University of Pittsburgh
School of Education
Office of Child Development

2016-2017 Annual Report
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

For several years the Office of Child Development (OCD) has been preparing for the inevitable transition to new senior leadership, and the time is now upon us.

“For several years OCD has been preparing for the inevitable transition into new leadership, and the time is now upon us.”

First, Laurie Mulvey retired in June, 2017. Laurie was one of OCD’s most senior staff members at 28 years, and created and led Service Demonstrations, which is OCD’s largest division. Laurie received several honors for her contribution to the welfare of children and families in the region, and she headed the coordination of the Early Head Start program, the Family Support Consortium, STARS Technical Assistance to improve quality in early care and education, and most recently the Positive Racial Identity and Development in Early Education (PRIDE) project, among dozens more. She recruited, trained, and supported a large and diverse staff, and helped to create and maintain OCD’s contribution to community-based projects supporting the development of children and families living in low-resource environments.

“We have led OCD for its entire history of nearly 32 years, beginning with three people...”

Second, we, OCD’s two co-directors, have announced our plans to retire, Robert McCall at the end of January, 2018, and Christina Groark in the summer of 2018. We have led OCD for its entire history of nearly 32 years, beginning with three people (including them) and a budget of $284,000 that has grown to 45-55 staff and students and a budget of $7.4-$8.5 million per year consistently over the last eight years. More importantly, the staff have operated scores of projects with over 300 partner organizations in Pittsburgh and around the world to contribute to the health, education, and welfare of literally tens of thousands of low-resource and vulnerable children.

“...in preparation for the future, OCD has undergone a reorganization...”

Third, in preparation for the future, OCD has undergone a reorganization, appointing two associate directors to oversee OCD’s two enduring themes of community service projects and research and program evaluation (see introductions in this report). John Kim comes to OCD from Kentucky with educational experience in economics, public health, and education and experience in working to improve the health, education, and welfare of children and youth in some of the poorest counties in America. John will oversee OCD’s community programs, with the help of Colleen Young, Director of Community Programs, as well as OCD’s communications and internal activities.
Shannon Wanless is Associate Professor of Education at Pitt, and joins OCD part time to oversee research and program evaluation projects. Shannon has practical experience as an afterschool counselor, summer camp director, and Head Start teacher, and has conducted and participated in numerous research projects in the USA and around the world that focus on children’s social-emotional development and relationships.

Fourth, OCD commissioned Bonner Consulting to conduct a transition study funded by the Buhl Foundation to explore with major university and community administrators, OCD staff, and national consultants OCD’s accomplishments, challenges, priorities, and opportunities as well as characteristics needed in a new director (see summary in this report). The study indicated that OCD was a national model of a university-community engagement unit and has one of the longest histories in the country of funding, creating, and managing a great variety of projects for low-resource and vulnerable children. But that diversity obscures its identity, so in the future it needs a communication strategy, a broader and more sustainable funding base, and more faculty involvement in its projects.

The study advised that the new director will need to create a strategic vision and identity for OCD, have strong credits in academics and community organizations, bring fund raising ability, be politically savvy and adept at team and relationship building, and have strong communication skills. The new director will find a skilled and experienced OCD staff and a receptive context, with a new university priority for engagement and a new Dean of Education, Valerie Kinloch, whose background includes community engagement.

In the meantime, OCD keeps chugging along. Last year’s budget was $7,639,426 ----within the $7.4-$8.5 million range of the last eight years despite a deteriorating funding environment. Among its two dozen projects, the PRIDE project promoting positive racial identity in young children received a million dollar grant from the Kellogg Foundation and $345,000 from the Hillman Foundation to implement its program. Also, the University has embarked on several community engagement programs, and OCD has contributed its experience to their design.

OCD has succeeded for nearly 32 years because of the strength and commitment of its staff and its funding and service partners, most of whom will remain. Thus, we are confident that OCD will evolve with the changing environment as it has for decades to enhance its contribution to the health, education, and welfare of children and families.

Christina J. Groark, Ph.D.                           Robert B. McCall, Ph.D.
Executive Summary: OCD Transition Study

Rationale for the Study
For the past 30 years the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development (OCD) has been a leader in university-community engagement, dedicated to helping families and children thrive through research, evaluation, publications, training, and innovative programming and services. OCD is currently undergoing major staff changes, including the pending retirement of key senior leadership who have been at the helm since the early years of OCD. Concurrently, the University is embracing a major priority of engagement with the community, and many leading community service professionals, foundation officers, and policy makers are also transitioning. Hence, this transition study, grounded in the work and guidance from committees formed through OCD’s Local Advisory Board, was conducted to assess the accomplishments, challenges, priorities, and new opportunities facing OCD, including the characteristics new leadership will need to guide OCD in the coming years.

Study Methodology
Bonner Consulting, with experience in succession planning for both corporate and small business clients, was hired to conduct the study, which consisted of interviews with 16 University and community administrators and three national consultants diversely experienced in university-community engagement. Additionally, 48 OCD staff members responded to a survey.

Results
Respondents identified OCD as “a national model” in bridging the community and university by applying research results and evidence-based best practices to create and manage enduring, innovative programs and projects that work to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families locally, nationally, and internationally. However, the study also cites OCD as not having a clear identity among its constituents due to its broad mission and diverse array of services and projects. Additionally, although OCD has done an amazing job of securing grants to become largely self-sustaining, OCD needs a more sustainable funding model. New opportunities for OCD include the expansion of mental health consultation and services for young children and an increase in research and services for groups that reflect the changing landscape of the community, such as immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ individuals and families, and homeless and rural families. The study also highlights the need for OCD to increase awareness and partnerships with faculty and the broader University community, as well as to uphold its mission through unpredictable changes in health, education, and social policies and priorities that affect the most vulnerable children, youth, and families.

The Next Director of OCD
The next director of OCD should possess strong academic and community credentials, have the ability to raise funds and build a strategic vision, and be politically savvy, adept at team and relationship building, and possess strong communication skills.

We want to thank the BUHL Foundation for funding this transition study. Also, thank you to everyone who was involved in contributing their time and insight to this effort. We hope it contributes to the foundation of the future OCD.

Please contact John Kim at John.Kim@Pitt.edu for a full transcript of the transition study.

DID YOU KNOW
OCD has been selected as this year’s recipient of the Chancellor’s University Prize for Strategic, Inclusive and Diverse Excellence (UPSIDE Award). The award recognizes OCD for its long history of impactful work which furthers the University’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.
OCD’s vision for all children, youth, and families is to have the opportunity, “to develop in safe and supportive environments and achieve their life potentials” which has been at the center of my work and schooling for the past 25 years. As a practitioner, my years as an afterschool counselor, YMCA summer camp director, and Head Start teacher, gave me daily experience creating safe and supportive environments. I realized from the beginning that “safety” meant not only physical safety, but emotional and psychological safety as well. I worked with families across the country in Alexandria and Arlington, VA, Jackson, MI, and Creswell, OR, enabling me to see and adapt to cultural differences across race and immigrant-status. But in these cities and small towns I also saw universal needs too. Regardless of the location or the demographic make-up, helping children and families to feel safe and supported meant building unconditional relationships with them, following their interests and needs rather than my own agenda, and repeatedly demonstrating that I could be trusted.

“...helping children and their families to feel safe and supported meant building unconditional relationships with them...”

Throughout my studies, I learned some answers and generated many questions.

Across all of these populations, I have seen that there may be cultural nuances in how warmth and responsivity are developed and communicated, but relationships are always at the core of learning and development. Supporting practitioners to develop those relationships by cultivating strong social-emotional skills and implementing them in culturally and racially-responsive ways is at the heart of my future work. I am lucky to be at OCD, where these values are shared and incorporated in OCD’s everyday work in the community and in its research projects.

I am honored to join OCD and to work with such a passionate group of individuals. As the Associate Director of Research, I look forward to working with my colleagues and with community partners to develop and study innovative approaches to creating safe and supportive environments in which children, youth, and families can thrive.
One year ago I was residing in Berea, a progressive little artisan town near the eastern Appalachian region of Kentucky, and working to improve health and educational outcomes for residents in some of the poorest counties in America. Five years ago I was implementing a national Catholic healthcare initiative to fight poverty and violence, this time with inner city children and families in Lexington, Kentucky. And ten years ago, I was managing a project to develop smart, transparent health benefit statements that would educate and enlighten insurance consumers on the true cost of healthcare utilization as part of the Innovation Center team at Humana, a for-profit health insurance company that recognized the financial benefits of promoting preventative health engagement. Each of these unique opportunities presented challenges that intersect education, healthcare, and social services. More importantly, they provided me with a greater sense of purpose and meaning for work that I had been seeking for many years in my young professional life.

“...[these challenges] provided me with a greater sense of purpose and meaning for work...”

My experience at Humana introduced me to the world of population-based healthcare, and propelled me to pursue my graduate studies in public health (University of Kentucky) and education (Northern Kentucky University). Today, I am privileged to be part of the Office of Child Development, working and living in a vibrant, historic city with its own unique set of challenges. I was drawn to OCD because of its long history of leading university-community engagement projects, something that I had been advocating for during my years in graduate school. I always believed that universities are the backbone of the communities in which they reside, and that faculty, staff, and students represent valuable assets in helping to solve complex social, health, and educational issues in the community. The University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development has been a leader in this endeavor, long before community-based participatory research became a popular theme in classroom instruction.

“I always believed that universities are the backbone of the communities in which they reside...”

I joined an incredibly dedicated group of people at OCD, everyone working together to continue this long legacy of serving the Pittsburgh community and beyond through partnerships with so many supportive community organizations. As the Associate Director of Programs, I am starting to explore new areas of growth and innovation, especially as the city and county continues to undergo major changes in demographics. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of OCD, and for the chance to make a positive difference in child welfare and development.
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.

QUOTE
“Whether we’re a preschooler or a young teen, a graduating college senior or a retired person, we human beings all want to know that we’re acceptable, that our being alive somehow makes a difference in the lives of others.” - Fred Rogers
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.
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.

**WE IMPACT POLICY BY:**

**SHARING THE RESULTS** of our work with practitioners, researchers, and policy makers.

**STAYING CONNECTED** to local, state, and national advocacy efforts.

**DESIGNING & ENGAGING** in collaborative work between researchers and policy makers.
Publications


DID YOU KNOW

OCD has been involved with initiatives focused on the needs of families and young children facing housing crisis and homelessness and critical supports within the systems that serve them.
Presentations


ADDITIONAL AWARD

Laurie Mulvey, the longtime director of demonstration programs for OCD, received the 2017 Coleman Award presented by the University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics. The award recognizes elected and non-elected community leaders who, by personal example and sustained generosity, have made a significant impact in the region.


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**OCD Evaluators**

OCD evaluators found promising outcomes for students attending afterschool programs in the Hill District: compared to their peers, the afterschool students had better school attendance and were more likely to be on target for meeting the Pittsburgh Promise eligibility requirements at graduation.


OCD’s global reach has expanded to help with children being adopted through orphanages in Kazakhstan by promoting academic and social-emotional development to trainers of caregivers.
Workshops and Trainings


A WAY OF LIFE

“Parents want what is best for their child, failure to do so is not based in desire.” This is a guiding principle of our Family Foundations Early Head Start program.
University Courses


DID YOU KNOW

Dr. Stephen Bagnato serves as the Pitt Co-Coordinator for the Penn State-Pitt Community University-Partnership Summit, which showcases the innovative work and collaboration of the Early…Division of OCD with their local and state partners. Their work has influenced public policy professional best practices, and advocacy.
**New Grants**

Eichner, J., Leading Together Evaluation, Center for Courage and Renewal (July 2016–June 2018), $20,000.


Mulvey, L., York County Community Innovation Zone Yr. 2, United Way of York County, (July, 2016 –June, 2017), $14,000.

Salaway, J., 4Kids Evaluation, Heritage Community Initiatives (May 2016-June 2018), $35,000.


**Continuing Grants**


**CONTINUED GROWTH**

OCD’s The P.R.I.D.E. Program organized a 3-year professional development journey for OCD staff to learn more about race, bias, racial identity development for young African American children, and ways we can incorporate this information into our work at OCD.
Continuing Grants


Larson, T. K., HealthyCHILD for Pittsburgh Public Schools Child Care Partners, Pittsburgh Public Schools Board of Education, Pittsburgh, Pa., (1994-present), $10,310.


Larson, T. K., Propel Partners in Wellness, Propel Schools, Pittsburgh, Pa., (2016-2019), $100,000.

McCall, B., FRIENDS: Communications Alliance II, FRIENDS NCCBCAP, (October, 2016 –September, 2017), $1,925


Mulvey, L., P3, Northwest TriCounty IU, (December, 2016 –April, 2017), $4,000.

Mulvey, L., Parent Leadership, Staunton Farms Foundation, (September, 2016 –August, 2017), $25,084.


Although the work done by the Office of Child Development’s Divisions is quite different, an underlying theme runs through all of our projects: Relationships Matter.
Grant History Summary

All amounts are in US Dollars.

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All amounts are in US Dollars.
Office of Child Development

Organization Chart

2016-2017

University Provost
Patricia E. Beeson

School of Education
Valerie Kinloch

OCD Co-Director
Robert McCall

OCD Co-Director
Christina Groark

Associate Director of Programs
John Kim

Director of Community Programs
Colleen Young

Family Support Technical Assistance
Leigh Carlson-Hernandez
Regina Jones

Early Childhood Technical Assistance
Bernadette Bennermon
Sharon Geibel

Early Head Start
Chris Dunkerley

Internal & External Relations and Communications

Associate Director of Research
Shannon Wanless

Applied Research and Evaluation Team

Early Childhood Partnerships
Tracy Larson

Positive Racial Identity
Aisha White

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