

# PROGRAM UPDATES

## Keeping up with the S.E.L.F.-Regulation Lab



Center for Children and Families



Over the last several years via grants through the Department of Education's Institute of Educational Sciences (IES), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the Children's Trust our lab has:

- ◇ Provided intervention services to **436 families** in our community via our Summer Programs (STP-Prek, HIP, SPARK) as well as our parenting services (PCIT).
- ◇ Provided training to **over 200** teachers, counselors, and therapists



By: Dr. Graziano

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### Special points of interest

- ☺ In this newsletter, we wanted to share with you some of our findings from the research you have helped create in the last 2 years
- ☺ Don't forget to complete any pending ratings!
- ☺ STP families, see you for your 6 month fol-

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## Reminders/Upcoming Events

*We are currently completing our school readiness 6-month follow-ups. So if you came to see us earlier in the year for a school readiness evaluation, please come back to see us!*

*We are now gathering the teacher ratings so please remind your teacher to fill those out. Remember we need your help to continue receiving funding for this great program and to make it as low cost as possible for families.*

**November 8, 2017 @6pm**  
*STP Prek Parent Booster Session*  
*Food and child-care will be provided.*  
*We hope to see you, and this is a perfect chance to bring any completed teacher ratings!*

## Social Functioning in Children with or at risk for ADHD



### Parent tip #1

-Help your children improve their peer relations. As a parent set up and monitor play dates to ensure that your child is using proper social skills during the play date.

-Praise your child for playing nicely and gently with others.

Children with Attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) experience an array of social difficulties including peer rejection, poor social skills and the misinterpretation of social cues. For example, in a neutral situation (e.g., child bumps another child while walking), a child with ADHD is more likely to react aggressively.

This study reviewed 109 previous studies which compared children diagnosed or at-risk for ADHD to those without any diagnoses.

We found that children with ADHD had the most problems in **peer functioning**. Specifically, children with ADHD had fewer friends and experienced a poorer quality of friendship compared to children without ADHD.

It is important to note that these peer difficulties occurred even when considering children with ADHD's co-occurring conduct problems (e.g., aggression).

### CITATION

Ros, R., & Graziano, P. A. (2017). Social Functioning in Children With or At Risk for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 1-23.

## ADHD and Emotional Dysregulation

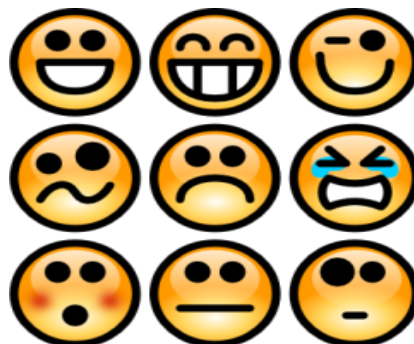
Emotion dysregulation can be broken down into four different domains:

- 1) Emotion recognition: a child's ability to label and recognize correct emotions.
- 2) Emotional reactivity/negativity: the duration and intensity of an emotional expression a child displays during a frustrating and challenging task.
- 3) Emotion regulation: A child's ability to control their emotions in an adaptive manner.
- 4) Empathy: the ability for a child to show concern and care to others who are experiencing distress.

This study reviewed 77 prior studies that examined the

emotional functioning of children diagnosed with or at-risk for ADHD compared to those without any diagnoses.

We found that children with ADHD had the most emotional problems within the reactivity and regulation domains. Specifically, children with ADHD experienced more intense negative and positive emotions when reacting to stressful tasks. Additionally, they had poorer coping skills.



### Parent tip #2

-Increase your child's emotional awareness by asking them to identify the feelings of characters in books and T.V. shows. Ask them why the characters may be feeling that way and strategies to make them feel better.

-Praise your child when they handle a difficult or frustrating event (e.g., losing in a game) well.

-Ignore whiny emotional reactions as you do not want to reinforce it

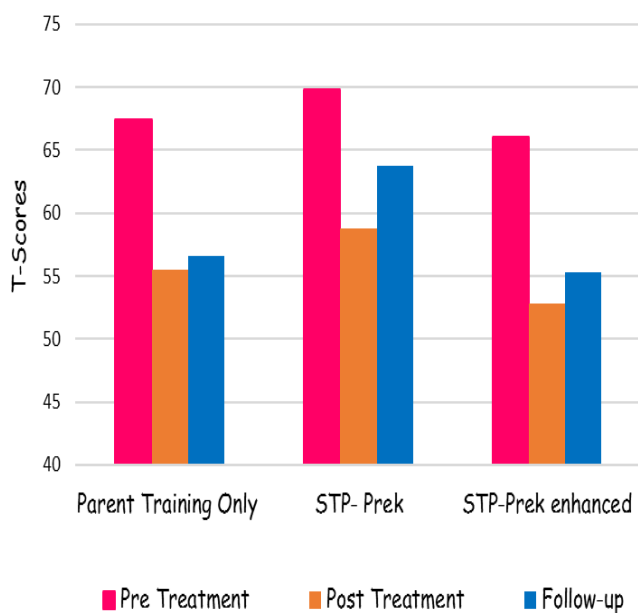
### CITATION

Graziano, P. A., & Garcia, A. (2016). Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and children's emotion dysregulation: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 46, 106-123.

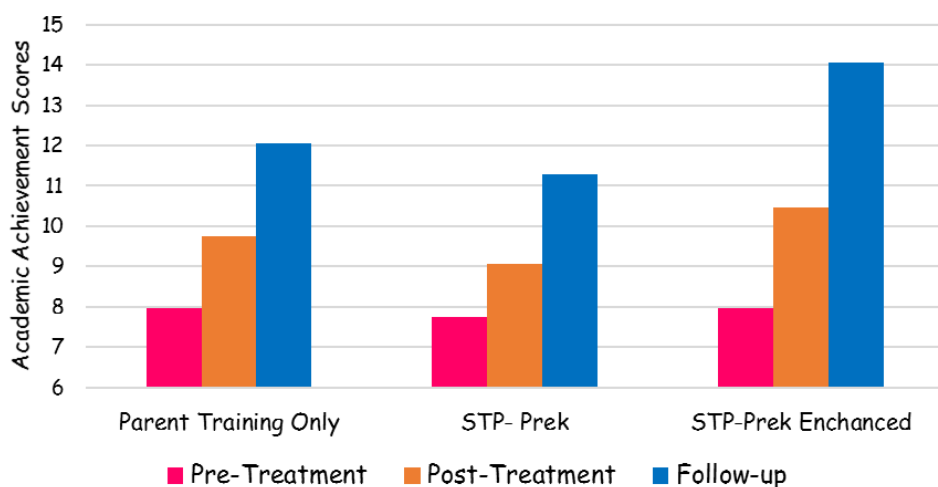
## Benefit of Social-Emotional Curriculum in STP-PreK



Behavior Problems: Teacher Ratings



Academic Achievement



-Our Summer Treatment Program for Pre-Kindergarteners (STP-PreK), which includes both our day camp and school readiness parenting program (SRPP), has shown to be effective in helping pre-schoolers with disruptive behavior problems transition more effectively to kindergarten.

-The current study compared children who attended the standard STP-Prek, versus those who attended an enhanced version of the STP-Prek which included a more extensive social-emotional curriculum (STP-PreK Enhanced), as well as those children who did not attend camp but whose parents attended the SRPP (Parent Only).

### Major Findings

1) Children in all 3 groups improved their behaviors as reported by parents and teachers.

2) Children in the STP-PreK Enhanced group experienced greater academic success, emotional knowledge, emotional regulation and executive functioning compared to the children in the other groups (who did not have the social-emotional curriculum).

### Implications

-Our parenting program is the critical component towards improving children's behavioral functioning

-Including the social-emotional curriculum in the STP-PreK is critical to ensure maximum benefits.

-Improving children's ability to control their emotions as well as their higher order thinking skills (e.g., remembering classroom rules, waiting appropriately for their turn) is particularly important for young children with disruptive behavior problems like ADHD who tend to have difficulties in these domains.

### CITATION

Graziano, P. A., & Hart, K. (2016). Beyond behavior modification: Benefits of social-emotional/self-regulation training for preschoolers with behavior problems. *Journal of School Psychology, 58*, 91-111.



# STP Pre-k Parenting Outcomes

## Parent tip #3

Parental involvement is an extremely important factor in a child's school readiness outcomes, so make sure you stay involved in your child's everyday life and communicate with your teacher about your child's progress.

## Parent tip #4

Continue to do "special time" with your children and use your positive "do skills" not just during play but during everyday situations. For example, praising your child for completing their homework or sharing with their sibling.



## CITATION

Graziano, P., Ros, R., Hart, K., & Slavec, J. (in press). Summer Treatment Program for Preschoolers with Externalizing Behavior Problems: An examination of Parenting Outcomes. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*.

-Helping parents learn how to best promote their children's behavior at home is a critical component of the STP-PreK. The parenting program that we have developed is called School Readiness Parenting Program (SRPP).

-This study examined the extent to which the SRPP is successful in a) reducing parents' stress levels, b) promoting positive parent-child interactions, and c) promoting positive discipline strategies/involvement.

-Our results showed that parents improved their use of positive "do skills" (e.g., labeled praise, reflections, and behavioral descriptions) during "special time" while also learning to withhold negative "don't skills" (e.g., asking too many questions and giving commands and criticisms) after completing our program.

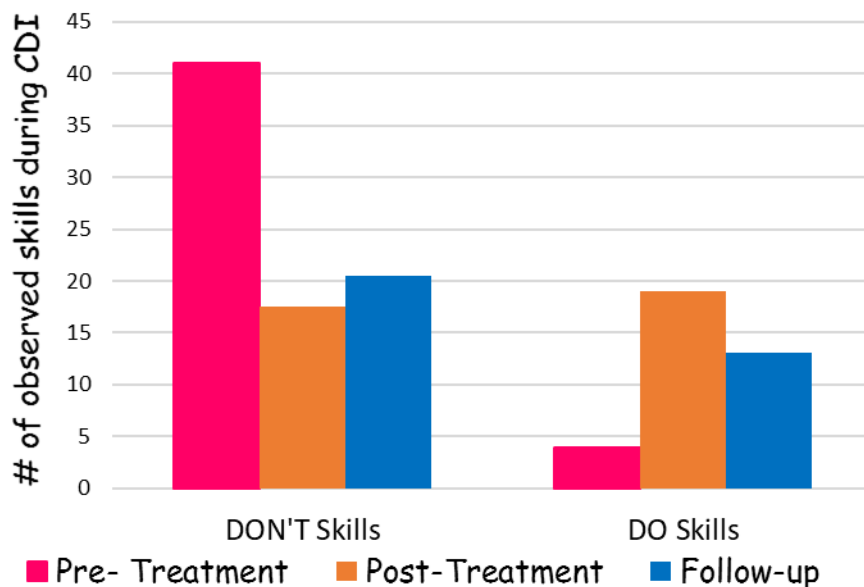
-Parents also reported lowering their stress levels and increasing positive parenting discipline strategies while reducing inconsistent discipline practices.

-All of the parents' gains were maintained even 6 months after the program ended!

"This is an amazing camp. I absolutely loved everything about it. I loved the teachers, counselors, and the entire staff. This program changed my life and improved my family."

-STP-Prek Parent

## Parenting Skills (Observation)





### FAST FACTS

- Children who participated in HIP decreased their BMI scores by 24%.
- Families that participated in HIP significantly improved their healthy habits by 18%.
- Children also improved their overall nutritional knowledge and ability to classify foods correctly by 50%!
- Parents also improved in packing healthier lunches for their children by 115%!

## HIP (Healthy-Lifestyle Intervention Program)

-This study examined initial findings from our 8-week Healthy-lifestyle Intervention program (HIP), which included children's participation in a daily summer camp (modeled after the STP-Prek) along with parents' participation in a parenting program focused on children who are overweight/obese (BMI 85th percentile or above).

-Our program teaches parents and children about proper nutritional awareness (e.g., Stop Light Diet System along with MyPlate guidelines), healthy habits, and physical activity.

-Parents are also highly involved as they receive daily feedback regarding their child's progress (e.g., trying a new healthy food) and how well they packed their lunch.



- Children's fitness greatly improved by (69%) and even increased 6 months later!

### CITATION

Graziano, P., Lim, C., & Garcia, A. (in press). The Summer Healthy-Lifestyle Intervention Program (HIP) for young children who are overweight: Results from an open trial. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*

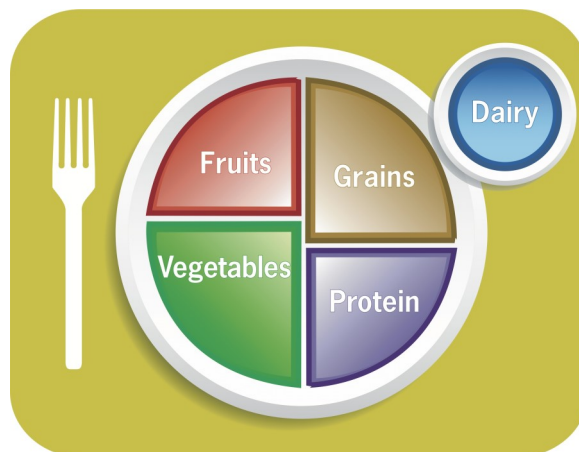
### Parent tip #5

-Help your children and family develop healthier eating habits by providing plenty of vegetables and fruits.

-Encourage your family to drink lots of water and get 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

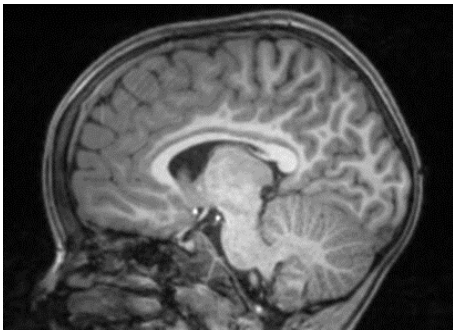
-Use the MyPlate as a portion control technique.

[https://www.amazon.com/MyPlate-Divided-Kids-Balanced-Sec-tions/dp/B01HDRGCEO/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1509570108&sr=8-3&keywords=myplate&dpID=513nXv3ELXL&preST=\\_SY300\\_QL70\\_&dpSrc=srch](https://www.amazon.com/MyPlate-Divided-Kids-Balanced-Sec-tions/dp/B01HDRGCEO/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1509570108&sr=8-3&keywords=myplate&dpID=513nXv3ELXL&preST=_SY300_QL70_&dpSrc=srch)





## Free Gifted/ School Readiness Assessments



The primary investigators, Dr. Graziano and Dr. Dick, received a 4-year NIH Grant (R01 MH112588-01): Assessing Heterogeneity in children's Emotional and Attentional Development (AHEAD). The goal of this grant is to better understand what contributes to children's individual differences in emotion regulation and attention.

To accomplish this goal we are recruiting children who are emotionally and physically healthy (not experiencing any difficulties with behavior, attention and/or hyperactivity) who are between the ages of 4.5-7 years old (Pre-K-1st grade) as well as children diagnosed or suspected of having Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

### Project Entails:

- Initial assessment completed in 2-3 visits at Florida International University-MMC.
- 30-minute MRI brain scan- No sedation, No radiation.
- A series of questionnaires from the participant's parents and teacher.
- 6 month follow-up assessment to see how your child is progressing.

### Compensation

- Each family will receive \$150 along with a cool picture of your child's brain (see on the left) for the initial assessment and another \$100 for the 6-month follow-up
- A brief report of their child's academic performance
- If the child qualifies for gifted we will include a free psychoeducational report worth \$1,000!!!
- Teachers will also receive \$50
- Plus \$20 for each successful referral - reach out to any friends and family who you believe would benefit.

## PCIT

Free Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is available for families with children ages 2-6 who are experiencing behavioral difficulties. Assigned either to traditional (once a week) or intensive (Monday-Friday for 2 consecutive weeks) treatment, parents will also receive compensation (\$25 gift cards) for completing questionnaires.

For more information and to see if you qualify please contact Rosmary Ros at 305-348-6679 or email the [selfreg@fiu.edu](mailto:selfreg@fiu.edu)



# Message from the Director

Dear Families,

The important work you have been reading about in this newsletter would not be possible without you and your family. But we also can't forget to thank the incredible team of students and trainees who have come to train with us over the last several years, as well as your children's teachers and schools. Working with and getting to know you all has been a true blessing and joy to us!

We are currently conducting our 6-month follow-up for all the families participating in our AHEAD project. We know you all have very busy schedules and it is hard to find time to come back out to FIU, but your feedback and participation in our program and our research studies is vital to our program's continued success. You matter to us and to all the future families who will benefit from the work we are doing at FIU. If coming out to FIU is too much of a burden on your family, we can come to your home or your child's school. Please call us, if you haven't already, to schedule your appointment. Hope to hear from you soon!

Also, please remind your teachers to complete their questionnaires as we want to know how your children are doing in school.

On another note, some families have contacted us to let us know that there have been new or continuing issues since we last saw you. Remember that our center has a wide range of services for elementary-age children, including the Summer Treatment Program. Another summer may be just what you and your child need to get back on track. Our center also has a number of parenting programs, both group and individual, if you need an extra boost. Many other evidence-based intervention and treatment options are available. To find out more about available programming, please visit our center's website [www.ccf.fiu.edu](http://www.ccf.fiu.edu) or call our main office (305-348-0477).

Finally, we hope that you know we are here for you. All of our phone numbers are listed below. If you have a question at any time, we are happy to do our best to problem-solve and connect you with the resources you, your child, and your family needs to be healthy and well.

Warmest Regards & Sincerest Thanks,

Dr. Graziano

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