

Eliot-Pearson Newsletter

Department of Child Study and Human Development

Issue No. 2-October 2018



Letter from the Department Chair

On the wall in my office, over my desk, I have a hand-written African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Every so often, in between meetings, I look at it and I ponder: Does it really have to be one or the other? What does it mean to go fast? How do we measure far? And what about going together? Are there many different ways to "go together?" Depending on the day and the task at hand, I come up with different answers.

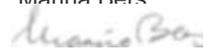
Last month, I held a "Share and Learn" pizza lunch and invited all graduate students in the department to join me. The lunch was very-well attended and we had an informal discussion about the different meanings of our new vision "Child Development in the 21st Century," the impact on their experiences in the graduate

Eliot-Pearson can go as fast and as far as we want. It is up to our community to decide. As a chair, my role is to put in place mechanisms to support this process. To this end, I am happy to announce that we have launched a new internal grant program to provide financial support for, programmatic activities proposed by faculty, staff, and graduate students, to build a strong department aligned with the vision of "Child Development in the 21st Century." This might mean different things for each and every one of us. For example, organizing a workshop or special event, inviting speakers, developing a new program for our students, inviting children and families from the community, planning a special service trip, developing an art gallery in

program, and the different roles they can play to make this vision become a reality. Both doctoral and master's students shared their interdisciplinary perspectives and ideas, questions and suggestions.

our building, convening a scholarly gathering, etc. The deadline for submitting proposal is November 15th and I encourage everyone to apply. In this diversity of ideas and approaches, I am not sure if we will go fast, but I know we will go far.

Marina Bers



Professor and Department Chair

Featured Project: ScratchJr

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of apps for young children. Despite flashy graphics and engaging music, very few of these apps actually provide young children with opportunities to design, create, and express themselves, while problem solving. That's what motivated the work on ScratchJr. In 2011, thanks to a grant from the National Science Foundation, the [DevTech](#) research group to collaborated with the [MIT Media Lab](#), to develop [ScratchJr](#). Today ScratchJr has been downloaded over 11.5 million times, has been translated into 12 languages, and 25 million ScratchJr projects have been created.

ScratchJr is an introductory programming language that enables young children (ages 5-7) to snap together graphical programming blocks to make characters move, jump, dance, and sing. Children can modify characters in the paint editor, create colorful backgrounds, add their own voices and sounds, even insert photos of themselves – then use the programming blocks to make their characters come to life. “Every young child should be given the opportunity to learn how to code. We see coding (or computer programming)—says Prof. Bers- as a new type of literacy. Just as writing helps us organize our thinking and express our ideas, the same is true for coding. In the past coding was seen as too difficult for most people. But we think coding should be for everyone, just like writing.”



Eliot-Pearson Seminar Series Opens with a Promising Start

This past month the department kicked off the new Eliot-Pearson Seminar Series!

The beginning of the series was marked by a talk on, [Evolutions and New Direction in Children's Media](#). Senior Lecturer, [Julie Dobrow](#), moderated a discussion with panelists, [Peter Stidwill](#) (Executive Producer, [FableVision](#)) and [Carol Greenwald](#) (Executive Producer, [WGBH](#)).



Our guests spoke about the creative process involved in making new media, how new media can make learning playful, how animated cartoons can get preschoolers to engage in computational thinking, and how diversity is presented in front and behind the screens.

Work-Shop Review

On September 27th [Evans Family Assistant Professor, Sasha Fleary](#), facilitated a hands-on semester planning workshop for graduate students. Seven (6 Ph.D., 1 MA) students mapped out their current and long-term personal and professional goals and the steps to achieve these goals. As one of the main objectives of the workshop was work-life balance, Professor Fleary, shared some of her personal struggles with work-life balance and lessons she learned from graduate school to now.

All students were encouraged to sign up for an account on the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) for more resources on goal planning, time management, and other career and work-life-related skills. Tufts University has an institutional [membership](#) to the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, therefore [sign-up](#) is free.

Grants and Awards

New E-P faculty member, [Eileen Crehan](#), is the recipient of a Faculty Research Award. The Crehan lab excitedly embarks on a new study with funding from this award. Titled, "Looking" at Differences Between ASD and ADHD: Building a Social Cognitive Battery, this project will test a social cognitive battery using eye tracking and physiological arousal measurement in children with a diagnosis of ASD or ADHD. Once this study is approved by the IRB, the lab will begin recruiting interested children and families for a one-time study visit. Stay tuned for updates!

Publications

At the end of the month, Senior Lecturer, [Julie Dobrow's](#), new book will be published and become available to the public! The book, [After Emily: Two Remarkable Women and the Legacy of America's Greatest Poet](#), is a biography that weaves together the stories of poet Emily Dickinson, and the mother-daughter duo that brought her poetry to the world and crafted the image of the poet we know today. Details including upcoming book readings and talks can be found on Julie Dobrow's personal [website](#).

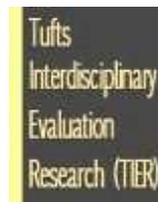
Eliot-Pearson Community News



Researchers at [DevTech](#) are busy working on [The Coding as Literacy project](#), which teaches coding as another language. The curriculum is currently being piloted at the [Eliot-Pearson Children's School](#) and will be implemented in Norfolk, Virginia public schools in coming months. In September, DevTech hosted a group of kindergarten teachers from Norway to share their work designing developmentally appropriate technologies. On October 14th DevTech participated in [Boston's HUBweek Robotics Block Party](#). Children and families stopped by to learn about DevTech's work and play with [KIBO](#) and [ScratchJr](#).



This school year EPCS has already held several events aimed at building meaningful connections with the families it serves. The school invited EPCS alums and current parents to a Wine and Cheese Night during which they were able to share their experience within and beyond Eliot-Pearson. Parents in the EPCS community organized a family-oriented Art Day for children and siblings to engage in different art activities that incorporate science, math, and the creative arts. This past month the Fall All-School Picnic provided families an opportunity to get together



During the month of October, [Tufts Interdisciplinary Evaluation Research \(TIER\)](#), TIER members, doctoral candidates, [Meera Menon](#) and [Veronica Mingo](#), passed their Ph.D. proposal defenses. Meera is working on a dissertation entitled, "Trajectories of Adolescent Mothers' Parenting Stress Across Early Childhood: Exploring Relations with Children's Socio-Emotional Functioning" (committee members: [Ann Easterbrooks](#), Chair; [Tama Leventhal](#), and [Sara Johnson](#)). Veronica's dissertation is entitled, "An Ethnography of Caregivers' Experiences and Practices in Colina" (committee members: [Ann Easterbrooks](#), Chair; [Jayanthi Mistry](#), and Paula Bedregal, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile).



Director of the [Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development \(IARYD\)](#), Professor [Richard Lerner](#), is co-chairing a Special Topic Meeting for the [Society for Research in Child Development \(SRCD\)](#), beginning on October 18th. The topic of this meeting is, "[Promoting Character Development Among Diverse Children and Adolescents: The Roles of Families, Schools, and Out-of-School Time Youth Development Programs.](#)"
Principal Scientist and Founder of the [Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness, Dr.](#)

for an afterschool potluck and social event to connect with one another.



[Daniel F. Perkins](#), visited the IARYD last month. Dr. Perkins, spoke about the Penn State Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness and its [longitudinal study on Transitioning Veterans](#). In addition to providing a public lecture, Dr. Perkins, made himself available for individual and small group meetings with community members.

Congratulations



Professor [Tama Leventhal](#) has been asked to co-chair the next conference for the [Council on Contemporary Families](#), which will take place in Spring 2020. The theme of the conference will be, "Raising Children in the 21st Century."



Senior Lecturer and [Tisch Scholar](#), [George Scarlett](#), was featured in the Boston Globe this past month, in an article, "[When it comes to your child's extracurriculars, experts say focus on building a life and not a resume.](#)"



Congratulations to Eliot-Pearson Ph.D. students, [Meera Menon](#) and [Brian Burkhard](#), who have been selected to sit on the graduate student panel for an upcoming [Khodadad Endowed Lecture](#), on childhood aggression from a developmental perspective.





Congratulations to [Ettya Fremont](#), who on October 10th, successfully defended her doctoral dissertation entitled, "A Prescription for Thriving: Exploring Positive Development in Adolescents with Chronic Conditions."

Eliot-Pearson students, Emily Fuller, Nick Woolf, and Catherine Quirion, have been selected for the Graduate Student Association.



Abigail Beech, Melissa Wishner, and Zoe Steckler, have been named as Co-Presidents of the [Child Development Association \(CDA\)](#).

Upcoming Events

Eliot-Pearson Seminar Series

Department of Child Study and Human Development

Monday October 29th, 1:30-3:00pm

Dale Stevens Library Room #157

105 College Avenue

Medford, MA 02155

If you are planning on attending please RSVP by October 24th to:

Deborah.mcgreevey@tufts.edu

"How Exercise can Circumvent and Manage Mental Health in Children"

Betsy Hoza (Clinical)

Information Seminar via Webinar

If you or someone you know are interested in a graduate degree in applied child development, please tune in!

Wednesday, November 14th

6:00pm-6:45pm

For more information,

visit us <http://ase.tufts.edu/epcshd/> or email Bruce Johnson

You are invited to the Dissertation Defense of Melissa Colon

Thursday October 25th, 1:00-3:00 pm

Collaborative Learning and Innovation Complex (CLIC)

574 Boston Ave, Room 402 (*Reading Room*)

Medford, MA 02155

Title: "We are Beautiful People:" The Schooling Experience of Puerto Rican School-Age Mothers

Committee Members: Jayanthi Mistry, Ph.D., Ellen Pinderhughes, Ph.D., Sabrina Vaught, Ph.D., and Sonia Nieto, Ed.D

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Visit the department at: <http://ase.tufts.edu/epcshd>

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