



## The Infant Parent Project Grows Up

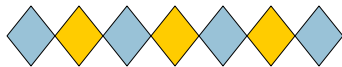
### About Our Participating Families

This is an exciting time for your family; watching your child grow and learn everyday! We appreciate your participation and the time you took to be involved in this re-search project during this busy time. We thought you would enjoy hearing more about who else participated in the study so far.

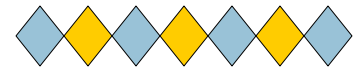
- 133 moms and 90 dads participated in the prenatal phase.
- At that time, 12 mothers were single parents, 101 couples were married, 13 were living together, 6 were dating, and 2 described their relationship as other.
- Moms range in age from 15 to 40, fathers from 21 to 44.
- 98 moms are White, 26 African American, 6 Biracial, 1 Asian American, 1 Hispanic American, & 2 described their race as other.
- 74 fathers are White, 13 African American, 2 Biracial, and 1 described his race as other.
- All mothers were expecting their first child; 8 fathers had children from previous relationships.
- Participating infants were born from January through November 2005. 55% of the babies are male; 45% female.
- Of these families, 118 moms and 84 dads completed the 6 month wave of data collection with their infants. The most common reason for dropping out of the study was that the family moved from the area.

In research, it is very important to collect information from a large number of the same families over time, so we are hopeful that each of you will continue in the study.

Relatively little research has been done about fathers, so father participation in this study is extremely helpful when possible.



### Staff Update



Our research team has begun to feel like our own family. And like any family, there have been changes over time.

**Regan Beaudry** continues to run the day to day operations of the project. She is working on her master's thesis about factors that affect coparenting (i.e., how mothers and fathers share parenting and support one another as parents). Regan and her boyfriend Brian recently got engaged and they are planning a wedding for June '06. Congrats Regan! **Kathy Siepak** is also continuing in the project and is busily working on her dissertation about predictors of toddlers' strategies to control their emotions. **Dr. Leerkes** continues to teach classes about parenting and child development at UNCG and to study early parent child relations. This

year, she and her husband are excited to take their daughter to tour college campuses.

Graduate assistant **Elizabeth McClure** completed her Master's degree in Birth through Kindergarten Education in December and is employed as a preschool teacher at Huntsville Elementary School. **Tracy Dobbins**, a Clinical Psychology graduate student, began a 2 year internship at the Yale Child Study Center in Connecticut this summer. Undergraduate assistants **Anna Hussey, Kate Seymour, Cate Nixon and Mary Beth Lee** graduated in May and are entering graduate programs or careers. We will miss each of them, but wish them well in their new ventures!

We also want to introduce new members of our team. **Ani Vosbikian**, who earned a Masters degree in Child Development from Sarah Lawrence College and has been working in the foster care system in New Jersey, and **Stephanie Parade**, who recently graduated from the University of Connecticut, will join us as graduate research assistants. Undergraduates **Mike Berwanger, Amina Smith, Allison Myers and Geralynn Sylver** will join our team this summer and fall. Welcome!



## Recent Results: Parenting Confidence

Dr. Leerkes is interested in the development of parenting confidence among first time parents. This is one of few studies to address this question for **both mothers and fathers**. We found that:

- **Mothers' confidence** was highest if: their own *mothers* were loving in childhood, they had previous experience caring for infants and children, high self-esteem, and a good amount and quality of parenting support from others, and they felt that their infants had "easy" temperaments.
- **Fathers' confidence** was highest if: their own *fathers* were loving in childhood, they received good support about parenting from others, and their child was a male. Fathers of daughters felt less supported in their parenting role which may explain why they felt less confident in their parenting.
- Mothers' parenting confidence was significantly higher than fathers. This difference was accounted for by the fact that mothers tended to have more previous experience interacting with infants and children.

These results are statistically significant, but they do not reflect everyone's experience. So, you may feel things are different in your own family, and rightly so.

We'll continue to share results with you over time. Right now, we are busy coding your infants' behavior from the 6 month visit. We are eager to tell you what we find. Research can be a slow process because there are a lot of steps between collecting information and then summarizing it so we can answer some of our biggest questions about the transition to parenthood and child development.

Return Address Label

Mailing Label



## Breaking news: Follow-Up Study Announced!

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Leerkes received a grant from the **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development** that will allow us to continue to collect information about your families. We plan to contact you again when your child is 15 to 17 months old to collect more information about mothers and fathers, your relationship with each other, how you make decisions about parenting, how parenting has affected

you, and about your developing child. This phase of the study will involve completing questionnaires and visiting campus for another observation of your toddler while mom is present followed by an interview with mothers. We hope you will continue in the study!

If your address or phone number changes, please let us know. Call (336) 334-3561.



Regan greets our visitors