

Quarterly newsletter of the

Caribbean Child Development Centre

Consortium for Social Development and Research

University of the West Indies, Open Campus



UWI
OPEN CAMPUS

August - October 2014

CCDC's Former Head now Deputy Principal, UWI Open Campus



Photo: Prof. Julie Meeks

Professor Julie Meeks, a Professor of Child Development and Nutrition, and former Head of the Caribbean Child Development Centre (CCDC), was appointed Deputy Principal for the UWI Open Campus.

Professor Meeks' work focused on nutritional status and child development of children in difficult circumstances. She carried out longitudinal observations of undernourished children and examined their behavioural responses to nutritional supplementation and psychosocial stimulation, including interactions with their caregivers, other adults and children. She has studied the effects of lead toxicity coupled with under-nutrition, and the benefits of zinc supplementation on the growth, morbidity and development of children.

Over the last two decades, she has focused on issues of children and violence, including the development of aggression among children, and the effects of violence on Caribbean children. She was the lead researcher on the Caribbean Region report on Violence against Children for the UN Secretary General's Global Report. She has been principal investigator on many research projects with substantial grant funding from international agencies including the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO, the OAS and the IDB.

Professor Meeks will continue to be the principal investigator of the three-year USAID-funded project *Transition Living Programme for Children in State Care* monitored by the CCDC.

The CCDC wishes Professor Meeks great success as she takes up her new position with the Open Campus.

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Transitional Living Programme for Children in State Care



Photo (l-r): Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Denise Herbol; Executive Director of the Child Development Agency (CDA), Rosalee Gage-Grey; Principal of the UWI Open Campus, Professor Eudine Barriteau; Deputy Principal of the UWI Open Campus and former Head of CCDC, Professor Julie Meeks Gardner; Chairman of the Child Development Agency (CDA) Children's Advisory Pane, Charles Young; Arnett Gardens resident, Jasmine Barnes; Minister of Youth and Culture, Hon. Lisa Hanna; and Vice -Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Professor E. Nigel Harris.

Children in State Care in Jamaica are to benefit from a transitional living programme under a US\$1,388,000 USAID Grants initiative. The programme was launched on Thursday, October 30, 2014 at The University of the West Indies (UWI) Regional Headquarters. The project is being implemented by The UWI Open Campus' CCDC, in partnership with the CDA.

The programme is expected to impact and improve the lives of up to 400 children between the ages of 14-21. The Transitional Living Programme for Children in State Care Project will also create appropriate and safe transitional living facility for 40 girls on their exit from children homes. It will provide for improved preparation of children who have reached the age of 18 and are about to leave residential care. This will be carried out through the establishment of an "exit-readiness" programme, which focuses on job and life skills training and mentorship. The programme will also cover matters such as lifestyle choices, health, family, employability, the environment, and secure public-private partnerships.

Jamaican Police Becoming Champions of Children's Rights



Photo: 2014 JCF Project Implementation Team

By the end of 2014, CCDC's Child Rights Education Project (CREP) had equipped 424 members of The Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) with knowledge, skills and tools to uphold child rights. A growing number of police personnel, of various ranks and sections across Jamaica, have stepped up to the challenge and are serving as child rights champions. We anticipate a groundswell based on the high level of receptiveness and interest demonstrated by the police; they are buying into rights-based policing.

In 2008, CCDC launched the UNICEF-supported Child Rights Education Project, and in 2009, the *Child Rights & Responsibilities Course for Professionals* was successfully piloted with social workers and children's officers. Subsequently, police officers, juvenile correctional personnel and educators were targeted and the project has since helped to build the child rights capacity of hundreds of members of these targeted groups, and hundreds of others, including children.

CCDC-JCF collaboration commenced in 2010; JCF cooperation facilitated CCDC carrying out a survey that examined how police members were guided during their encounters with children .

The findings revealed an absence of child-centred policy and procedures within JCF. The project is now providing technical assistance for the development of JCF's Child Interaction Policy and Procedure, working closely with a dedicated police team at the Research, Planning and Legal Services Branch.

The production of the 2014 Child Rights Training Guidelines for the JCF and adapted *Child Rights and Responsibilities and Child Rights Training of Trainers* programmes for police, made possible with continued UNICEF support, are being used by the National Police College of Jamaica (NPCJ) in the development of its own four-tier Child Rights Training programme. Police trainers are being trained to deliver the program,. An e-learning component, teaching and job aids are also being developed.

CREP activities for 2015 continue to focus on building JCF's capacity to serve children's best interests, working closely with other critical stakeholders, and to establish mechanisms to sustain programming, monitoring and evaluation that contribute to improved outcomes of police encounters with children. For more information on the project, contact Heather Gallimore, at heather.gallimore@open.uwi.edu

CCDC launched HFLE website

The Caribbean Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) website was launched online on August 29th, 2014. The Caribbean HFLE website aims to serve as a repository of HFLE teaching and learning resources developed by Ministries of Education and other partners in the Caribbean, as well as to promote networking among HFLE stakeholders.

The website was constructed through funding from the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office, Jamaica.

<http://www.open.uwi.edu/hflecaribbean/>

Re-establishment of Model Early Childhood Institutions



Photo: The EC centre at CCDC

The Early Childhood Institutions (ECIs) throughout the Caribbean continue to try and implement high quality, constructivist programming but despite this, it is evident that the teachers are still struggling to understand how to implement play-based methods while successfully achieving children's academic goals.

It is based on this that the CCDC, decided to develop the four UWI Open Campus existing ECIs in Antigua, Jamaica and Trinidad, into laboratory pre-schools to help both pre-service and in-service teachers. The ECIs will allow for the establishment of best practices in early childhood care and development, and training sites for prospective caregivers and others working in the early childhood environment throughout the Caribbean. The CCDC was able to successfully obtain JA\$44M from the CHASE Fund in Jamaica to refurbish the Early Childhood Centre at CCDC, Mona.

As University laboratory pre-schools, they will:

- Provide appropriate developmental year-round programmes for children three months to five years
- Serve as a centre for teacher training through classroom practicum experiences
- Allow selected research and teaching projects at the schools

- Provide an observation and research site for students and faculty of UWI
- Facilitate an exchange programme for local, regional and international students
- Provide teleconference facilities for other UWI Open Campus sites in the Caribbean region to facilitate workshops for ECD students and trainers

Please see below abstract of a published article from our Research Fellow, Joan Thomas.

Abstract

Title: Parenting strategies among Jamaican parents of aggressive children

Authors: Thomas J¹, Lewis Fokum Y², Powell C³ & Meeks-Gardner J¹

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¹Caribbean Child Development Centre, The University of the West Indies, Open Campus

²Faculty of Humanities and Education, The University of the West Indies, Mona

³Epidemiology Research Unit, Tropical Medicine Research Institute, The University of the West Indies, Mona

The objective of this study was to describe the range of strategies used by Jamaican caregivers in managing their children's behaviours. Prior to an intervention, the primary caregivers of 138 aggressive children, aged six to eight years old, from four primary schools in Kingston, were interviewed about the strategies they used when their children misbehaved as well as when they behaved acceptably. The caregivers reported using a variety of harsh and inappropriate strategies when their children misbehaved; however, they also reported using some appropriate ones. Additionally, they responded when their children displayed good behaviours. Implications for research and practice are discussed.