



Families' and children's Adjustment Study

Study Update by Martha Tompson, Ph.D, Principal Investigator

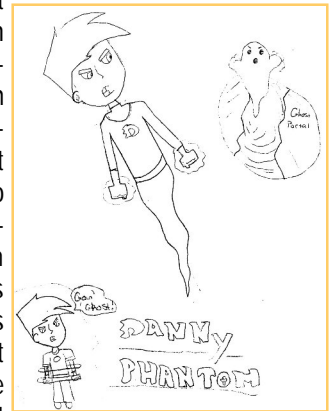
Spring, finally! After the coldest February on record, it's reassuring to see the trees beginning to bloom. We now have almost 150 families enrolled in the Families' and Children's Adjustment Study; we've seen over 70 families twice, and have seen about 15 families three times. We are hoping to have another 20-25 families enter the study in the next three months, and then we will have all our first evaluations complete. We'll be seeing you all again soon!

In talking with our families in the last few months we're very aware of the challenges and joys kids experience in having siblings. For the kids in our study without brothers or sisters – our only children – there are frequently some advantages – more time with parents, more space of their own, and, frequently, more money and opportunities to help them along the way. Sometimes they are quite pleased with their only child status, while others wish that they had a brother or sister. For those children with siblings, brothers and/or sisters can be a wonderful source of companionship and affection. Many kids express fondness for their siblings, and the same kids sometimes wish they were only children! Fighting with siblings is probably the number one issue that most parents and kids talk about during our final videotaped discussion task. For older siblings, it is often difficult to deal with younger ones who may "borrow" their things, snoop into their business, and want to hang out with them. For younger siblings, it can be tough to watch the older one getting to do all of the "fun things"

that the younger child is not yet ready for. It is not surprising that siblings fight, given their need to grow up and establish their own identities. As unpleasant as they can be, fights can provide an opportunity for children to learn how to understand others' needs, negotiate, and compromise. As parents, our job is to balance the needs of the older child (to be independent, to do things on his/her own) with those of the younger child (to be a part of their brother or sister's life, to strive to be like him/her), and to let them work it

out on their own as much as possible. Although difficult, it's important to not take sides and to encourage compromise from everyone. As unbelievable as it may seem at the time, those who fought most as youngsters can be extremely close as they become adults (just ask my sister!).

We've included some suggestions for fun activities in this newsletter, as well as some strategies for coping with the challenges of busy family life. We will see you soon, and thanks again for your continuing participation.



A drawing from one of our participants in the study.

Tips on Managing Job and Family

- ⇒ Have a calendar on the refrigerator that lists each family member's activities.
- ⇒ Prepare meals on the weekend for quick reheat during the week. Try to engage your child in helping with meal preparation, such as washing and cutting vegetables, fruits, etc.
- ⇒ Make a list of chores for each family member and also put on the refrigerator. Be sure to check off each chore as they are completed.



- ◆ If you know anyone interested in participating in our study, feel free to have them give us a call at 617-358-2246 or email us at families@bu.edu
- ◆ If there have been any changes in your contact information, please let us know as soon as you can

Activities for the Kids

Fun Books to Read

- The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster
- Charlotte's Web by E. B. White
- Hoot by Carl Hiaasen
- James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl



Unscramble these fun spring words!

(answers will be in the next newsletter)



- | | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| losohc atnvciao | dsibr |
| rwfloes | rsgsa |
| arni | sleablab |
| cocser | nshusien |
| olarsesc | cie macer |

Sudoku Answer Key:

5	8	4	2	9	6	3	7	1
1	2	9	3	8	7	6	5	4
6	7	3	1	4	5	8	2	9
4	3	1	6	2	9	5	8	7
7	5	8	4	3	1	2	9	6
9	6	2	7	5	8	4	1	3
8	1	7	5	6	4	9	3	2
2	9	6	8	7	3	1	4	5
3	4	5	9	1	2	7	6	8

Suggested Resources

General Parenting Books:

- Good Friends Are Hard to Find: Help Your Child Find, Make, and Keep Friends
— Fred Frankel & Barry Wetmore
- Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me & Cheryl to the Mall: A Parent's Guide to the New Teenager
— Anthony E. Wolf
- Don't Sweat The Small Stuff (For Teens): Simple Ways to Keep Your Cool in Stressful Times
— Richard Carlson

Books for Kids:

- Stellanuna by Janell Cannon — A story family, acceptance, uniqueness, and fitting in.
- Tell Me Something Happy Before I Go to Sleep by Joyce Dunbar and Debi Gliori — A story of how an older brother helps his younger sister out.
- Where Do Balloons Go? An Uplifting Mystery by Jamie Lee Curtis — A fun story about a boy with a big imagination.
- The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein — A story about love and giving.

Websites:

- www.cfw.tufts.edu/index.html — provides information and resources about parenting, education, child development, health, and recreation.
- www.schwablearning.org — provides resources for parents to help their child with a learning disability such as ADHD, Dyslexia, nonverbal learning disabilities, etc.
- www.highlightskids.com — fun games and activities that families can play together online.



Family Spring Activities in the Boston Area



- ◇ **Boston Symphony Orchestra Community Chamber Series** – free performances every Sunday at 3pm until April 29 at various locations in/around Boston. Tickets must be reserved 2 weeks in advance: call 617-638-9300 or email: education@bso.org www.bso.org

- ◇ **USS Constitution** – explore the ship and learn about the crew. Opens April 1. Free admission. T-accessible: Green (N. Station) or Orange Line (Community College). www.usconstitution.navy.mil

- ◇ **Swan Boats** – ride them at the Public Gardens. Opens April 14. Kids (2-15) \$1.25, Adults \$2.75. Green Line: Arlington. www.swanboats.com

- ◇ **Boston By Foot** – explore the Freedom Trail and learn about its history by walking around Boston, designed for kids 6-12! Opens May 1. \$8 admission. www.bostonbyfoot.com

- ◇ **Community Boating, Inc.** – classes on sailing, windsurfing, and kayaking open to kids ages 10-18, From June 19-Aug 26, M-F 9-3 pm- Fee: \$1 <http://www.community-boating.org/>



Cook's Corner Banana Pudding

Makes 8 servings

35-45 NILLA Wafers

5-6 medium size fully ripe bananas, sliced

3/4 cup granulated sugar, divided

1/3 cup all-purpose flour

Dash of salt

4 eggs, separated, at room temperature

2 cups milk

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

* reserve 10 to 12 NILLA Wafers and 1 banana for garnish.

(Provided by the Nabisco NILLA Vanilla Wafer box)

Combine 1/2 cup sugar, flour and salt in top of double boiler. Stir in 4 egg yolks and milk; blend well. Cook, uncovered, over boiling water, stirring constantly; 5 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla. Spread small amount on bottom of 1-1/2 quart casserole; cover with layer of NILLA Wafers. Top with layer of sliced bananas.

Pour about 1/3 of custard over bananas. Continue to layer wafers, bananas and custard to make 3 layers each, ending with custard. Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry; gradually add remaining 1/4 cup sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Spoon on top of pudding, spreading to cover entire surface and sealing well to edges. Bake at 350° F for 10 to 12 minutes or until browned. Cool slightly or chill. Just before serving, garnish with reserved banana slices and NILLA Wafers. Enjoy!



A special thanks to all those who helped make this newsletter: Martha Tompson (Principal Investigator), Claudette Pierre (Project Director), Kat Dingman, James McKowen, Rachel Freed, Desiree Gomez, Corey Smetana, Tory Choate, Annette Mankus, and Kara Durocher. Editor: Priscilla Chan.

FAMILIES' AND CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT STUDY

C/O MARTHA TOMPSON, PhD

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

648 BEACON STREET, 4TH FLOOR

BOSTON, MA 02215

