

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Before the School of Home Economics was established at The University of Alabama, a course in the area of human development and family life, *Social Problems of the Family*, was taught in the Sociology Department in the 1927-28 academic year. Next, a child development course was offered in 1930-31. Almost immediately after the founding of The University of Alabama School of Home Economics in 1931, an instructor in nursery school, Mrs. Elmer Springer, was appointed and the state's first nursery school laboratory was opened on the ground floor of Doster Hall. The primary purpose of the school was to provide college students enrolled in two child development courses the opportunity for broader and more enriched education through observation and participation as they studied the growth and development of young children and parent-child relationships. The lab school was funded by the parents of the 18 children enrolled, ages three to five, and by the tuition of the students taking the classes. The parents were charged 33 cents per day for food and laundry. One course in child development and one in parent-child relationships were taught in the summer of 1931. As the interest in courses containing a laboratory component grew, the nursery school continued, and in 1937 a two-story female graduate student dormitory was renovated to house the nursery school laboratory.

Students were so interested in the child development course and the nursery school, they petitioned the Dean of Home Economics to continue the offerings in the regular sessions. In the 1931-32 University of Alabama catalog the following description appeared:

Child Development—The outstanding problems, attitudes, and practices of parents will be considered. Present day concepts and methods for dealing with parent-child relationships will be presented from authorities on the subject. Students will have actual contact with nursery school children. Class discussions will be organized around problems to be found in dealing with young children.

In the 1930's, child development was a part of the major in General Home Economics which was one of three majors offered in the School of Home Economics. In January 1941 a new faculty member, Pauline Park, was brought to the University of Alabama to develop a Department of Family Life and to teach the family sociology course which previously had been taught by the Dean of Home Economics. By March 1941, a 10-year plan had been drafted for this new department which set forth the functions and proposed program. Since the nursery school was already established, much effort was devoted to adapting it into the framework of a departmental laboratory and to strengthening the program of pre-parental education. The department grew from 15 students in the 1941-42 year to 65 in 1943-44.

In 1942 the nursery school facility became The Child Development Center, and a separate laboratory was established for infants and toddlers. This Infant Laboratory provided students an opportunity to observe growth and development of children six weeks to three years of age. In 1943, Lea Cowles Masters, a well-known specialist in infant development who established a nursery school for the United Nations, was hired by The University to teach an infancy course and to direct the laboratory. One of the first in the United States, the Infant laboratory was considered unique and was visited by some of the most well-known child development experts at that time. Margaret Mead, Grace Langdon, and Mary Sweeny were among the early visitors to the laboratory. In 1971, Dr. Benjamin Spock visited the child development laboratories. Other long-time directors of

the labs, Mrs. Martha Strickland (Child Development Center) and Mrs. Arlee Vallery (Infant Laboratory), were known for having considerable impact on the education of young children, their families and college students majoring in early childhood education. Under Mrs. Strickland's direction, The Child Development Laboratories became among the first programs for young children in the state to be accredited by The National Association for the Education of Young Children.

In 1958-59, as a result of a faculty member, Dr. Jacqueline Davis, attending a Southern Association on Children Under Six conference, the department was influential in establishing the Alabama Association for Young Children (AAYC). Since that time, the department has supported and provided guidance for the organization with faculty (including Dr. Jacqueline Davis, Ms. Martha Strickland, Dr. Tommie Hammer, Dr. Carroll Tingle, Ms. Carmen Hudson, Dr. Dee Morgan and others) serving on the AAYC executive board as president and in various other leadership positions.

In the mid-sixties, the department was heavily involved with the training of Head Start personnel, and the University of Alabama became one of the first regional teacher training centers in the country to receive Head Start Supplementary Training (HSST) funding. Dr. Jacqueline Davis was instrumental in designing a classroom for five-year-olds that was added to the Child Development Center for training purposes, and by the summer of 1965, the center was the second largest HSST facility in the nation. A commendation from National Head Start recognized this program as the most outstanding of its kind in the country. Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, First Lady of the United States, visited the Child Development Center in 1966 to see this model Head Start teacher training facility and to dedicate the federally funded south wing.

In 1974, HSST evolved into a competency-based teacher credentialing curriculum, The Child Development Associate program. Head Start teachers trained by the University of Alabama received credit for courses offered by the Department of Human Development and Family Life, and faculty in the department today continue to conduct in-service training for Head Start personnel. For many years, Dr. Carroll Tingle played a major role in establishing and overseeing the CDA program on the UA campus, reaching ten counties around the state.

In 1970, primarily due to efforts of then chair, Dr. Robert Shuckert, the department received a federal grant to create the Model Day Care Center (MDCC), designed to serve disadvantaged infants and children and to train day care personnel. The MDCC, directed by Mrs. Shirley Payne and later by Dr. Carroll Tingle, was one of the first in the country to serve low-income families, providing transportation of the children, in-house health services, parent education and a full-time nutritionist. In 1972 this program was expanded with Appalachian Regional Commission funds, and a Comprehensive Child Care Services Program (CCSP) for low income children and their families began operation in two buildings on campus. Dr. Gail McGee first directed the CCSP, which provided large scale, wide-ranging programs and services to 150 children and their families.

Quality research became a focus as HDFS faculty and graduate students (as well as faculty and students from other departments) conducted approved research projects consistent with the program's mission. The first departmental research projects involving children in the laboratories were conducted in the early 1980's. One study, conducted by Mrs. Martha Strickland, Mrs. Elizabeth Robertson, Ms. Carmen Hudson and Mrs. Carolyn Diener, investigated the outcomes of implementing a planned energy curriculum in the

preschool classroom. One example of how focused research was translated for policy and intervention was a federally funded grant obtained by faculty members Mrs. Arlee Vallery, Mrs. Carolyn Diener and Dr. Carroll Tingle. This group studied the design and effectiveness of the first automobile safety seats manufactured to protect very young children. The results of the study contributed to the establishment of transportation safety regulations governing the use of vehicle belts and seats in Alabama and guided the production standards for the early devices. The effects of using computers in the early childhood education classroom, a study conducted by Dr. Becky Ladewig, Mrs. Martha Strickland and Dr. Milla Boschung, paved the way for further interdepartmental and cross-campus research collaborations. Today, research efforts in the department continue to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding optimal growth, development and interaction of very young children.

Around 1980, with the onset of full availability of public education for five-year-olds, both afternoon groups and, eventually, all of the Child Development Center classrooms became multi-aged, and quality research flourished. Some of the recent research areas include: parent attitudes toward the guidance of children, social behavior interactions of preschool children on a playground, parental influences on bullying among children, the effects of various stimuli on children's language development, the effects of maternal depression on the development of prenatal and neonatal children, the effects of various play interventions on children's anxiety and prognosis in a medical setting and the developmental outcomes of children experiencing diverse fathering models.

Eventually, another program, University Child Care Services (UCCS) was established on campus to meet the growing need for quality full-day child care services for university faculty, staff and students. Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, UCCS was housed on campus and served some 47 children ages three months to more than five years. The program's focus was on promoting healthy growth of each child in physical, social, emotional and cognitive domains.

The correspondence version of child development courses first were taught in the 1942-43 academic year. Several years later, in 2004, the department signed an articulation agreement with the Alabama Community College System to accept, into an online degree program, students holding the associate's degree in Child Development. Up to 60 hours could transfer into a bachelor's program, with two courses counting in the major and 18 as a minor in Family and Consumer Sciences. The entire bachelor degree was made available in an online environment for students all over the world who study early childhood education. Dr. Carroll Tingle provided initial curriculum direction and technological consultation for this program and continues to oversee its progress today.

In 2005, the Child Development Center and the Infant Lab combined with the University Child Care Services to become The Children's Program at the newly built, state-of-the-art Child Development Research Center (CDRC). The most advanced of its kind in the southeast, the 64,000-sq.ft. research facility is equipped with the latest multi-media research technology, seven large research suites, and eight research rooms. Each research room has an adjoining observation booth where faculty and students can collect data for examination.

Today, the CDRC houses the Children's Program, an NAEYC accredited laboratory school enrolling approximately 120 students ages two months to five years; Child Development Resources, which assists

families across the state of Alabama to provide a safe, loving, and enriching life for their young children; the Parenting Assistance Line (PAL), a toll-free service to anyone who wants information and support in becoming a more confident parent; Capstone Family Therapy Clinic, which provides the community with help in resolving personal problems and trains graduate students specializing in marriage and family therapy; the Pediatric Development Research Laboratory; the Parent Education Research Laboratory and the Bama Cognitive Laboratory. True to its interdisciplinary nature, the CDRC is also home to the Autism Spectrum Disorders Clinic from the Department of Psychology and the Belser-Parton Literacy Center from the College of Education. Space dedicated and conducive to research allows for testing and observing individual or small-to-large groups of children.

The purposes of the child laboratories at The University of Alabama have changed little since the inception:

- To provide an exemplary program for children and their families based on the developmental theories supporting the whole child as central to optimal growth outcomes.
- To provide an instructional setting for student observation, participation and experimentation under trained leadership.
- To provide a setting for faculty and students to conduct approved research in the areas related to children and families.
- To provide opportunities for local, state and national groups to observe developmentally appropriate practices with young children.

From 1931 to the present, The University of Alabama College of Human Environmental Sciences Department of Human Development and Family Studies has advocated for a holistic approach to healthy child and family life education.

The Department of Human Development and Family Studies employs faculty and graduates students who make significant contributions to the field of early childhood education in the state. Throughout the 1970's and 80's, faculty were heavily involved in providing training to daycare personnel through countless workshop presentations. Daycare personnel attended many of these workshops to earn continuing education units (CEU's) required for employment. Dr. Mary Catherine Beasley, in The Division of Continuing Education, worked closely with department faculty to coordinate programming each summer which became known as The Preschool Institute. The department also hosted the Alabama Association for Young Children annual conferences on several occasions, with outstanding keynote speakers such as Ella Jenkins, a well-known recording artist and composer of children's music, and Judy Carter, a kindergarten teacher and daughter-in-law of then President Jimmy Carter. In addition to serving on the AAYC Board, faculty held leadership positions in the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA). Dr. Tommie Hamner served as president of the regional organization, and Dr. Jacqueline Davis, Dr. Carroll Tingle and Ms. Carmen Hudson each were elected as the state representative to SECA. Many department graduates have made noteworthy contributions to the field, such as Ms. Margie Curry, a two-time HDFS graduate, who established the Child Care Resources agency in Jefferson County, and Ms. Sally Edwards, who secured funding and directed Child Care Resources based at UA, promoting quality child care services for 12 Alabama counties. Other HDFS graduates serve as administrative staff for Tuscaloosa's One Place, a respected family resource center. Another HDFS alum, Sally Longshore, has served in several key early childhood positions across the state and currently is the Education Administrator for Federal Programs in Montgomery. A master's graduate, Mrs. Marian Loftin, served a long

tenure as administrator of Alabama's Children's Defense Fund. Additionally, faculty and graduates of the department have been instrumental in establishing the Alabama Network of Family Resources, an organization of non-profit centers that provide an array of services designed to strengthen and support families in the state. HDFS graduates can be found in prominent positions in the State Department of Education, State Department of Children's Affairs, VOICES for Alabama's Children, Alabama Office of School Readiness and numerous other state agencies serving children and families. Many HDFS graduates hold administrative or faculty positions in institutions of higher education across the state, region and nation.

As the needs of the students and job opportunities change, courses are added, deleted, or revised; programs are evaluated and modified; current faculty eagerly adjust; and faculty with diverse backgrounds and expertise are added. The name of the department has evolved from the Department of Family Life, to the Department of Child Development and Family life, to the Department of Human Development and Family Life, and is known today as the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. Presently, the department offers majors in Human Development and Family Studies, and in Early Childhood Education at the undergraduate level. Various concentrations (General HDFS, Child Life, Family Studies, Adolescence and Youth, Early Child Development, Child Development Practitioner) in related areas and two minors (HDFS and Additive Disorders and Recovery Studies) are available to meet the diverse interests and needs of students and to provide a wide range of job opportunities for graduates. Graduate programs are available in Human Development, Family Studies, Marriage and Family Therapy and in Parent and Family Life Education.

Conducting quality research to generate new knowledge in the field is a priority as is service to those in need throughout the state. The Department of Human Development and Family Studies strives to serve the ever changing needs of Alabama's children and families by continuing to lead the state in maintaining excellence in education, research and service.