

PEERS2K Project

Summer
2022

Dear Families, Teachers, and Directors,

I hope you all had a great summer! This year was exciting for the PEERS2K project as our first group of children transitioned to kindergarten! We had so much fun catching up with families and hearing all about children's adventures in kindergarten. We also greatly enjoyed meeting our new group of preschoolers virtually! 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 also thank all the families who came into our lab and participated in our first rounds of psychophysiology appointments!

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. This year we also had amazing participation from kindergarten teachers. We could not do this project without everyone's flexibility and willingness to participate!

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

**University at Buffalo
Social Development
Lab**

devlab@buffalo.edu

(716) 645-0213

<http://ubwp.buffalo.edu>

[/socialdevlab/](http://ubwp.buffalo.edu/socialdevlab/)

How many drips of
ice cream are
melting in the sun?





Summer
2022

Looking Ahead . . .

In the early spring of 2023, we will be recruiting our third cohort of preschoolers! If you know any kids who will be in preschool during this upcoming year and plan on moving up to kindergarten during the fall of 2023, let them know about our project (see page 5 for our flyer)! We will also be following up in the fall of 2022 with children who move to kindergarten. We cannot wait to hear how the transition to kindergarten goes!

Currently, we plan to continue collecting data remotely, but if conditions change at our partner centers, we may be able to return to school-based collection. We will be inviting kindergarteners to participate in Zoom interviews. As with every timepoint, we will be asking parents and teachers to complete Qualtrics reports online.

Activity Ideas:



Visit the library



Make [paper airplanes](#):

Have a race to see which plane is the fastest!



Make a blanket fort



Make [play dough](#)!

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 may [click here](#).



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 may be broken down into three categories: social behaviors, academic achievement, and parenting.

Social Behaviors

- Children who exhibited more prosocial (e.g., sharing, cooperation) behaviors in preschool were more likely to perform better in reading and math in kindergarten. In addition, higher levels of prosocial behaviors in preschool predicted increases in that child being the recipient of prosocial behaviors by peers in kindergarten.
- High levels of physical aggression in preschool was associated with worse academic performance in kindergarten, especially as it relates to early literacy (e.g., identifying letters), as well as lower executive functioning (i.e., ability to regulate thoughts and behaviors) skills.
- High levels of relational (e.g., excluding peers) aggression in preschool was associated with lower executive functioning skills and poor basic math skills in kindergarten

Academic Achievement

- Children who demonstrated above average literacy skills in preschool were less likely to be physically aggressive and less anxious in kindergarten. These children were also less likely to be the victim of physical aggression in kindergarten.
- Above average basic math skills in preschool were predictive of increases in overall academic performance in kindergarten. Preschool basic math skills were also associated with low levels of physical aggression.

Parenting Style

- Children who received high levels of positive parenting (e.g., warmth, supportiveness) in preschool were more likely to have high levels of executive functioning and basic math skills in kindergarten, and were also less likely to be physically aggressive to peers in kindergarten.
- Parent engagement in at-home academic enrichment activities (e.g., reading stories, practicing alphabet) was associated with better executive functioning and overall school performance as well as less anxiety in kindergarten
- Children who received high levels of harsh parenting in preschool were more likely to be physically aggressive and less prosocial in kindergarten. In addition, harsh parenting was associated with decreased literacy skills over time.

Lab Updates



Kristin Perry has completed her internship at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, received her PhD in Clinical Psychology, and has begun her Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Penn State University in the Prevention and Methodology Training Program.



Gretchen Perhamus passed her dissertation proposal to become a doctoral candidate, was selected for the Young Investigators Program at the ISRA conference where she presented talks about her two most recent publications, and received the Murray Levine Graduate Award for Community Engagement in Psychology.



Bri Memba passed her dissertation proposal to become a doctoral candidate, presented a poster on her paper at the ISRA conference, and received the Department of Psychology Excellence in Teaching award. She also received an award for her presentation at the 8th Research Conference on Relational Aggression.



Emily Verdaasdonk received her Master's in Psychology from UB and will continue to work as a Project Coordinator with Dr. Stephanie Godleski at the Rochester Institute of Technology.



Kristin Kibler presented a poster from our FRIENDS project at the Eastern Psychological Association Conference in New York City.

Research Assistant Graduates



Ann Malcolm is attending Marist College for her Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.



Celeste Beauvillaire is working in the SUNY Binghamton Mood Disorder Institute under the direction of Dr. Brandon Gibb.



Kristen Kibler is continuing at UB to receive her MA and AC in School Psychology.

Lab Publications

Ostrov, J. M., Murray-Close, D., ^Perry, K. J., ^Blakely-McClure, S. J., ^Perhamus, G., Mutignani, L., Kesselring, S., ^Memba, G., & Probst, S. (2022). The development of forms and functions of aggression during early childhood: A temperament-based approach. *Development and Psychopathology*. doi:10.1017/S0954579422000177

^Perry, K. J., Ostrov, J. M., Murray-Close, D., ^Blakely-McClure, S. J., ^Kiefer, J., ^DeJesus-Rodriguez, A., & ^Wesolowski, A. (2021). Measurement of aggressive behavior in early childhood: A critical analysis using five informants. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 209, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2021.105180>

Principle Investigators

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



Research Technician

Katy Gardner



Graduate Students

Gabriela Memba
(PEERS2K Project
Director)
Gretchen Perhamus
(FRIENDS Project Director)

Undergraduate Research Assistants

Hayley Feibel, Ava O'Hara, Emma Gandolfi, Ann Malcolm,
Amy Maslin, Celeste Beauvillaire, Kristen Kibler

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

Approved by the University at Buffalo IRB: 7/15/2022



University at Buffalo
Social Development Lab
PEERS2K Project



**Do you have a child who is currently enrolled in preschool and is planning on attending kindergarten next year?
Do you live in Erie or Niagara County?**

We are currently conducting research on the factors that increase children's success during the transition to kindergarten related to their social development.

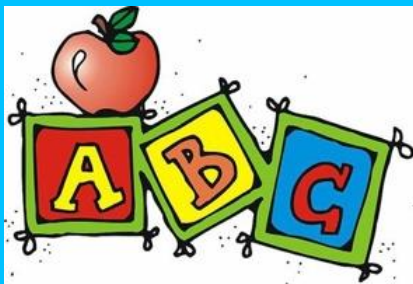


Please scan if you are interested in joining the PEERS2K Project!

We learn about this transition by:

- Gaining insight from parents and teachers
- Conducting brief interviews with children
- Examining children's biological sensitivity to context (i.e., if some kids are more influenced by things happening in their environment than others).

Families are compensated with a \$40 gift card to Target, Amazon, or a similar establishment for completing the parent report. If interested, families will also receive a \$50 gift card for visiting the Social Development Lab during the summer.



To learn more about the PEERS2K Project, please email our staff at devlab@buffalo.edu or call the lab at (716) 645-0213

Additional information can also be found on our website:
<http://ubwp.buffalo.edu/socialdevlab/>