

Final thoughts...

As you may already know, our website has changed! Please look for us at our new site, www.egdstudy.org, where you can continue to find updated information about the study, staff, and publications from the project's principal investigators.

The Early Growth & Development Study started interviewing participants in 2003. To date, we have a total of 361 adoptive families, 358 birth mothers and 125 birth fathers participating in the first cohort of our study! Each participant's continued involvement is extremely important to us throughout our longitudinal study.

With the information we've collected thus far, our researchers have published a total of 24 journal articles with more in the works! You can learn more about articles and press releases on our website, www.egdstudy.org. You can also use this website to keep in touch by updating your contact information if it should ever change.



Early Growth and Development Study

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A yearly newsletter for the Early Growth & Development Study



EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY

FALL/WINTER 2011

OSLC Hosts Adoption Conference

Last November, OSLC welcomed a team of national experts on adoption to the inaugural "Conference on Improving Outcomes for Adopted Children and Families." The conference was hosted at OSLC in conjunction with OSLC's NIDA Center for Drug Abuse Prevention in the Child Welfare System.

The conference brought together adoption practitioners, policy experts, and researchers in the field of adoption to discuss the risk factors, outcomes, and services for adopted youth. A key focal point of the conference was discussing ways to integrate current research evidence and consider next steps in terms of effective support programs and intervention services for adoptive families.

"The conference was a wonderful and rare opportunity to bring together those of us conducting rigorous research in the area of adoption with those of us providing services to adoptive families to learn more about the unmet needs of some adoptive families," says OSLC Science Director Leslie Leve. "Both groups learned an immense amount from the other, and together we were able to move the field forward in ways that we could not have done alone."

Conference attendees examined research and current practices in three types of adoption: international adoption, adoptions from the foster care system arranged by state child welfare agencies, and infant domestic adoptions.

Presentations focused on topics such as the effects of prenatal influences (parental substance use), adverse early environments (maltreatment, marital conflict, placement transitions, and severe deprivation), and genetic influences on the development of adaptive and maladaptive adjustment in adopted youth. In addition, effective interventions for youth in foster care were described as an example of intervention programs that might be well-suited for modification with adoptive families.

As a result of the conference, attendees are currently collaborating to produce manuscripts for a forthcoming special issue for *Children and Youth Services Review* titled, "Improving Outcomes for Adopted Children and Their Families: Incorporating Knowledge about Genetic, Neurobiological, Prenatal, and Familial Influences and their Interactions." We will share more information about this special issue in a future newsletter.

Did you know?

There are 1.5 million adopted children in the United States (more than 2% of all U.S. children), and 58% of Americans know someone who has been adopted, has adopted a child, or has placed a child for adoption.



ENTER TO WIN A SUBSCRIPTION FOR *Adoption Constellation*

The Early Growth and Development Study is giving away five, one-year subscriptions to *Adoption Constellation* magazine!

Adoption Constellation is the premier publication of Adoption Mosaic, an organization dedicated to connecting, honoring, and serving the adoption community through innovative education, practices, and support services. The magazine represents and speaks to all members of the diverse adoption community and helps build and support bridges between adoption constellation members, with the ultimate goal of improving adoption experiences. Visit www.adoptionmosaic.org to learn more about Adoption Mosaic and *Adoption Constellation*.

The Adoption Constellation

A Publication of Adoption Mosaic

How to Enter

Send an email to egdstudy@oslc.org with your current contact information and the words "Magazine Contest" in the subject line. If you're one of the five randomly selected winners, we'll call you with the good news!

Research Update

The success of our study would not be possible without the cooperation and dedication of our participants. We are greatly appreciative of the time you take for participating in interviews, filling out forms, and completing packets. Have you ever wondered what we do with all of the information?

After collecting and studying the vast amounts of first-hand data, our researchers are uncovering some interesting facts.

A series of papers using the extensive information provided by birth mothers, birth fathers, adoptive mothers, adoptive fathers, and adopted children, has demonstrated that both inherited characteristics and the child's social environment jointly influence a range of child behaviors including their emotionality, social inhibition, fussiness, and behavioral and emotional adjustment. In addition, work from this study has shown that less marital instability and hostility and more marital warmth are associated with better child sleep during early childhood. These findings highlight the importance of both nature and nurture on child development. They also help researchers identify family processes that could help prevent the development of behavioral and/or emotional difficulties in children.

Additionally, we have found that greater openness in adoptions (for example, more contact and knowledge between birth and adoptive parents) is associated with more satisfaction with the adoption process among birth mothers and adoptive parents.

Overall, the knowledge gained from this study has the potential to improve the lives of children and families from both adoptive and non-adoptive families.

EGDS RESEARCH SCIENTISTS HONORED with SOCIETY FOR PREVENTION RESEARCH AWARDS

Congratulations to EGDS Principal Investigators Leslie Leve, Ph.D. and Daniel Shaw, Ph.D. who each received a 2011 award from the Society for Prevention Research (SPR).



Dr. Shaw was awarded SPR's 2011 *Friend of ECPN Award*. The award is presented to a mid-career or senior preventionist who has supported and encouraged early career prevention scientists or issues.

Dr. Shaw's advisees have been awarded 44 competitive fellowships and/or publication awards, and have co-authored 50 peer reviewed publications under his direction, with another 35 peer-reviewed papers co-authored by post-doctoral fellows. Dr. Shaw challenges his mentees to excel, pushes them to do their best work, and continues to be a source of support and mentorship after they leave his laboratory to launch their independent careers.

The Society for Prevention Research, in its 20th year, is a multi-disciplinary, international membership of scientists, practitioners, advocates, administrators, and policy makers working to enhance dissemination of prevention research to promote health and well-being globally.

Future Directions

Great news! We are pleased to inform you that we have been awarded federal funding for another study. The study, which we are calling EGDS-Health, is funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) and aims to learn more about the influences of heredity and child rearing on physical growth and development. This opportunity to continue our goals could not happen without all the time and support you have given us throughout these past years. We hope that you have enjoyed your experience in the study as much as we have enjoyed working with you.

Stay tuned for more details! In the meantime, you can find more information about the study at www.egdstudy.org.



EGDS Principal Investigator, Leslie Leve, Ph.D.

Dr. Leve is the 2011 recipient of the Society for Prevention Research's *Prevention Science Award*.

Dr. Leve was selected for her outstanding contributions to advancing the field of prevention science. The award was given to her at the annual SPR Conference in June in Washington, D. C. and is awarded annually to an individual or team of individuals for exceptional work in developing and testing prevention strategies.

In addition to directing the Early Growth and Development Study-Phase I project, Dr. Leve also directs a long term follow-up study of women who were involved in the juvenile justice system as adolescents, and has been a lead researcher on several other grants funded by the National Institutes of Health that include the development of interventions for families with child welfare involvement. Dr. Leve is also the Science Director at the Oregon Social Learning Center and chair of the 2012 SPR Conference in Washington, D. C.