

Work & Family Transitions Project

Summer 2004 Volume 5, Issue 1

Notes From the Project Director Maureen Perry-Jenkins, Ph.D.



Hi everyone!

Well we have just finished year #2 of the new project. As most of you know, we really have two projects going on at the same time. The original Work and Family Transitions Project #1 is following up families that we first visited when they were having their first child and now their oldest child is entering first grade. We have enjoyed reconnecting with some of you, and over the next two years will be meeting with all of you again. The games and videotaping that now occur at Phase 6 have added on a whole new and very fun dimension to the project, and we really appreciate your willingness to participate. Thank you so much for sticking with us for the past 6 years.

The second project, The Work and Family Transitions #2, is following a new sample of single and two-parent working families as they negotiate work and new parenthood. We have had our share of challenges in trying to recruit this sample for our project and are now moving into Hartford Connecticut to try and find more families. We are especially interested in learning about the unique issues that face single mothers as they become parents and manage a full-time job. If you know of any expectant parents who might be willing to help us out please have them call our toll free number (1-888-531-BABY) We could really use your help on this one!

As always, what we do would not be possible without your help. We have learned so much about the joys and challenges of combining work and family life and can't wait to learn more. Words cannot express the gratitude I hold for each and every one of you who has shared your story with us. Thank you.

Maureen



We have a number of new students and staff that have joined our project.

Let's give them a big ol' WFTP Welcome!!!

First up...

Jade Logan will be entering the graduate program in Clinical Psychology this fall at UMass. She comes to us from the University of Delaware and she has interests in child development and family life. Yeah Jade!

Crystal Hayes is graduate student in the Smith College School for Social Work and she is currently being trained to conduct interviews in the field so many of you may be meeting Crystal in the near future. Alright, Crystal!

Kim Robinson Williams is our new community outreach coordinator in Springfield. Kim's full-time job is at the Urban League, but she has agreed to recruit pregnant women in Springfield for us. Thanks Kim!

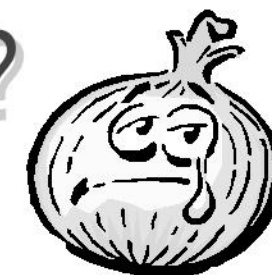
Last but not least...

Marcia Forbes is a graduate student in Social Work at Uconn. Marcia is going to help us develop contacts and recruitment sites in Hartford Connecticut.

We are so lucky to be adding such energetic, bright, and committed women to our project and they can't wait to get out there to meet you. Welcome Jade, Crystal,

What!?!...They're gone!?

Moving On....Goodbye to Courtney and Abbie



We all can't quite believe that Courtney Pierce and Abbie Goldberg, who have been instrumental to every aspect of the Work and Family Transitions Project, are actually leaving us! We thought it might be useful to let you know a little bit about what our graduate students actually do when they are not out interviewing you.

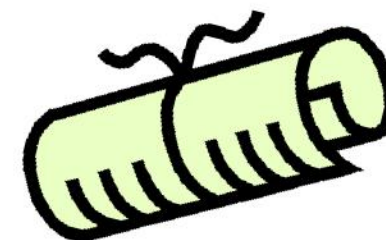
Both Courtney and Abbie have completed all of their academic requirements in the Clinical Psychology program at UMass. People who get their doctorates in this field are trained to pursue work as clinicians and/or as academic researchers. The final stage of the training involves completing a 1-year clinical internship outside of UMass.

Courtney's internship will be at Duke University in the Department of Psychiatry where she'll focus her work on children, adolescents, and families. Courtney will work for a few months at a clinic that is focused on the assessment and treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder for both children and adults.

Abbie will complete her internship through the Yale Department of Psychiatry and Yale-New Haven Hospital. For six months she will be doing clinical work with adolescents and their families, and for six months she will work with adults who have both mental health and substance abuse problems.

Both Courtney and Abbie are interested in careers that will allow them to remain active in both clinical work and research.

Courtney and Abbie will be missed terribly and all of us remaining at WFTP owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their commitment to our project. They have set a standard for excellence that will keep us all "on our toes" even when they are gone. Thank you for everything and we wish you great things in the future!



On the Road Again...



This fall, several members of the Work and Family Transitions Project will present some findings from our interviews with you at a conference of The National Council on Family Relations. The National Council on Family Relations is a large organization of researchers, teachers, and practitioners who meet every year to share what we have learned from families like yours, and discuss how to promote family well-being and family-friendly policies.

Pump'n 9 to 5



For her project, Heather looked at your answers to our questions about breastfeeding. She put together all of your answers, and even went back and listened to many of your taped responses to the questions about breastfeeding. She found that, for many families in our project, women were able to breastfeed longer when they felt that their supervisor and their company were more supportive of their efforts

Daddy Diaper Duty



In her paper, Karen looked at how mothers influence the amount of time that fathers spend taking care of their baby, by either encouraging their partners to be more involved or doing most of the child care themselves. She found that fathers who felt their partners encouraged their participation in child care soon after the baby was born spent more time with their babies during the first year of the baby's life.

Got the Baby Blues... Take Control!

For her project, Courtney explored how a person's sense of control over his or her life is related to feelings of anxiety and depression, and how this changes after having a baby. She found that new parents who reported a greater sense of control over their lives experienced less feelings of depression and anxiety.



Couples that Play together, Stay Together



Amy and Julianna were interested in whether the time that new parents spend together and alone in leisure activities influences how things are going in the marriage. As many of you probably know, finding time to spend together as a couple is a big challenge faced by new parents, especially when both parents are also working! Amy and Julianna found just what you would expect – that the amount of time that couples spend in leisure activities together and alone or with friends decreases after having a baby. When they looked to see whether the amount of time couples spent together was related to the kind of relationship they have they discovered that fathers, on average, did not see a connection between the amount of time they spent in leisure activities with their partner and how things were going in their marriage. Interestingly, however, mothers *did* report feeling more love for their partners when they spent more time together after the baby was born.

We look forward to presenting all of these findings at the National Council on Family Relations in Orlando, Florida this November!

PARENTING



What do our families say are the best things about having a six year-old?

1. Now they can do more things for themselves--like fix themselves breakfast!
2. They have definitely developed a mind of their own!
3. Now that they're in school, their schedules coordinate with work schedules better!
4. They can help out with younger siblings!
5. They understand more (Okay--we can now start teaching them sports!)

It's awesome, it's better than I thought that it'd be! I knew it'd be good, but this is never a dull moment!



When she was five, she was extremely difficult. But once she started school, she leveled off, and now she is so much fun!
- Mom

Before I became a parent, I thought that the typical modern woman was supposed to be able to do everything. But then after I became a parent, I found out that it was a myth. Someone just made that up, and it'll drive you crazy!
- Mom

The best thing about this age is that the conflicts are simple to resolve. In general, the bigger the kid, the bigger the problems!
- Dad

Laundry, Garbage and Dishes: Then and Now

As many of you already know, this past year we had the amazing opportunity to come back and interview some of you who participated in our original study. (For those of you who we haven't yet visited again, expect to hear from us around the time that your first child turns six. We can hardly wait to talk to you.) It has been so exciting to see how your children have grown and changed. You are also teaching us a lot about other things that may change or stay the same over the years. Take household tasks: One year after the birth of your first child, most (though by no means all!) women were doing the laundry more than men, and most (though by no means all!) men were taking out the garbage/recycling more than women. Although back then, a lot of you told us that both men and women were doing the dishes, women tended to do the dishes

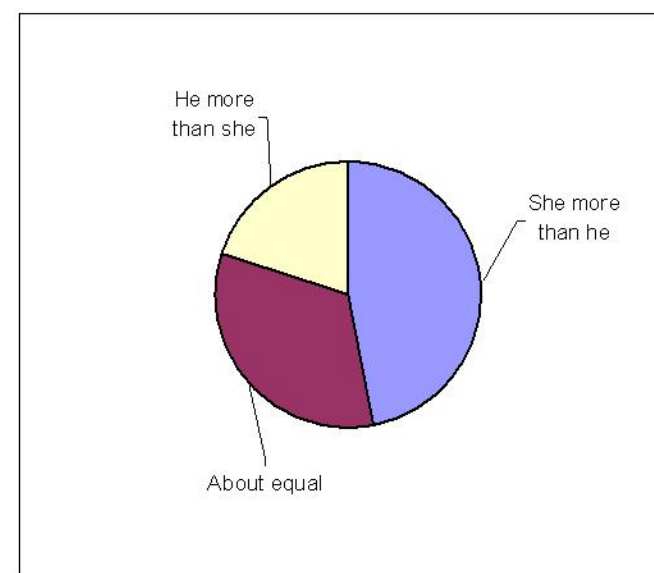
more often than men. (Keep in mind that there are as many ways of dividing up household tasks as there are families; these are just *averages*, and your family might be really similar or really different from others.) From what we've seen so far, the laundry situation and the garbage/recycling situation have stayed pretty much the same over the years. But it looks like five years later, more men are doing the dishes more often: A lot more of you now tell us that you split dish-washing equally. [Scrub away!]



Who's Doin' the Dishes???

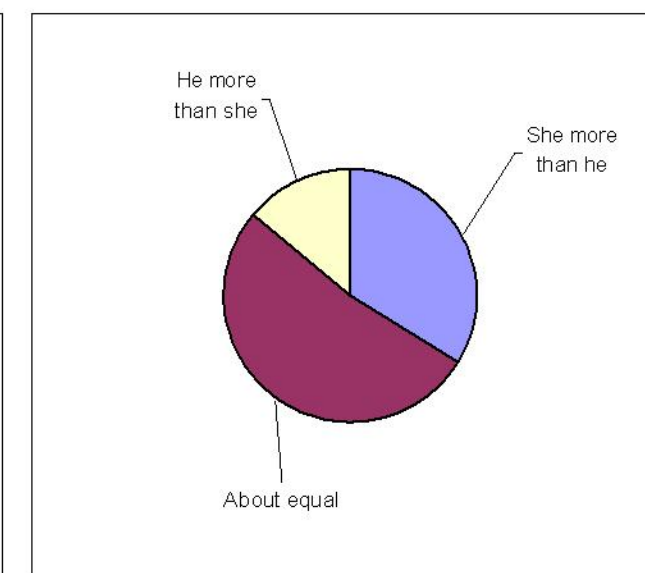
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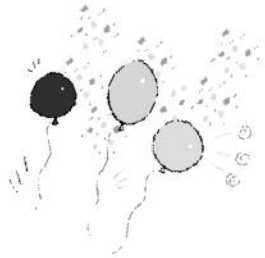


Now

Year 6



We have a new toll-free number!!



1-888-531-BABY



Call us if you know someone who qualifies for our new project:

- Pregnant with first child
 - Currently working
- Plans on returning to work
- Would like to earn \$200



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