

All Our Families Study

Understanding Development Across the Lifecourse

Fall 2017

Greetings and happy Thanksgiving to All Our Families

We hope that you have settled nicely into fall and the busyness and fervor of the back-to-school season have given way to family routines. Thanksgiving is an opportunity to pause and remember the people and things for which we are grateful in our lives. For us, at AOF, that's easy — we are grateful for you: all our participant moms and families. You make our work possible and rewarding.



Summer was a busy time for All Our Families. In addition to the updates below, we also travelled to share our research: in June, PhD candidate Erin Hetherington presented a poster at two epidemiological research conferences in Seattle, WA. And in July, post-doctoral fellow Kiran Pohar Manhas presented on parents' perspectives on sharing research data at the DATA 2017 Conference in Madrid, Spain. We were also informed that AOF is invited to present four abstracts at the World Congress on Development Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD) this month in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.



In June, we held a team building day for all of us at AOF where we spent the morning expanding our networking skills, while in the afternoon we got our hands dirty with clay and made an adorable pod of whale shaped containers at 4 Cats Studio.

The year ahead promises to keep us busy. I am back from a sabbatical with new ideas and strategies to share with the team. I have been investigating other disciplines to see how others approach understanding how the environment shapes what we do, and how well we do — both as families and as a society. New post-doctoral and PhD students have joined us this fall (read below) and we will be undertaking some exciting new projects thanks to new grants from [CIHR](#) and others. We are continuing to strengthen our relationships with partners [REACH](#), [CANUE](#) and [SAGE](#).

Finally, a reminder that although our newsletters are published only twice a year, you can always keep abreast with the most current developments at AOF by following us on [Twitter](#) and/or [Facebook](#).

Happy Thanksgiving!

Suzanne

Study Updates

Update on *Eight is Great*: phonological awareness follow up in January

Our 8-year follow up *Eight is Great* is underway and we are so pleased to have a great response from all of you. To date you have returned 351 questionnaires. We will continue to collect responses until fall 2019, i.e. until all qualifying participant children have turned eight.



The *Eight is Great* questionnaire is primarily available online, which offers a number of advantages. It allows participants to follow along, stop/take a break when needed and return to the study when you have more time. It also allows us to clean, compile and analyze the questionnaire data much more efficiently, and thus, produce actionable results much sooner.

If you haven't received a link to the study just yet, watch your email around the time your child turns eight. After the initial invitation email to participate in *Eight is Great*, if you haven't had a chance to log in and start the questionnaire, you will receive a few friendly reminders by email in 2-week intervals to keep us top of mind. You can stop and return to the questionnaire as many times as needed. Once we've received your completed questionnaire, we will email you a \$25 Tim Hortons electronic gift card as our thanks for your time and commitment.

Beginning in January, participants who previously participated in the Phonological Awareness sub-study in 2015 will also receive an invitation to complete a follow-up phonological awareness self-assessment of their 8-year-old child shortly after the *Eight is Great* questionnaire is sent out. This follow up will be the final step in the Phonological Awareness sub-study, enabled by a grant by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Pediatric Innovation Award update: continuing work on self-regulation

Over the summer months, we conducted a number of outreach meetings with community groups, early childhood educators, knowledge users and other stakeholders, including representatives from Calgary Reads and First 2000 days Network, occupational therapists from the Calgary Board of Education, a knowledge translation expert from Alberta Health Services, and an early childhood educator from Mount Royal University.



We shared our plans for self-regulation research and gathered thoughts and opinions on what information may be of interest to these frontline practitioners, and in what format it would be most useful.

Next, while we look at the research data to determine factors that promote self-regulation at age 5, we are also thoroughly reviewing and analyzing self-regulation information already out in circulation, including resources by local agencies, and widely in print and online. This will help us ensure that when it's time to publicize our findings, the information is presented in the most accessible and impactful format possible to help early childhood educators, counsellors, policy makers and, ultimately, parents become more effective partners in the development of self-regulation in their children and the children they work with.

Summer student project: Calgary mothers' use of community resources



Our summer student, Katelyn Deyholos, brought the project *Community resource utilization: Is it the person or the place?* to a successful conclusion just in time to return to her studies as a 4th year Psychology undergrad at the University of Calgary. Using data from the All Our Families (AOF) cohort, and under the guidance of PhD student Erin Hetherington and AOF program manager Nikki Stephenson, Katelyn investigated how community resource use in Calgary is associated with the number of libraries, community centres and recreation facilities in each neighbourhood.

AOF moms reported that they were more likely to use community resources at 3 years postpartum, than in the early months of motherhood (4 months postpartum). We found that mothers' background plays a greater role in their choice to use community resources, rather than their geographical location: more often than not, we found that moms were not bound by the availability of amenities (or lack thereof) in their communities and travelled to the libraries, play groups and facilities they wanted to use. Overall, the results showed that moms' use of community resources played a protective role in their health and their children's development.

Research to real life: Healthcare professionals' perspectives on caring for pregnant refugee women in Calgary



Our former research assistant Anika Winn's honours thesis project is a wonderful example of how our research translates to practical results in real life. The study aimed to understand the experiences of health care professionals providing care to pregnant refugee women in Calgary, in particular in relation to federal funding cuts to refugee health coverage (2012-16) and the recent influx of Syrian refugees.

In-depth interviews were conducted with doctors and nurses working at the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic and Peter Lougheed Centre who are specialists in providing care for pregnant refugee women. Health care providers described multiple barriers when caring for pregnant refugees, including language and cultural barriers, transportation, family responsibilities and difficulties navigating the health care system.

The doctors and nurses managed these barriers by using a team-based approach, coordinating appointments, and ensuring continuity of patient-centered care. The federal funding cuts added additional challenges, as many refugees were left without adequate health coverage and the funding changes were complicated to understand. To maximize coverage for their patients, Mosaic staff resorted to paying out of pocket or relying on donations to care for uninsured refugees. Adding additional strain on their already limited resources was the Syrian refugee influx which further increased the demand on these service providers.

How did we make our findings relevant to the healthcare community?

Anika and Erin met with the staff at Mosaic and other healthcare providers to present our findings and recommendations. These forums were well received and helped us generate lay reports and summaries that the healthcare community can broadly share. Doctors like Dr. Annalee Coakley and Dr. Gabriel Fabreau, who are leaders in refugee health care, are able to use our data to support their advocacy, in their papers and/or in policy work.

Our findings support (1) a central clinic model for providing health care for refugees which can help ensure that relevant expertise is in one place and refugees receive appropriate care while adapting to a complex health care system in a new environment. And as the current system is complicated, tedious and not well understood by health care professionals, (2) strategies that streamline the process and make it more accessible would be valuable. Finally, (3) health care professionals require additional resources to provide comprehensive and ongoing support to refugees, especially during periods of increased service demand. Providing support early would reduce the likelihood the health problems escalate.

We are especially proud that this work has been so meaningful to the health care community and we appreciate their enthusiasm in dissemination of these findings. Next, we plan on sharing our work with other organizations such as the Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS), PolicyWise for Children and Families, and the Peter Lougheed Centre. We hope to also present this study next year at the North American Refugee Health Conference in Portland, OR.

You're invited: free movie screening of *Akeelah and the Bee*



This fall, join us on **November 8** for a free screening of *Akeelah and the Bee*, sponsored by the [Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute \(ACHRI\)](#), as part of *Science and the Cinema*, a series of film screenings hosted by the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine. *Akeelah and the Bee* is the story of a young girl's resilience in the face of many familial, social, and cultural adversities. It is an inspiring story that has important lessons for the entire family.

Following the movie, AOF post-doctoral fellow Nicole Racine and Dr. Sheri Madigan, assistant professor in the department of psychology and Canada Research Chair in Determinants of Child Development, will speak and answer questions on how we can foster resilience in children and youth, the importance of positive relationships with mentors, the role of the community in providing support to families in need, and how community members can promote the healthy social and emotional development of children.

Science in the Cinema brings together science and popular culture in a fun and engaging way. Watch a film with a health science theme and listen to an expert explain the science behind the movie. An interactive question and answer period follows each movie. Admission is FREE and all attendees receive a voucher for a free small popcorn! All Calgary screenings take place at the Plaza Theatre in Kensington (1133 Kensington Road NW, Calgary).

For complete listing of the screenings for the 2017-18 season, visit the [Facebook page](#) or sign up to receive email updates.

Staff news

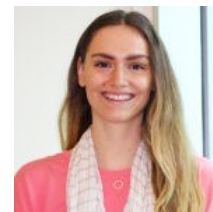
Welcome Rochelle and Natalie

We're excited to welcome two new members to the All Our Families team.



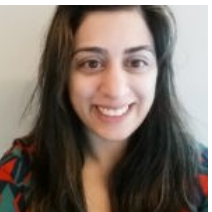
Dr. Rochelle Hentges is a developmental psychologist and joins us as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Owerko Centre and the University of Calgary's Department of Psychology. Her program of research focuses on examining how children develop within contexts of stress or adversity, and how child temperament influences the way children respond to early stressful contexts (e.g., high marital conflict, poverty). Her fellowship is focused on examining how prenatal stress impacts child socio-emotional and cognitive development. Rochelle completed her Master's of Science in Child Development at the University of Stirling in Scotland and her PhD in Developmental Psychology at the University of Rochester, NY. She recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh, PA before moving to Calgary to join the All Our Families team. Her fellowship is funded by the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute's Talisman Energy Fund for Healthy Living and Injury Prevention.

Natalie Scime is a PhD student interested in maternal and newborn health, with a specific focus on women who experience medical complications during pregnancy and/or childbirth. Her doctoral research will examine breastfeeding goals, outcomes, and support for women with a medically high-risk pregnancy. Natalie received a Master's in Health Promotion from Western University in 2017, after which she moved from Collingwood, ON to Calgary to join the All Our Families team.



Congratulations all round

All Our Families is proud to extend congratulations to our team members Erin Hetherington and Nicole Racine. They were awarded top honours for their poster presentations at the 2017 Owerko Centre Conference held on June 1.



We also extend heartfelt congratulations to our post-doc research fellow Kiran Pohar Manhas who was recently awarded a 2-year Health System Impact Fellowship from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Her project is titled Embedding Shared Decision-Making in Patient Centred Care in Community Rehabilitation Programs in Alberta and she will be working with a primary supervisor at Alberta Health Services and two academic co-supervisors based at the Integrative Health Institute at the University of Alberta.

Hats off also to our former postdoctoral research fellow Shannon MacDonald who was successful in receiving a Career Development Award from the Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientist Program (CCHCSP). This highly prestigious award guarantees Shannon protected time (minimum 75%) within a mentored research program for four years. This means she will be able to focus on her passion for research and bring evidence to the policy and practice environment related to immunisation, vaccination and health services.



AOF welcomes baby Sadie

We are incredibly excited to welcome little baby Sadie Jean who arrived in September to mom and All Our Families Program Manager Nikki Stephenson. Everyone is doing well and we can't wait for them to visit us in the office. For now, this photo will do.

