



FRIENDS Project

Social Development Lab
University at Buffalo, SUNY

Social Development Lab

Phone

(716) 645-0213

Email

devlab@buffalo.edu

Website

<http://ubwp.buffalo.edu/socialdevlab/>

FRIENDS Year One Summary

Children Participating: 74

Preschools Participating: 9

Teachers Participating: 22

Saliva Samples Collected: 368

Hair and Nail Samples Collected: 140

Dear Families, Teachers, and Directors,

We hope this newsletter finds you and your family happy, healthy, and soaking up some sunshine! The FRIENDS Project Team and I have been overwhelmed by families' and schools' amazing involvement in this first year of our project! We are so grateful for all parents' and teachers' help in completing online materials and remote/virtual data collection this past spring and summer.

As the school year starts, we will be contacting parents to obtain children's kindergarten teachers' information. We will ask participating children's kindergarten teachers for teacher reports. Please contact us with this information via phone or email, or you can click [here](#) to submit now! Please read on for some family activities, preliminary project findings, and updates on our lab and team!

With gratitude,
Dr. Jamie Ostrov
Director, UB Social Development Lab

Summer 2020 Newsletter

What's next for the FRIENDS Project?

This fall will be the final timepoint for our first group of families who began the project in fall 2019. We are so excited to follow up with families and see how the transition to kindergarten is going! We are also looking forward to recruiting our second group of preschoolers this fall.

We will continue to collect data remotely in the fall. This means:

- ☀️ We will conduct child interviews via Zoom video conferencing software.
- ☀️ Families joining the project this fall will be asked to complete at-home cortisol collection.
- ☀️ We will send teacher and parent reports via Qualtrics.

Developmental Milestones

The CDC has a [free application and resources](#) to track your child's developmental milestones!

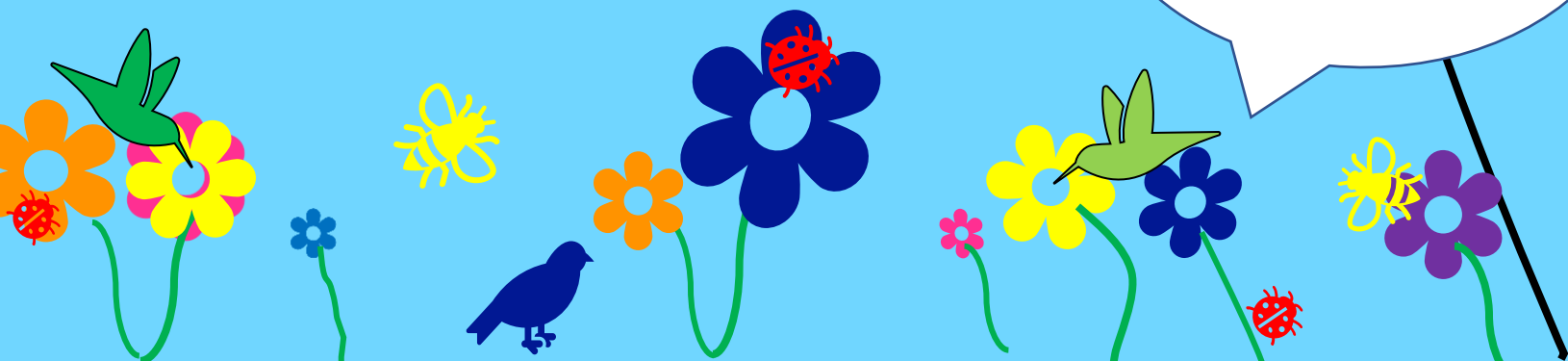
Family Fun

- ☀️ Enjoy a movie night in a blanket fort.
- ☀️ Visit some animals via the [San Diego Zoo Live Cameras](#).
- ☀️ Take a virtual tour of the [Smithsonian Museum of Natural History](#).
- ☀️ Go for a visual scavenger hunt while on a walk.
- ☀️ Practice [mindfulness](#) and make a mindfulness [bottle](#).
- ☀️ Make [gak, oobleck, slime, and other sensory toys](#) at home.
- ☀️ [Cook something](#) together.

What colors make up this kite?

Count how many!

Birds	_____
Flowers	_____
Ladybugs	_____
Bees	_____



Preliminary Findings

One topic the FRIENDS project is interested in is the power of parenting! Preliminary results show that when parents displayed more positive parenting (i.e., warmth and support) their children exhibited more prosocial behavior (i.e., sharing, helping) with their friends, as well as better executive functioning (i.e., being able to pay attention, remember things, and control their behavior). These results show the importance of positive parenting!

Additionally, the FRIENDS project is interested in school readiness and peer relationships. Children who had higher levels of executive functioning also showed more prosocial behavior and lower levels of anger and hyperactivity.

Finally, we are also interested in children's levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, and how that influences school readiness. Specifically, we tested cortisol by collecting saliva from children, as the hormone is present in spit! Preliminary results show that lower basal cortisol (i.e., lower stress levels in the morning) was related to less child hyperactivity and anger, demonstrating how children's biology may be related to their behavior (and likely how their behavior impacts their biology).

We sincerely appreciate your understanding and willingness to go above and beyond to continue the success of the FRIENDS project!

We could not do this without your support.

Lab Updates

- ☀️ Kristin Perry won the Routh Research and Dissertation Grant from Division 53 of the American Psychological Association. This grant acknowledges Kristin's innovative dissertation which will improve scientific knowledge about child psychology.
- ☀️ Dr. Ostrov has been [appointed to a National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) Research Review Study Section](#).
- ☀️ Emily Verdaasdonk will be joining the lab as a master's student this fall.
- ☀️ Ariana DeJesus Rodriguez, a McNair scholar, presented her independent research project based on PEERS data this summer.
- ☀️ Research from a previous project (PEERS) will be presented at the International Society for Research on Aggression in Ottawa, Canada next summer.

FRIENDS Project Team

Principal Investigators

Dr. Jamie Ostrov
jostrov@buffalo.edu
(716) 645-3680

Dr. Dianna Murray-Close (MPI)
Professor, University of Vermont

Project Coordinator Sarah Nowalis

Research Technician Danielle Rice

Undergraduate Research Assistants

Ariana DeJesus-Rodriguez, Julia Kiefer, Shelby Ostolski, Erin Dougherty, Jessica Phillips

Graduate Students

Gabriela Memba
Gretchen Perhamus
Kristin Perry (Project Director)
Emily Verdaasdonk

How many ocean animals do you see?