



Newsletter

March 2009

STAR Update



Happy Spring to all! We began our third year of STAR visits in October of 2008. Thank you to all the parents who have continued with the study. We could not do it without you! If your child is 5 ½ and has not completed their third STAR visit please contact us at 336-334-4574 to set up your appointment.

Continuation

We hope to continue our project into your child's elementary school years. Please keep us up to date with any changes to your contact information in order for us to send you updates with our project's progress, and information regarding the continuation of STAR.



Meet the Graduate Students

Jackie Nelson is a third-year graduate student on the STAR Project. She has her BA in Psychology and her MS in Human Development and Family Studies. Her research is focused on parent-child relationships, associations between mothers' and fathers' parenting, and children's emotional development. Jackie helps on STAR with visits and data coding.

Investigator Spotlight



Investigator Spotlight: Dr. Nayena Blankson

Dr. Nayena Blankson is a postdoctoral research associate on the STAR Project. Dr. Blankson currently teaches an undergraduate course in child development and works with different investigators on their research projects. In her research, Dr. Blankson is interested in the organization and development of cognitive abilities as it relates to personality, parenting, and schooling.

Recently, Dr. Blankson published an article on the role of shyness on a child's vocabulary. She found that children who can stay on task perform better on vocabulary tests regardless of whether or not they are shy. In addition, children with enriching home environments who are not shy also perform better on vocabulary tests than children who are shy.

In addition to her work with the STAR Project, Dr. Blankson is involved with other research projects. She consults with faculty and graduate students on the statistics and methodology of a variety of parent and child development research projects. She also presents her research at national conferences such as the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) and recently gave a guest presentation at the Quantitative Training for Underrepresented Groups (QTUG).

In our next issue - STAR Research Updates

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6 Ways

To Motivate a Child to Learn

1. Fill your child's surroundings with words and reading
2. Encourage decision making and expressing of his/her opinion
3. Show excitement with your child's interest
4. Celebrate achievements no matter their size
5. Focus on your child's strengths to promote development of talents
6. Make everyday a learning opportunity

Super Sidewalk Paint



Materials:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Cold Water
- 6-8 Drops of Food Coloring
- Plastic bowl
- Paint Brush
- Old shirt or Smock

What to do:

Mix the cornstarch and water then add food coloring. Make up several batches adding a different coloring to each. Use the Sidewalk paint to create a picture or even a sidewalk game. The paint will easily wash away with water.

STAR Research



Here are a few interesting things we have learned so far from your visits with us.

- We have followed 263 families for the past 3 years. Some of our families have moved across the country, but still come back to visit, or we travel to them.
- The make-up of our families in the project is similar to that of the city of Greensboro. Half of the children in our project are male and half are female and 42% of our sample is non-White.

One particular area of interest in our study is the way that families express emotions. Using the data we have collected over the first 2 years, emotional expressiveness was grouped into three categories: high positive and low negative, very low positive and average negative, or average positive and very high negative expressions. These categories of emotional expressiveness seem to be stable in families across activities and over time. In addition, these emotional expressiveness categories also affect how children regulate their own emotions.



Keep in touch!

Please contact Pam Baldwin with address or phone number changes. You can reach her by e-mail pldover@uncg.edu or by phone 336-334-4574. Thanks!

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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