

NEWS FROM THE CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPING CHILD AND FAMILY

RESEARCH FINDINGS THAT DOCUMENT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRICULA FOR FAMILIES WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Funded by the Robin Hood Foundation, Martha Edwards, Director of the Center for the Developing Child and Family, and her team have spent 12 years working with the Coalition for Hispanic Family Services. They provided training and consultation to support their implementation the two parenting programs developed at the Center: **Bright Beginnings**, created by Dr. Edwards, and **Personal Best**, created by Judy Grossman, Associate Director. The Coalition named this two-generational program “Primero Pasos” (First Steps) and has worked with over 60 families each year running groups and doing home visits using the two curricula. The families who participated were particularly stressed due to job instability, immigration challenges, language barriers, and lack of formal education.

Primero Pasos became the Center’s major site to do research on the impact of Bright Beginnings and Personal Best. They videotaped parents and their children at the start of the program and 8 months later. By coding these videotapes, they were able to

document that these parents showed significant improvement in:

- Being emotionally responsive to their children
- Promoting their children’s exploration and learning
- Supporting their children’s language capacities

Using self-report instruments, parents also reported significantly less depression and less parental stress, both of which are risk factors for children’s development. Children in the program also showed significant gains in their development, particularly in receptive language and social-emotional capacities.

These programs, which intervene early in the lives of parents and their children, are clinically effective in enhancing children’s development in the areas

central for success in relationships and in school. They also are effective at increasing the competence and confidence of the parents to connect with their children and support their development. Bright Beginnings and Personal Best positively influence parenting behaviors and achieve positive outcomes for children.



The upcoming year will be a busy one for the Center in their work with families and young children. Center faculty, Sabina Fila, Genoveva Garcia, Yolanda Martinez, Brenda Nikelsberg, Chris Reynolds, and Barbara Russek, will be providing training and consultation to agencies in every

borough of the city, continuing their research, and conducting monthly half-day workshops at Ackerman.