are believed to influence perception. Using video vignettes imbedded in an online survey questionnaire, combined with conjunctive analysis of case configurations as the primary analytic approach, the current research answers the following research questions: 1. Are perceptions of playful aggression “situationally invariant” or do attitudes about playful aggression vary by specific combinations of contextual factors such as a child’s age, whether an adult is present supervising the play, and the presence/type of weapon children play with, which define the situational context of aggressive play? 2. Do the contextual factors (i.e., children’s age, supervision, weapon presence/type) that are believed to affect perceptions of aggressive play demonstrate “main effects” on perceptions or does the influence that factors have on perceptions vary across situational profiles? 3. Do situational profiles that define the context of playful aggression that is most likely to be viewed as “playful” differ significantly for parents versus non-parents and for teachers versus administrators? A convenience sample of adults employed in 12 early childhood educational centers located in Clark County, Nevada, was recruited to participate (n=41). Each respondent was asked to view a random series of 12 videos. After each video the dependent variable—perception—was measured. Specifically, a respondent was asked to rate the behavior observed in each video. Scores were recorded on a seven-point semantic differential scale that ranged from (0) “play” to (7) “violent”. Given the affects of certain demographic characteristics that influence perceptions of playful aggression, participants also provided demographic information about their gender, race/ethnicity, education status, parental status, and whether they were currently a teacher or part of their school’s administrative staff. This study, believed to be the first of its kind, adds to the existing body of knowledge by advancing our understanding of the situational context of playful aggression. It is important for two specific reasons. First, it helps clarify why different people view aggressive play differently, by identifying specific combinations of contextual factors that influence perceptions of aggressive play behavior. Second, results from the current study provide insight into policy geared towards integrating the positive benefits of playful aggression on child development into the classroom, by defining the situational context of aggressive play that is viewed as most “playful.” Finally, future research should build on information produced from the current study to develop effective approaches to include playful aggression experiences in educational policy and practice.</td>
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### Study Summary

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<td>2013</td>
<td>Andrew Cummings, Doctoral Student, Department of Psychology, Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Rennels, Professor, Department of Psychology</td>
<td>Social/emotional development</td>
<td>How Mood Affects Children's Recognition of Others' Emotions (Dissertation)</td>
<td>Previous studies examined how mood affects children's accuracy in matching emotional expressions and labels (label-based tasks). This study was the first to assess how induced mood (positive, neutral, or negative) influenced five- to eight-year-olds' accuracy and reaction time using both context-based tasks, which required inferring a character's emotion from a vignette, and label-based tasks. Both tasks required choosing one of four facial expressions to respond. Children responded more accurately to label-based questions relative to context-based questions at the age of five to seven, but showed no differences at the age of eight, and when the emotional expression being identified was happiness, sadness, or surprise, but not disgust. For the context-based questions, children were more accurate at inferring sad and disgusted emotions compared with happy and surprised emotions. Induced positive mood facilitated five-year olds' processing (decreased reaction time) in both tasks compared with induced negative and neutral moods. Results demonstrate how task type and children's mood influence children's emotion processing at different ages. See more here: <a href="https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/1768/Abstract-Cummings.pdf">https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/1768/Abstract-Cummings.pdf</a></td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>PI. Dr. Peggy Whitby, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies</td>
<td>Social/emotional development</td>
<td>Implementing Prevent, Teach, Reinforce in a Preschool Setting</td>
<td>This project examined the program-wide positive behavior support system, specifically Prevent, Teach, Reinforce (Dunlap, Iovannone, Kincaid, Wilson, Strain, Knoster, 2009).</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Kirsten Pickett, Heather Temkin, Abigail Parker, &amp; Derrick Mittelstadt, Doctoral Students, Department of Physical Therapy, Faculty Advisor: Robin Hickman, Associate Professor, Department of Physical Therapy</td>
<td>Motor development</td>
<td>Effects of Environment on Children's Motor Scores, Eligibility Status, and Administration Times (Dissertation)</td>
<td>Best practices for assessing developmental skills in young children focus on naturalistic observation in everyday settings, but the effects of environment on test scores, eligibility status and administration time have not been explored. The Peabody Developmental Motor Scales Second Edition (PDMS-2) was administered to 34 children aged 18 to 59 months in natural and pull-out settings. PDMS-2 total, gross, and fine motor quotient (TMQ, GMQ, and FMQ) scores were significantly lower in the natural environment ($p&lt;0.014$). Based on our results, more children would qualify for services when tested in natural environments using TMQ and GMQ scores. It also took significantly longer to test children in the natural environment ($p&lt;0.044$). Pediatric service providers should consider the impact environment may have on children's scores and resource utilization when planning assessment. Further, use of standardized tests of discrete motor skills, such as the PDMS-2, may be more appropriate in pull-out settings.</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>PI. Dr. Michelle Tannock, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Young Children’s Rough and Tumble Play and Educator Training</td>
<td>This research investigated the rough-and-tumble play of 17 five-year-old children in two early childhood settings. The study resulted in an increased understanding of the forms of rough-and-tumble play displayed by young children. This study demonstrates that both boys and girls are engaged in a variety of rough-and-tumble play behaviors. Twenty-seven distinct rough-and-tumble play behaviors were exhibited during the observation period. They included eight components identified as rough-and-tumble play in previous research and also 19 behaviors not previously identified as elements of such. These elements indicate pre-operational forms of rough-and-tumble play. The results of this study have implications for the understanding of child development. It suggests that rough-and-tumble play evolves as children age, that children move into more complex play behaviors as they mature.</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Lillian White Englund, Doctoral Student, Department of Special Education, Faculty Advisor: Nancy M. Sileo, Professor, Department of Special Education</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>Evaluating and Improving the Quality of Teacher’s Language Modeling in Early Childhood Classrooms (dissertation)</td>
<td>The relationship between pre-school teachers and the children in their classrooms directly influences the degree of success the children experience in school and in life. The emphasis on quality pre-K education in the U.S. has resulted in an increased need for highly qualified teachers who are capable of engaging in meaningful interactions with young children. An important component of high-level teacher-child interactions is the teacher's ability to model language for children as they acquire vocabulary and language context. This mixed-methods study was designed to examine the effectiveness of a professional development intervention designed to improve the quality of language modeling with pre-K teachers. Pre-kindergarten lead teachers were selected in three classrooms in each of two facilities. These teachers were surveyed on beliefs and intentions regarding their practice. They were given the opportunity to view and reflect on their use of language, then they were instructed on components of language modeling, followed by an opportunity to practice with further opportunities to review and reflect. Finally, they were interviewed on their perceptions of the intervention model. The teachers were video-recorded based on the professional development guidelines outlined in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System Pre-K Manual (Pianta, La Paro, &amp; Hamre, 2008a). Teachers were instructed regarding ways of improving language modeling in their classrooms. Teachers reviewed their video-recorded sessions and evaluated their performance. Findings revealed improvements in the use of language modeling across all six participants. In two cases, teachers struggled with viewing themselves regarding language modeling and needed more coaching before they were able to view, reflect, and challenge themselves to improve their practice. In the interview portion of the study, all participants generally expressed positive impressions of the experience in the study and the need for including similar professional development in teacher preparation programs.</td>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Study Summary</th>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>PI: Dr. Catherine Lyons, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education and Dr. Claire Tredwell, Director, UNLV/CSUN Preschool, Department of Special Education</td>
<td>Social/emotional development</td>
<td>Impacting Teacher and Child Interactions: Measuring Beliefs, Intentions and Practices in Early Childhood</td>
<td>The purpose of this study is to investigate the quality of teacher-child interactions and the quality and quantity of social interactions among children in inclusive preschool classrooms. Specifically, the study will (a) examine the effects of administering a scale on teacher beliefs, intentions, and practices of quality interactions, (b) investigate the effects of scripted video instruction on the quality of teacher-child interactions, and (c) investigate the effect of social development among children with and without disabilities by focusing on learned behaviors through teacher modeling (Gronin, 1998).</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Mia Song Younhe, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nancy Sileo, Associate Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies</td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Examining Play Among Young Children in Single-Age and Multi-Age Preschool Classroom Settings (Dissertation)</td>
<td>Advocates for multi-age classrooms claim multi-age groupings benefit children (Brynes, Shuster, &amp; Jones, 1994). Currently, there is a lack of research examining play among students in multi-age classrooms. Research is needed to examine these behaviors among and between young children in single-age and multi-age classrooms. The purpose of this study was to determine if young children benefit from increased play opportunities. This qualitative study utilized observations, interviews, and questionnaires to gather data from teachers, parents, and children, regarding play interactions in both single-age and multi-age classrooms. The intent of this study was to provide a rationale for why multi-age programs should be developed or continued. Participants included teachers and parents who completed questionnaires and children who participated in video taped observations and interviews. This study took place in a fully inclusive early childhood center. Observations of the play engagements of children were video taped in both the indoor and outdoor sandbox settings. During the five weeks of video taping, 281 play segments were recorded resulting in 1549 occurrences of play. Based on the play observations, it appeared that young children in multi-age classrooms engaged in more than one type of play more frequently than young children in single-age classrooms. Further, young children in multi-age classrooms initiated play more frequently. However, typically developing young children in multi-age classrooms did not initiate play with young children with disabilities more frequently than typically developing young children in single-age classrooms. The interviews with children indicated that young children were aware of their own play interactions. Based on the data collected from the questionnaires of teachers and parents, it appeared these two groups had similar views of the value of play and believed it to be developmentally appropriate and a critical learning process. Professionals in the field of early childhood education should consider the results of this study when designing, developing, and implementing single and multi-age programs for young children with and without disabilities. Moreover, professionals should consider the impact of play on the development of young children when designing curricula. See more here: <a href="https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/1768/Abstract-Younhe.pdf">https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/1768/Abstract-Younhe.pdf</a></td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Keith Hyatt, Doctoral Student, Department of Special Education Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Special Education</td>
<td>Social/emotional development</td>
<td>A Comparison of Social Skills Training Approaches on Preschool Teacher and Child Behaviors (Dissertation)</td>
<td>The purpose of this study was to determine whether instruction to teachers resulted in differences in their performance. Secondly, this study compared the effectiveness of two social skill training methods, a proactive approach and a reactive approach, on increasing the “positive initiations” and/or “positive responses” of preschool children toward their peers during small group art activities. The proactive approach consisted of the teacher providing children with 5 minutes of instruction on specific social skills prior to the art activities, while the reactive approach consisted of the teacher providing verbal praise for “positive initiations” and “positive responses” during art activities. Three teachers who taught at an inclusive university preschool and 24 children between the ages of 4 years-old and 5 years-old participated. The teachers and children were randomly assigned to one of three groups: reactive, proactive, or comparison. Each group of children included 8 children: 4 boys (1 with a disability) and 4 girls (1 with a disability). Results indicated that teachers differed in their use of proactive and reactive strategies. The teacher trained in reactive strategies continued to use the strategies during a Follow-up Phase. The teacher trained in the proactive strategies used one of the four proactive strategies during the Intervention Phase, but her behavior during the Follow-up Phase returned to the level found during Pre-intervention. Teachers in each experimental group exhibited significant differences in behavior when compared with the performance of the teacher in the comparison group. Results of analyses of child behavior indicated that the performance of each group on “positive responses” increased throughout the study. The reactive and comparison groups also showed increases in “positive initiations;” however, the increases noted in the reactive group were significantly higher than those of the comparison group. For children with disabilities, the results indicated that the children in the reactive group exhibited more “positive initiations” than did children in the comparison group.</td>
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## Date Completed | Investigators | Topic | Title | Study Summary
---|---|---|---|---
2009 | Dr. Deb Carter, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education Dr. Renee Van Norman, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education | Social/emotional development | Program-wide Positive Behavior Support in Preschool | There is growing concern over the number of young children who display challenging behavior and preschool teachers are reporting children’s challenging behavior as their greatest concern. Program-wide Positive Behavior Support (PWPBS) is a promising model for supporting appropriate behavior and decreasing challenging behavior in early childhood programs. Implementation in early childhood settings is relatively new and guidance on how to implement PWPBS in early childhood settings is growing. This article documents the implementation process for an early childhood program serving children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age, shares lessons learned and offers practical advice for getting started with PWPBS.

2008 | Denise Winsor, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Psychology Faculty Advisor: Dr. Lisa Bendixen, Professor, Department of Education Psychology | Cognitive development | A Multi-Dimensional Look at Young Children’s Developing Epistemology and How They Might Contribute to Theory of Mind (Dissertation) | This study explores very young children and how their cognitive ability and interactions with peers may reveal information regarding epistemological development. Data was coded inductively and deductively using ATLAS-TI software. The twelve levels of analysis ultimately resulted in three sets of themes: individual epistemic profiles, group epistemic profiles, and overall preschooler's epistemic profiles. These themes suggest that preschoolers can and do demonstrate epistemological development and that focus groups provide a unique and abundant source of epistemological insights. This study stands to promote theoretical, methodological, and educational advancements in the field of personal epistemology and with the research of young children. See more at https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3823&context=rtds

2006 | PE: Shannon Crozier, Director, UNLV Center of Autism Spectrum Disorders | Inclusion/children with disabilities | Effects of Social Stories on the Prosocial Behavior of Preschool Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders | Social Stories™ are a popular intervention for preschool children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). This study investigated the effects of Social Stories on prosocial behavior of three preschool children with ASD in an inclusive setting. Social Stories increased appropriate behavior and decreased inappropriate behavior for two participants. The addition of verbal prompts (condition C) was necessary to increase appropriate behavior for the third participant. Maintenance probes were conducted to assess whether stories became imbedded in classroom routines. See more here: https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/1768/Abstract-Crozier.pdf

2006 | Keri Altig, Doctoral Student, Department of Special Education Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nancy Sileo, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education | Cognitive development | The Effect of Selective Attention on Preschool-Age Child Behavior (Dissertation) | One way teachers can encourage child development is to provide activities and structure so the child will engage with the environment. This study examined the effects of training teachers of preschool children to use selective attention and how training affected child engagement during circle time activities. Verbal praise and praise cues were used as contingent teacher attention on children exhibiting circle time expectations. Findings suggested the four teachers increased the use of selective attention via verbal praise and praise cues. Though, teacher participant three did not improve her use of praise cues. Implementing the selective attention approach in preschool classrooms did not have an effect on child engagement. Child engagement data showed variable levels of engagement in baseline and intervention. See more at: https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/1768/Abstract-Altig.pdf

2006 | Edith Naas, Doctoral Student, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Filler, Professor, Department of Educational and Clinical Studies | Inclusion/children with disabilities | Colored Overlays and Symbol Identification in Preschool Children with Disabilities (Dissertation) | The purpose of this study was to determine if pre-school children, with and without disabilities, could identify symbols more accurately while looking at the symbols through colored overlays. The LEA Playing Cards and the LEA Near Vision Test were used to assess the ability to point to a symbol. To screen for the preferred color overlay the Cerium Colour Overlays were used. Eighteen children, aged 3 to 5 years participated. Nine were children with disabilities, nine were children without disabilities. A screening determined if each child could match four common symbols by pointing. Three groups were formed. Each group included three children with disabilities and three children without disabilities. A Pretest involved having each child point to four symbols on the LEA Near Vision Test first with the Test card was covered with a clear overlay, second with the preferred color overlay and, finally, with a randomly chosen non-preferred color overlay. The Intervention procedure was the same as the Pretest procedure with the exception that each group used a different type of overlay. The analyses included one-way ANOVA with repeated measures between the Pretest scores and the Intervention scores, a one-way ANOVA comparing the Intervention scores between those with and without disabilities, a one-way ANOVA comparing the Intervention scores between the three groups, a two-way ANOVA comparing the interaction between the Intervention scores of the group factor and the disability factor, and a two-way ANOVA comparing the preferred color choices between the disability and overlay conditions. Interaction between the group and disability factors were not statistically significant. There was a trend in which the children with disabilities achieved higher Intervention mean scores when using colored overlays. No single color dominated preference. See more here: https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/1768/Abstract-Naas.pdf