Who We Are
The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development is a university-community public-private informational resource and management facility that contributes to the welfare of children, youth, families, and communities in the greater Pittsburgh area, throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, across the nation, and around the world.

Who We Serve
We function as an intermediate organization serving those who work to improve the lives of children, families, and communities. These constituents include faculty and administrators of the University, service professionals and agencies, policy makers, as well as public and private funders.
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From the Co-Directors

We are pleased to present the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development’s 29th Annual Report. Some highlights of the year’s activities include the following.

In collaboration with the state’s Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, OCD conducted and wrote an Environmental Scan and a Strategic Plan for the LAUNCH project (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs for Children’s Health) funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA). The project supports the creation, expansion, and improvement of numerous mental health services in a variety of contexts for children birth to 8 years of age and pregnant women. OCD will update the Scan and Plan and conduct the evaluation for this five-year project.

OCD’s Ready Freddy program is an integration of best practices in kindergarten transition, parent engagement, and attendance to foster early school success. The project, now in its last year, is listed as a Promising Practice by National Head Start, has become imbedded practice within the Pittsburgh Public School District, and is replicated across multiple districts nationally.

In collaboration with Allies for Children, OCD completed a study of crossing guards for school children in the City of Pittsburgh. The report assessed how crossing guards are prepared and supported for their jobs and how they are deployed, paid, and supervised. Several recommendations were made.

OCD is concluding its evaluation of a teenage pregnancy prevention project operated by a team at Carnegie Mellon University. The intervention uses videotaping and could become widely implemented.

We are also collaborating with Pitt faculty on several projects. For example, Dr. Thomas Akiva, School of Education, together with OCD is delivering a technical assistance intervention aimed at improving out of school time program delivery. We are also working with the Center for Urban Education in the School of Education to create a project intended to promote early childhood racial identity, which is related to better academic success.

As part of the Community Innovation Zone state grants, OCD in partnership with Dr. Lindsay Page, School of Education, launched a new strategy called Attendance Texting to increase daily school attendance among PreK-3rd grade students to improve school-to-family communication. In contrast to text-based systems that only allow for one-way communication of school notifications, this system provides streamlined back-and-forth communication between schools and families to promote attendance and school activities.

The Office has expanded its HealthyChild and HealthyInfants projects in local schools and in the Panhandle of West Virginia. These projects use a mobile, interdisciplinary team to provide on-site consultation, modeling, mentoring, and support to teachers, administrators, and parents with children facing a variety of challenges in early intervention, preschool, and child care settings.
The Communication Alliance was formed to support a network of non-profit partners interested in building their communication capacity and sharing resources and ideas. It not only aims to improve non-profit communication, but to strengthen individual organizations and build a more caring and cohesive community. During the last year, the Communication Alliance has conducted numerous workshops, dispersed communication materials to over 200 non-profit staff, and provided tangible support to several agencies that do not have staff to produce communications.

The Office continued its succession planning, initiating an Opportunities with Responsibilities Group of nine volunteer staff each of whom were asked to identify a current or future issue facing the community, study the issue, create a project or intervention pertaining to the issue, and write a proposal to fund it. The intent is to encourage, guide, and practice skills needed in future OCD leaders.

The Office’s budget of resources in force during 2014-15 increased by 5% over the previous year to a total of $8.4 million, continuing a pattern of small increases over the last few years in spite of the difficult climate for services and demonstration project funding. OCD received 27 grants to continue projects and 13 grants to support new projects. Office staff have also extended their productivity, publishing 18 articles, issuing 14 interagency reports, making 19 presentations, and offering 26 workshops and trainings.

We very much appreciate the diligent work of our staff, faculty, agencies, and funders with whom we partner—they make it possible for the Office to contribute to the well-being of countless children and families each year.

Christina J. Groark, Ph.D.  Robert B. McCall, Ph.D.

Co-Directors

Vision
The opportunity for all children, youth, and families to develop in safe and supportive environments and achieve their life potentials.

Mission
Through mutually beneficial partnerships with our constituents, we facilitate and develop new knowledge, services, and policies to improve the lives of children and families. We do this work in five domains:

- Interdisciplinary education and training.
- Interdisciplinary research and scholarship.
- Human service demonstration programs, networking, and strategic planning.
- Program monitoring and evaluation.
- Needs assessments and policy studies.

Purpose
- Create and maintain a supportive and facilitative atmosphere for its constituencies so that interdisciplinary and collaborative activities may be conceived, nurtured, implemented, and managed.
- Provide guidance, assistance, and management for the planning, funding, development, implementation, and operation of innovative collaborative systems, projects, and programs in its domains of activities.
- Provide and clearly communicate balanced, non-partisan, research-based information on service needs and program effectiveness to our constituencies.
- Provide information, technical assistance, and interdisciplinary and management services to collaborative projects pertaining to university community partnerships; collaborative demonstration service and policy projects; strategic planning and systems analysis; program monitoring, evaluation, and needs assessments; interdisciplinary and applied scholarship, education, and training; and other activities that promote the welfare of children, youth, families and the communities in which they live.
- Disseminate research and professional information about children, youth, and families through publications, presentations, the popular media, and personal contact with those individuals who can use this information, including academics, service professionals, policy makers, parents, and citizens.
- Exemplify a university-community partnership and explore, demonstrate, and communicate to other universities and communities how such a venture can be beneficial to all partners.
Principles of Operation

Collaboration and Partnership
We work in collaboration with organizations or members of the community in a partnership manner. We partner with them on mutually beneficial projects funded by external agencies. Our partners share the rights, responsibilities, and credit as we select a topic, plan and implement a project, operate it, and report its results.

We construct interdisciplinary groups to work in and with. We support educational, scholarly, service, evaluation, and policy projects on any topic pertaining to children, youth, and families. We do not focus exclusively on one or two problems, issues, or content themes.

We facilitate, coordinate, and help others meet their goals and objectives. As a result, we do not necessarily play a lead or continuing role in projects. While we do operate numerous projects when collaborators request that we play a continuing role, we also enhance capacity in other organizations and individuals so that they, not OCD, can operate the project. We plan an appropriate role consistent with a project’s mission and principles, regardless of whether the project’s funding comes to OCD or to another organization. We spin off or transfer projects when they no longer need us or do not fit our project criteria.

As long as core funding permits, we do not charge or extract quid pro quo benefits from participating groups or projects. We want to preserve trust and confidence in OCD as a fair and independent manager of collaborations. However, funded projects that ask us to perform a continuing administrative or technical service typically pay us for that service.

Responsiveness and Flexibility
We are responsive and flexible in selecting special projects. Because of our partnership style, new projects are typically selected when a need is recognized, agencies and personnel are available, and funding for the project is possible. We often collaborate with our partners to set project agenda. We are prepared to operate in a timely, often rapid, manner. We try to maintain the capability and flexibility to meet our partner’s needs.

Neutrality and Openness
Our services and assistance are available to any of our constituencies, and anyone is eligible to be a partner in our collaborative projects.

We do not operate direct services. Since we try not to compete with our constituencies, we do not deliver routine professional or human services. We may coordinate existing services and supervise case-management functions in situations in which it is necessary or desirable to do so.

We promote the welfare of children, youth, and families, but we are not a partisan political advocate. Instead of advocating for specific pieces of legislation or issues, we operate as an independent, credible, unbiased, and balanced source of information and as an administrative manager of service demonstrations, program evaluations, needs assessments, and policy projects on behalf of children, youth, and families.

Project Criteria
We consider the following criteria before taking on a project:

- The project pertains to children, youth, families, or the communities in which they live.
- The project contains an innovative demonstration of new knowledge, techniques, best practices, and state-of-the-art activities intended to create new information about the project, its feasibility, and its effectiveness.
- Some appropriate evaluation will be conducted to assess the project’s process and outcome effectiveness.
- The project has implications for education, research, services, policy, or the welfare of children, youth, and families beyond the specific project itself, and some provision is made to communicate the results of the project.
- The project is a collaboration of stakeholders operating in a partnership mode.
The National Advisory Board meets biennially and provides the provost of the University, OCD’s Local Advisory Board, and OCD’s co-directors with a review and evaluation of OCD’s programmatic activities and internal administration. It places OCD in national perspective with respect to the purpose, nature, and relevance of its projects, successes and challenges, prospects for funding, stature relevant to other such units in the country, role in the University and local and national communities, and future directions.

National Advisory Board

Chairperson

Dr. Frances Degen Horowitz, President Emerita, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. Horowitz, a developmental psychologist, was president of the City University of New York Graduate Center for 14 years (1991-2005) after serving 30 years at the University of Kansas, the last 13 of which she was Vice Chancellor for Research, Graduate Studies and Public Service and Dean of the Graduate School. She was President of the Society for Research in Child Development, Scientific Advisor to the American Psychological Association, and is now Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of Antioch College.

Members

Dr. J. Lawrence Aber, former Director, National Center of Children in Poverty, Professor of Applied Psychology and Public Policy, NYU/The Steinhardt School of Education. Aber is a prominent specialist in child development, especially low income children and families, and social policies.

Dr. Michael S. Wald, Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor of Law (Emeritus), Stanford University. Professor Wald has also held the position of Senior Advisor to the president of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation on Evaluation, Policy, and Children and Youth; Executive Director, Department of Human Services for the City and County of San Francisco; and Deputy General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during the Clinton administration.

Dr. Heather B. Weiss, Director, Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University. Weiss’s project provides information about the development, implementation, and evaluation of family support and education programs for policymakers, program directors, and evaluation researchers. She is a consultant to numerous organizations dealing with family programs and their evaluation.
Local Advisory Board

Chairperson

Mr. Thomas Michlovic, Commissioner, Pennsylvania Securities Commission, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1010 N. Seventh Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102
phone: 717-783-4389 • fax 717-783-5125 • tomichlovic@comcast.net.

University of Pittsburgh

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Dr. N. John Cooper, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, 917 Cathedral of Learning, Pittsburgh, PA 15260
phone: 412-624-6090 • fax 412-624-6089 • cooper@pitt.edu.

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phone: 412-692-6000 • Diego.Chaves-Gnecco@chp.edu.

Marc Cherna, Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, One Smithfield Street, Suite 400, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2225
phone: 412-350-5705 • mcherna@dhs.county.allegheny.pa.us.

Ronald R. Cowell, President, Education, Policy, & Leadership Center, 800 North Third Street, Suite 408, Harrisburg, PA 17102
phone: 717-260-9900 • cowell@eplc.org.

Betty Cruz, Manager, Special Initiatives, Office of Mayor William Peduto, City of Pittsburgh, 512 City County Building, 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219,
phone: 412-255-2439 • fax 412-862-0676 • betty.cruz@pittsburghpa.gov

Karen W. Feinstein, President, Jewish Healthcare Foundation of Pittsburgh, Centre City Tower, Suite 2330, 650 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
phone: 412-594-2555 • Feinstein@jhf.org.

The Local Advisory Board is comprised of leaders from OCD’s constituencies of University administrators, community service professionals, private enterprise representatives, funders, and policy makers. The Board meets four times a year to advise OCD on broad programmatic and administrative matters, and OCD works with individual Board members on more specific issues as needed throughout the year.
Heidi Feldman, Professor of Pediatrics and Neonatology, Stanford University, 750 Welsh Road, Suite 314, Palo Alto, CA 94304  
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Mike Hepler, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of Western PA, 5432 Butler Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201  
phone: 412-782-5710 • bgcwpa@cs.com.

The Honorable Timothy F. Murphy, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives, 504 Washington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228  
phone: 412-344-5583 • murphy@mail.house.gov.

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Assistant: Nancy Glover nglover@heinz.org

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Frederick W. Thieman, President, The Buhl Foundation, Centre City Tower, Suite 2300, 650 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222  
phone: 412-566-2711 • thieman@buhlfoundation.org.

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Ex-Officio

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The mission of the Office of Child Development (OCD) is to improve the lives of children and families.

Most of OCD’s projects involve four basic functions:

- **ANALYZE** information from research and professional practice.
- **INNOVATE** with service demonstrations and applied research.
- **LEARN** and improve through monitoring and evaluation.
- **CHANGE** practice and policy based on knowledge.

Although these functions often occur in this sequence, they can interact and overlap with each other throughout the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating projects.
Reports and Publications


Presentations


Inter-Agency Reports


Workshops and Trainings


Tepe, J. (October, 2014). PICCOLO. Provided for Pittsburgh Public Schools EHS Program. Pittsburgh, PA.


Grants

New Projects


Continuing Projects

Groark, C., *Core Support*, The Heinz Endowments (January 2014 – December 2016), $500,000
Nigam, M., *Propel*, Propel Schools Foundation (July 2013 – Sept. 2015), $50,000
### Grant History Summary

All amounts are in US Dollars.

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Office of Child Development

Staff Listing

Co-Directors
Christina J. Groark
Robert B. McCall

Assistant Director
Kenneth Smythe-Leistico

Division Directors
Steven J. Bagnato
   Early Childhood Partnerships
Joan Eichner
   Applied Research and Evaluation
Roger Fustich
   Administrative Operations
Laurie A. Mulvey
   Service Demonstrations

Project Directors
Sheila R. Beasley
   Family Support Outreach
Bernadette Bennermon
   Early Childhood Partnerships
Leigh Carlson-Hernandez
   Family Support Policy Board
Doris A. Dick, Assistant Director
   Administrative Operations
Christopher J. Dunkerley
   Early Head Start
Sharon L. Geibel
   Early Childhood Mental Health
Regina Jones
   Partnerships for Family Support
Penny K. Lang
   School Age Care
Tracy Larson, Assistant Director
   Early Childhood Partnerships
Stephanie McCarthy
   Applied Initiatives
Lucas O. Musewe
   MIS Director, PFS
Kenneth Smythe-Leistico
   Communications
Aisha White
   Ready Freddy
Colleen Young, Assistant Director
   Service Demonstrations

Staff
Ann M. Bisceglia
Denise A. Casino
Jessie Chatta
Amanda B. Cross
Stacy Cullinan
Betty Lee Dell
Sarah Dix
Denise Esposto
Maura Falchetti
Barbara F. French
Coni Hainsworth
Annette Harris
Amanda Harrison
Medina Jackson
Kelley Keenan
Joanna Kemp
Liz Kennedy
Pat Lehnhardt
Kelly M. Martin
Margaret M. Matesa
Miriam T. Messick
Gloria Rodriguez Ransom
Jennifer Lee Salaway
Donna G. Sarneso
Janell Smith-Jones
Barbara R. Stolarz
Michael Tarquinio
Emie Tittnich
Angela Y. Tookes
Iris Winter

Graduate Students and Interns
Kyle Amsler
Tomasina Boyd
Kristyn Brier
Meghan Carey
Amanda Griffin
Afton Kirk
Kelsey Lytwak
Rachael Manfredo
Teresa Pizzella
Samantha Ricci
Ivonne Sanchez
Lindsey Vicoria