

Site Spotlight

The Pennsylvania State University (PSU) is the lead site for The Early Growth and Development Study–Phase II and is actively involved in coding projects with the Phase I data as well. Dr. Jenae Neiderhiser, the Principal Investigator of the project, joined the faculty of PSU’s Department of Psychology in 2007. PSU is widely known as a top research university, where a variety of work involving children and families is being conducted in the Department of Psychology. The Early Growth and Development Study joins the developmental psychology area alongside studies on children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development; parenting and coparenting; sibling relationships; and brain development (just to name a few!). Dr. Neiderhiser’s research focuses on how the interplay between genes and the environment relates to different interpersonal relationships across the lifespan (e.g., parent–child, sibling, spouse, and peer).

Dr. Ginger Moore, Assistant Professor of Child Clinical Psychology at PSU, has recently joined our team, bringing funding from PSU’s Children, Youth, and Families Consortium. Dr. Moore studies the impact of early life experiences and relationships on the development of emotion regulation and empathy.

PSU is the main site for the study’s data scanning, processing, and coding. The team members at PSU are also involved in editing and coding videos from our Phase I home visits. Although you will not see any of the PSU staff during our home visits, chances are you have already spoken with either Tassie or Marissa for our adoptive parent phone interviews!

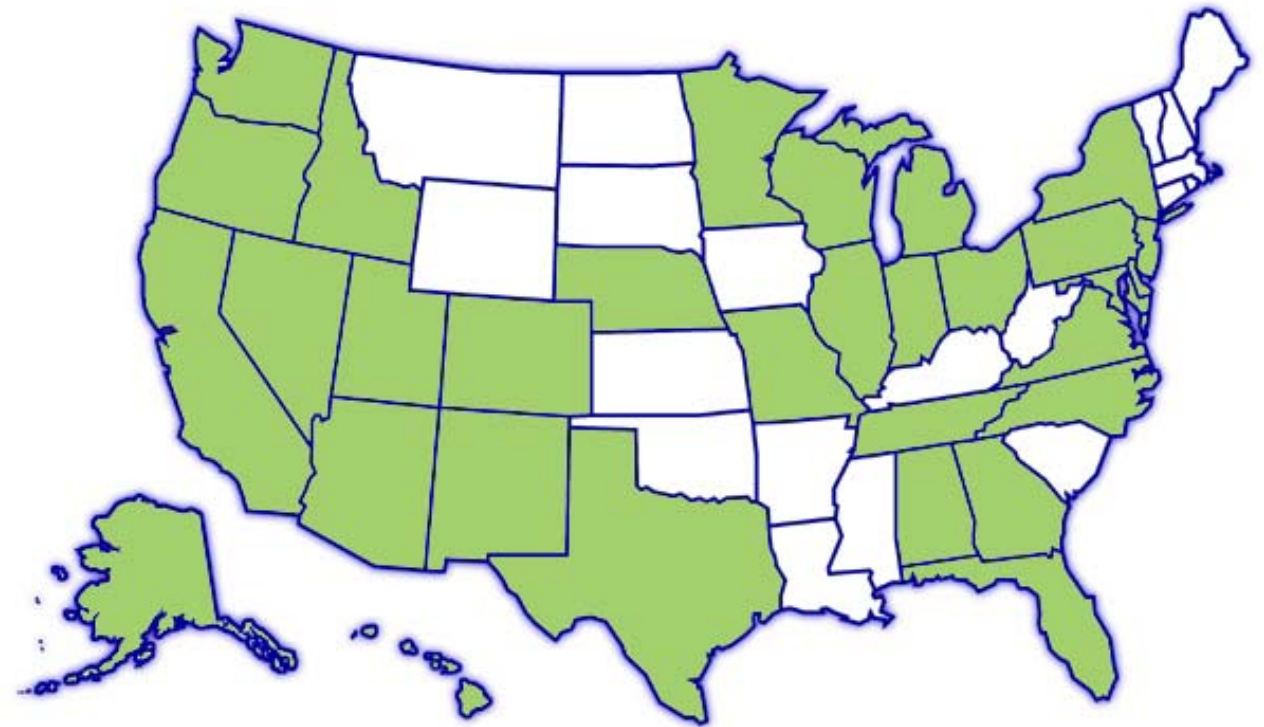
Staff Introductions

Marissa Gernett. I recently graduated in May from PSU with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Jewish Studies. Before joining the research team for the Early Growth and Development Study, I worked on other developmental research projects and focused on finishing up my degrees. For this study, I conduct phone interviews and work with the data from the home visits. I love speaking to all of you and hearing about your experiences. In the future, I hope to pursue my master’s degree in social work, but for now I am enjoying being a part of this study.



Tassie Hajal. I have been a part of this team since the fall of 2007. I graduated from the University of Michigan in 2006 with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and am a 2nd-year graduate student in PSU’s Child Clinical Psychology program. I am interested in studying how the parent–child relationship influences emotional development in infancy and early childhood and how it is related to later child outcomes. Thus, this study is a great match for me! My main duties include leading a team of data coders and conducting phone interviews. I really enjoy talking with all of you and appreciate your willingness to talk with me.

Where Are You? (Participants’ Home States Are in Green)



Trivia

1. In what year did the U.S. Census Bureau include “adopted son/daughter” as a kinship category?
a. 1950 b. 1975 c. 1990 d. 2000
2. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, how many adopted children are in the United States?
a. .75 million/1% b. 1.5 million/2% c. 2.25 million/3% d. 3 million/4%
3. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, which country did the most foreign-born adopted children come from?
a. Russia b. China c. Korea d. Mexico
4. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, were more boys or girls adopted at any age? a. boys b. girls
5. Which member of The Beatles was adopted?
a. John b. Paul c. George d. Ringo
6. Which American billionaire was adopted?
a. Bill Gates b. Steve Jobs c. Martha Stewart d. Donald Trump

Answers: d, b, b, c, b, a, b

Fun Facts

Celebrity Adoptees: Faith Hill, Ray Liotta, and Sarah McLachlan

Celebrity Adoptive Parents: Al Roker, Barbara Walters, Dan Marino, Diane Keaton, George Lucas, Magic Johnson, Meg Ryan, and Steven Spielberg



EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY

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EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY

2008 Newsletter

Stay in Touch!

We appreciate your continued participation in the study. Please call us if you move or change your phone number, and we will send you a \$15 bonus. You can reach us toll-free at 1-866-203-5165. We look forward to scheduling your next interview. Happy Holidays and Best Wishes to you in 2009!

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Greetings

Welcome to the first edition of our annual newsletter! We look forward for this opportunity to share information with you and update you about the progress of the study.

About the Study

The Early Growth and Development Study is a research study of birth parents and adoptive families that was initially funded by a 5-year grant in 2002. During those 5 years (Phase I), we had the opportunity to meet 529 birth mothers, 153 birth fathers, and 384 adoptive families. At the conclusion of Phase I, we were awarded another 5-year grant to recruit additional birth parents and adoptive families (The Early Growth and Development Study-Phase II). The funding agencies believe that our unique and valuable study will continue to educate professionals in the field of child development and those providing adoption services. We hope that you have enjoyed your experience in the study so far. We know how busy everyone can be and appreciate the time you have given to our research!

For The Early Growth and Development Study-Phase II, we began visiting birth parents and adoptive families in December 2007. Since then, our interview team has traveled the country to meet with over 150 birth parents and 50 adoptive families across 33 states. (See the map inside, which outlines the states where the participants reside.) We will update this map in the newsletter each year so you can see how the study is growing.

This study is a large, collaborative project between The Pennsylvania State University, George Washington University, the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and the Oregon Social Learning Center. The lead scientist at each research site has unique expertise. Each year, the newsletter will provide you with information about the types of research being conducted at each of the sites and the background and research interests of the lead investigator at that site. We will also introduce you to members of our recruitment and interview team, whom you might meet during your participation in the study. In this first edition, we would like to introduce you to the lead site: The Pennsylvania State University (see inside).

In the News

In August, our first scientific paper was published from the data collected during The Early Growth and Development Study-Phase I. The publication prompted some press by a National Public Radio reporter living near San Francisco, who interviewed Dr. Leslie Leve and one of the study's participating California adoption agencies. In addition, *Adoptive Families* magazine wrote an article that included some of the data on openness from Phase I of our study in their September/October issue. Links to these reports and articles can be found on our website.

Website

We recently launched our new website. For more information about the study, biographies and pictures of our staff, and links to additional resources, please visit us at www.earlydev.psu.edu