

PEERS2K Project

Fall 2021

University at Buffalo Social Development Lab

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PEERS2K Summary

Lab visits & kindergarten
assessments
are next (see pg 2)

Dear Families, Teachers, and Directors,

I hope you all had a great summer! This year was very excited for the PEERS2K project as we recruited our first group of children! We had so much fun (virtually) meeting families and getting to know the children. We cannot thank all our participating families enough for continuing to adapt to remote data collection procedures throughout the year. We know that Zoom interviews and completing our questionnaires are time consuming and we are so grateful for families' dedication to the project!

We sincerely appreciate school directors and teachers going above and beyond to recruit new preschool families when we were unable to come to the centers. We could not do this project without everyone's flexibility and willingness to participate!



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

How many bugs do you
see?

Looking Ahead . . .

In the early spring of 2022, we will be recruiting our second cohort of preschoolers! We will also be following up in the late fall/winter of 2021 with children who transition to kindergarten this year. We cannot wait to hear how the transition to kindergarten goes!

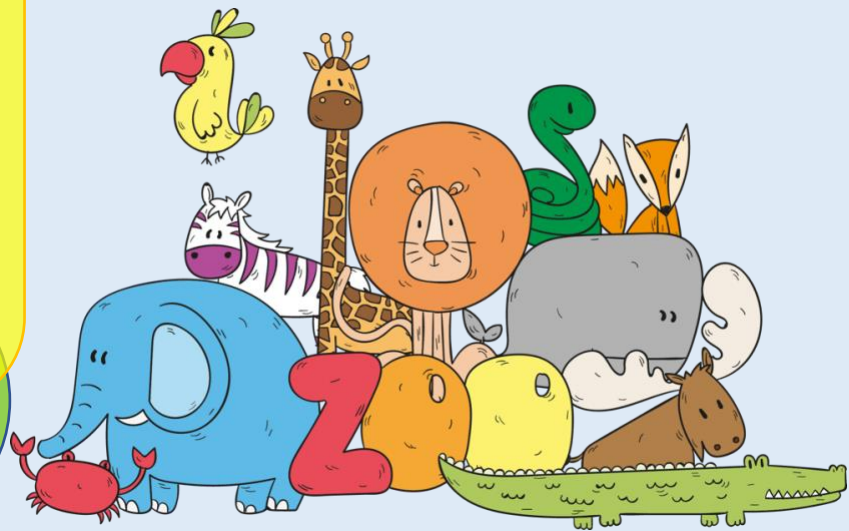
Currently, we are inviting families into the lab to participate in physiology sessions where we will measure your child's heart rate, breathing, and sweat on their fingers. If you are interested, please let us know or click [here](#), as we are now scheduling sessions. We also plan to continue collecting data remotely. Our new preschool cohort and kindergartners will be invited to participate in Zoom interviews. As with every timepoint, we will be asking parents and teachers to complete Qualtrics reports online.

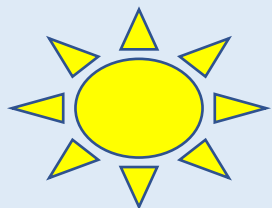
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If your child will be transitioning to kindergarten this fall, we will be contacting you to obtain your child's kindergarten teacher's information. We will ask kindergarten teachers for brief teacher reports for which we pay them. Please contact us with this information via phone or email, or you can click [here](#).

Activity Ideas

- Go on a [nature scavenger hunt](#)
- Draw what your dream zoo would look like!
 - [Make Gak](#)





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Preliminary Findings

PEERS2K is interested in how peer behavior in preschool is associated with school readiness during the transition to kindergarten and subsequent school functioning. Preliminary analyses from our project showed that child prosocial behavior (e.g., sharing, cooperating) is associated with better teacher reported executive functioning. Executive functioning is the mental skills that allow us to plan, focus attention, remember instruction, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. This provides evidence that positive peer behavior is associated with better school readiness and functioning.

We also looked at how parenting is associated with school readiness and children's social skills and well-being. We collected parent reported measures of parenting style as well as parent and teacher reported school and peer functioning. In the first group of PEERS2K participants, children whose parents were warm in their parenting demonstrated better math skills and less relational aggression (e.g., excluding peers). This suggests that positive parenting may be associated with better school functioning as well as more positive peer-related behavior. Our sample from the first timepoint was generally high in positive parenting and child prosocial behaviors which is great news. In the future, we look forward to testing these ideas with our much larger sample.

Lab/Project Updates

- ✦ Research assistants, Ariana DeJesus-Rodriguez and Julia Kiefer, presented their Honors projects at the Western New York Undergraduate Psychology Conference; Ariana also presented her poster at the McNair Scholars Conference
- ✦ Kristin Perry successfully defended her dissertation and will be on internship next year at the University of Mississippi Medical Center
- ✦ Katherine Foote defended her M.A. project and will be pursuing her M.D. at the University at Buffalo
- ✦ Danielle Rice will be pursuing her Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies at Penn State
- ✦ We welcome 3 new staff to the lab: Katy Gardner (Colgate University graduate), Sarah Lucas (Allegheny College graduate), and Kristin Tymchak (UB MA in School Psychology graduate)
- ✦ This fall, we will be welcoming 5 new research assistants to the project and lab: Celeste Beauvilaire, Emma Gandolfi, Amy Maslin, Ava O'Hara, and Ann Malcolm

Research Assistant Graduates

- ✦ Ariana DeJesus-Rodriguez will be pursuing her Master's degree at Fordham University
- ✦ Julia Kiefer will be pursuing her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Arkansas
- ✦ Erin Dougherty will be pursuing her Master's degree in school psychology from UB

PEERS2K Project Team

Principal Investigator

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