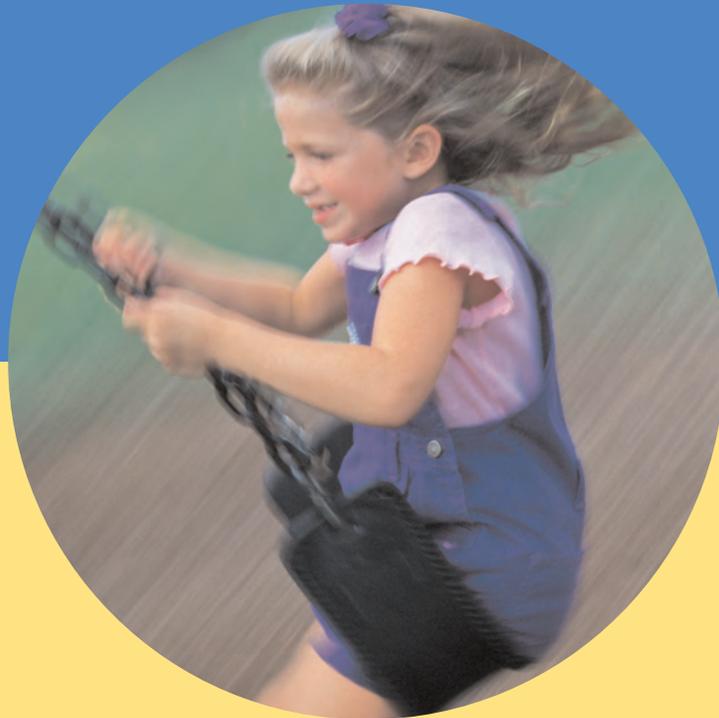


taking flight

Annual Report 2005/06



CUP

Community-University Partnership
for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

“We can all participate in and direct learning and discovery, because we have the same goal: to elevate the human spirit and to improve the lives of citizens.”

– President Indira V. Samarasekera,
University of Alberta

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Mission:

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) is committed to improving the development of children, youth, families, and communities by:

- generating, sharing, and mobilizing new knowledge about child and family development,
- identifying and promoting the use of evidenced-based policies and practices for optimizing child and family development, and
- nurturing a culture, both in the community and the University, in which rigorous research, evaluation, and practice are valued highly as critical components in efforts to understand and optimize development.

A Year to Soar

It's amazing how much can be accomplished in the course of a single year. Twelve months ago, we knew that we were embarking on what could prove to be one of the busiest years of our existence. We also knew that we were ready for the challenge. Since that time, we have completed work on a number of complex research projects, continued our work on several community-based projects and launched Families First Edmonton. We have also undertaken a number of exciting new initiatives, including the Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre and the Knowledge Mobilization Initiative. While we are proud of our accomplishments, we are most excited by the potential and promise that took flight this past year. CUP's 2005-2006 Annual Report is intended to show you what we have done, where we have been, and where we plan to go next. We hope you will join us on the journey.

"While this has been a big year in and of its own for CUP, it's clear that it is a result of the groundwork paved before in previous years."

– Christina Rinaldi

Professor, Department of Educational Psychology,
University of Alberta



Letter from Directors: Highlights from the Past Year

As CUP moved into its sixth year, the vision of its founders came to fruition in ways that they might never have thought possible. The hard work of the first five years is now paying incredible dividends in so many ways. First, the major research projects launched at the beginning of CUP are starting to yield interesting and helpful results. Second, the Families First Edmonton project is into the data-gathering phase and has brought together researchers and practitioners to shape a major policy study on how best to link families to services in the community. And third, CUP has become well known in the community for meaningful research activity. As a result, many community agencies and university faculty members are now contacting CUP to explore partnerships and obtain advice on new projects.

Recent successful grant proposals are enabling CUP to move forward on two new initiatives that will further fulfill its original vision. The first of these is the opening of an Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre. As the importance of the early years becomes more widely recognized, the need for appropriate measurement tools and program evaluation methods has intrigued both the research and practice communities. Members of both communities supported CUP's proposal for funding to open a resource centre to assist researchers and agencies to make good decisions about measurement and evaluation in the early years of childhood. That centre is now on the verge of being open for business – an exciting new venture for CUP!

The second of the new initiatives is in the area of knowledge sharing. In a recent call for proposals, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) invited agencies to propose projects that could close the gap between research and practice. CUP, in partnership with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (ACCFRCR), submitted a proposal to launch the Mobilizing Knowledge About the Development of Children, Youth, and Families (MKAD) Project. On campus, five faculties and the Office of the Vice President (Research) contributed the necessary matching funds to make the proposal viable – a testament to CUP's support from partners on campus! SSHRC made it known from the outset that there would only be ten grants awarded in total across Canada and the CUP/ACCFRCR proposal was chosen. Work has now begun on building the project, which will not only evaluate the effectiveness of various knowledge sharing activities but will also help CUP move forward in expanding the overall capacity of the community to engage in community-based research projects in the future. One of the main thrusts of the project will be to open certificate programs and courses on educating novice researchers and community partners in the practice of community-based research.

The operations of CUP had a somewhat different face during this year. Jeff Bisanz's sabbatical leave meant that Laurie Schnirer and Sue Lynch carried out the partnership administration. In addition, we added a Project Development Officer, a Knowledge Sharing Intern, and an expert Communications Advisor to the CUP team.

The spaces that house CUP have become too small as the number of projects has increased. Thus, as a busy and successful year closes, additional new office space in the Extension Building is being developed as CUP South and will house a number of CUP's functions.

We would like to thank all those who have given of their time, creativity, insights, and efforts to make CUP succeed. Through your efforts, CUP has become a centre well known for its dedication to, and expertise in, supporting the development of children, youth, and families in Edmonton, in Alberta, and beyond.

Sincerely,

Laurie Schnirer, Co-director and Research Associate

Sue Lynch, Co-director

Why It Matters:

Addressing the Research – Practice Gap

Modern society is complex and rapidly changing. These changes impact our economic, social, and cultural systems, as well as our education and government policies, in untold ways. They also create a myriad of challenges for today's children, youth, and families. More than ever, there is a need to build bridges and share knowledge so we can effectively respond to these challenges.

Closing the gap between the university and the community is critical to moving knowledge into practice. We recognize that both the university and the community possess different but equally important expertise in working with children, youth, and families. Strengthening the dialogue between researchers, community practitioners, and policymakers allows them to share their unique skills and knowledge and learn from one another. It also ensures that we are utilizing evidence-based practices and engaging in meaningful research.

We have been working hard to close this research-practice gap since our inception. Today, six years later, we remain committed to building relationships among diverse organizations and disciplines to ensure that knowledge gleaned from rigorous research is shared effectively. We provide opportunities for groups and individuals who may otherwise never interact to discuss important issues and undertake collaborative activities.

We work to make research relevant and accessible to our community partners by promoting and fostering interactive knowledge sharing. We also work with our university partners to ensure that they are supported in their community-based research efforts.

Our Focus

Our work to close the research-practice gap focuses on three critical areas: research, knowledge mobilization, and lifelong learning. We believe that building capacity in these areas will enable the university and the community to work together towards a brighter future for children, youth, and families.

Research

Communities and municipal, provincial, and federal governments already spend millions of dollars on programs for children, youth, and families – but how do we know these programs and policies are effective and efficient? Rigorous, relevant research on the development of children, youth, and families allows us to understand what is needed for healthy development and allocate an increasingly-limited pool of resources towards what will work best.

Traditional discipline-based research is often criticized as occurring in isolation, without consultation or collaboration with those in the community who work directly with children, youth, and families. This has sometimes resulted in research being seen as abstract, theoretical endeavors that have limited application to actual services and policies for children, youth, and families.

We are dedicated to creating opportunities for researchers, policymakers, and service providers to work together on research that explores the healthy development of children, youth, and families. This collaborative approach takes into account each group's expertise, resulting in research and knowledge that is relevant and can be utilized in maximizing healthy development.

Knowledge Mobilization

There is an increasing need for knowledge about the development of children, youth, and families to quickly and efficiently move into policy and practice. Unfortunately, sharing this knowledge is not as simple as making information available via print materials such as technical reports on research projects.

Researchers communicate with each other in highly technical terms that make technical reports and peer-reviewed journals inaccessible to many policymakers and service providers. Alternative knowledge sharing strategies can make it easier for people who have not been trained in research methodology and statistics to understand the research and its meaning.

Service providers have extensive knowledge about the people they serve – knowledge that is critical to understanding how development occurs for different populations in different settings. Their unique insights and observations often go unnoticed as they lack the time and resources to share them with policymakers and researchers.

Policymakers are bombarded by information, but have little time and resources available to engage in knowledge sharing. They may also be subject to political pressure to allocate limited funding to particular programs and not others. Evidence-based decision making is essential in determining which programs and services can have the biggest impact, but it can only occur if researchers, service providers, and policymakers work together.

CUP is dedicated to creating networks among researchers, service providers, and policymakers to ensure that knowledge and expertise can be shared and understood. We believe that by creating opportunities for knowledge sharing that respect and acknowledge different perspectives and expertise, ongoing dialogue and collaboration will naturally follow.

Lifelong Learning

Researchers, service providers, and policymakers can all benefit from ongoing learning opportunities. Researchers can improve their understanding of the current issues and challenges that children, youth, and families face, so that they can formulate relevant research questions. Service providers and policymakers can increase their understanding of the research process so that they can be critical consumers of research, and utilize research findings when it is relevant to their programs and policies.

Beyond learning, researchers, service providers, and policymakers also have knowledge and expertise that they can share with one another. Recognizing that there is always more to learn, and that we all have something to teach, will increase everyone's capacity to work towards the shared goal of ensuring healthy development for all children, youth, and families.

"It is critical to find ways to make information available in an easily accessible fashion for people; CUP is involved in both translation and transmission."

– Jane Drummond

Vice Provost, Health Sciences Council,
University of Alberta



How We Work

Structure

Our organizational structure includes a core secretariat that acts under the direction of our steering committee, with the Director of CUP reporting to a committee consisting of the Health Sciences Council (which includes the Deans of six faculties and a representative from Capital Health) and the Dean of Education.

For a list of our steering committee members, please see page 14. For more on the core secretariat, please see our bios on page 12.

Consulting, Brokering, and Leadership

CUP's Secretariat supports research, knowledge mobilization, and lifelong learning by engaging in three central activities: consulting, brokering, and leadership.

Consulting

Making connections, building relationships, and creating opportunities for collaboration between the community and the university is essential to our success. To facilitate this networking, we are continuously gathering and sharing knowledge through our participation in both formal and ad hoc meetings, committees, consultations, conferences, and CUP's formal communication vehicles (including, but not limited to our newsletter, *CUPdate*, and our website).

Staff involvement with these varied communication and knowledge sharing opportunities allows us to identify current issues facing child, youth, and family development in our community, and directs how we engage both community stakeholders and university researchers in finding solutions. We act proactively to share knowledge within CUP's network and also respond directly to requests for help – making knowledge that arises from research accessible to all stakeholders.

Brokering

Successful research collaborations between the community and the university requires trust between partners, an awareness of what potential participants bring in terms of resources, desires, and challenges, as well as effective communication.

We support the development and sustainability of these partnerships by helping to find appropriate partners on and off campus, identifying potential sources for funding, reviewing research proposals, and assisting with the ethics review process, as well as assisting with collaborative projects in whatever way possible.

Leadership

Beyond CUP's consulting and brokering role in research collaborations, we also initiate and undertake collaborative community-based research on issues related to the development of children, youth, and families. When we agree to lead a project, we are involved in proposal writing, securing funds, hiring staff, and coordinating research projects from start to finish.

Beyond Research: CUP's Current Activities

As in prior years, CUP is heavily involved in a number of research projects. (For detailed descriptions of our research activities, please see the Research section beginning on page 15). However, this past year included three new activities that are more focused on the knowledge mobilization and lifelong learning components: a knowledge sharing initiative, a resource centre, and the securing of funds for a large knowledge mobilization initiative.

Knowledge Sharing Initiative: Developing Guidelines and Policy Recommendations for Enhanced Knowledge Sharing of Community-Based research on Social Development Initiatives

CUP is developing a set of knowledge sharing guidelines and recommendations that can be used to increase awareness and understanding of community-based research findings. This work will result in a knowledge sharing handbook that will summarize knowledge sharing strategies and discuss their application and effectiveness in relation to research, services, and policies related to children, youth, and families. A list of recommendations for agencies, institutions, and policymakers on issues related to facilitating knowledge sharing and societal engagement is also being created, and a presentation for members of the local National Crime Prevention Strategy staff related to lessons learned from this work will be given when the handbook and list of recommendations are complete. As CUP continues to undertake knowledge sharing activities, this handbook will be updated.

Associated with this initiative is the creation of an internship position, funded by the Max Bell Foundation. CUP's communication needs are unique and require not only traditional communications expertise, but also knowledge of research and the university structure. In response to this challenge, we created an internship position to train someone who already possesses an understanding of research and the university to coordinate our communication and knowledge sharing activities. Lily Tsui joined CUP in September as our Knowledge Sharing Intern.

Under the guidance of a contracted communications expert, our Knowledge Sharing Intern has developed a communications plan for CUP, and is working on a number of ongoing projects in addition to the above-mentioned handbook. She is currently coordinating the re-development of CUP's website, which will be a more interactive place for CUP's partners and other interested parties to obtain information and engage with each other. Both the handbook and the website is expected to be complete in summer 2006.

Funding:

National Crime Prevention Strategy	\$50,000
Max Bell Foundation	\$36,142

"What is really unique about CUP is their ability to make research very understandable and to show its value to the community."

– Susan Coward

Director, Community Building South, City of Edmonton

Early Childhood Measurement and Evaluation Resource Centre (ECMERC)

ECMERC is a new resource centre for clinicians, community program staff and managers, evaluators, funders, researchers, and policymakers to assist them in understanding the purposes, use, and limitations of early childhood measurement tools. It was created in response to requests from our community partners for a local resource in addressing early childhood measurement issues.

Over the past several years, CUP has been heavily involved in projects designed to improve supports for child care centres and to evaluate screening tools used in these centres. The development of ECMERC will allow us to continue to address those issues, as well as allow those in the child care community to a) have access to relevant and appropriate assessment resources; b) increase their knowledge about the use, value, and limitations of various assessment practices and tools; c) have increased and timely access to appropriate expertise and consultations regarding general assessment practices and specific tools; and d) engage in ongoing dialogue with measurement experts, researchers and policymakers to improve understanding of assessment in practice and theory.

Funding:

Human Resources Social Development Canada: Social Development Partnership Program, Early Learning and Childcare, \$268,023

Mobilizing Knowledge About the Development of Children, Youth, and Families: Focus on Knowledge Transformation and Learning (MKAD)

Funding was recently secured for the MKAD initiative, which is now currently in development. The MKAD initiative is made up of three components that complement one another:

Evaluating knowledge mobilization strategies

In our work with collaborative community and research teams, one question emerges again and again: How can projects be carried out in such a way that maximizes learning for policymakers, program developers, practitioners, and other potential stakeholders to increase the likelihood that the research may result in better practices?

Our search for the answer will begin with evaluating the effectiveness of various knowledge mobilization strategies to determine what needs to be taken into account during a project to maximize its impact.

Community-based research workshops for community members

Our work with the many agencies and people who work with children, youth, and families has given us many opportunities to consult with the community on how we can best facilitate community-university collaborations. Many have expressed a desire to increase their capacity to participate knowledgeably in research and evaluation projects. The active participation of community representatives in community-based research is critical to the project's success. It not only optimizes the value of the research, but also the effectiveness of subsequent knowledge mobilization activities. That is why in addition to facilitating collaborations between the community and the university, it is also important to address this desire for increasing capacity.

We are currently in the planning stages of a workshop program on community-based research open to all community members. This program will provide continuing education opportunities and practical research skills training for interested community stakeholders.

Graduate certificate program in community-based research

Both our community partners and researchers that have engaged in community-based research collaborations agree that traditional, discipline-based graduate education usually does not prepare novice researchers effectively for participating in collaborative research. Expertise required to engage effectively in collaborative work include (but are not limited to) the ability to manage large-scale projects, coordinating with interdisciplinary research teams, and political savvy.

It is our hope that a graduate certificate program in community-based research can address this gap in graduate training. This program will allow students from diverse disciplines to obtain knowledge and experience needed to engage effectively in community-based research and knowledge mobilization on and off campus. We will be incorporating existing courses from different departments, developing new courses for this program, and providing practical community-based research experiences for students. The development and execution of this program will be guided by input from both researchers and community stakeholders.

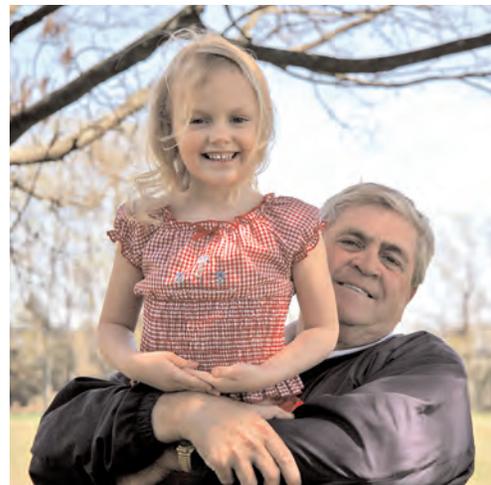
Funding:

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council	\$299,704
Alberta Centre for Children, Family and Community Research	\$120,000
Office of the Vice President (Research)	\$90,000
Faculty of Rehabilitation medicine	\$18,732
Faculty of Arts	\$18,000
Faculty of Education	\$18,000
Faculty of Nursing	\$18,000
Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry	\$18,000

"The learning initiatives that CUP is developing will help improve the university's ability to train students that hopefully will graduate and be immediately able to give back to the community."

– Christina Rinaldi

Professor, Department of Educational Psychology,
University of Alberta



Looking Ahead

Goals and Priorities

As we enter our sixth year of operation we are exceptionally proud of what we have accomplished. We have many collaborative projects that are either completed or in progress, with new activities constantly in development. We take particular pride in the fact that most of our projects are initiated by community stakeholders, and involve the expertise of community practitioners, policymakers, and university researchers. We believe each of these projects can improve community programs and advance fundamental knowledge about child, youth, and family development, and look forward to another year of active involvement in research activities.

Our commitment to research excellence has resulted in a number of community-based research projects and a growing reputation in the community as an expert resource and valuable partner. While research will undoubtedly always remain one of our top priorities, we have in recent years recognized a growing need to increase our emphasis on knowledge mobilization and lifelong learning to successfully fulfill our mission.

Future Objectives:

1. To improve use of research findings in community and government programs and policies.
2. To increase the capacity for community leaders and policymakers to use evidence-based decision making when designing and evaluating programs and policies related to child, youth, and family development.
3. To evaluate knowledge mobilization strategies used to engage community leaders, policymakers and researchers.
4. To increase the capacity of graduate students and novice researchers to participate in community-based research and evaluation.

We expect to fulfill these objectives through the MKAD initiative (described on page 7) and our knowledge sharing initiatives, and look forward to seeing what this year will bring.



"I think that in the next year or two we'll see even more growth, we're at the beginning of an explosion, and on the verge of becoming an important player in the community and on campus."

– Kelly Shaw
Project Development Officer, CUP

Financials

This past year, CUP's unprecedented growth is reflected in the financial picture. We managed over \$1 million dollars in project funding and just under a quarter of a million in operating revenue (a 23% increase from the previous year). As in other years, the funds go primarily towards staffing needs, accounting for 86% of all costs incurred by CUP. CUP staff are critical for the development, implementation, and monitoring of all CUP activities.

CUP's expenses and revenue can be broken down into two categories – funds used to support core operations, and funds related to specific projects. This year we also looked at alternate ways to fund core operations, and ways to address our sustainable funding needs. We often use time-limited project funding to develop our capacity at the core secretariat to fulfill our goals: for example, we were delighted that both the Max Bell Foundation and the National Crime Prevention Strategy provided project funding for us to increase our knowledge mobilization capacity. Our intent is to test new strategies with external funding, and if successful, incorporate them into our core operations the following year. We will continue to explore new ways to fund our activities in the future, as well as continue our search for sustainable support for our operating costs.

For 2005-2006, contributions to CUP's core operations were provided by the Health Sciences Council (University of Alberta), Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Edmonton Community Foundation, Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools, Edmonton & Area Child and Family Services Authority-Region 6, Capital Health, and an anonymous donor. Some of these funds are earmarked for expenditures over two years, including the addition of staff as well as a number of knowledge mobilization activities. This current year our operating revenues were equally split among the academic, community and government sectors, mirroring our efforts to link these three sectors together in the area of children, youth, and families.

Contributions for projects administered by CUP come from numerous sources. The distribution of these costs across expense categories, combined for these projects, is illustrated in the figure on the following page. (Full financial statements are available upon request.)

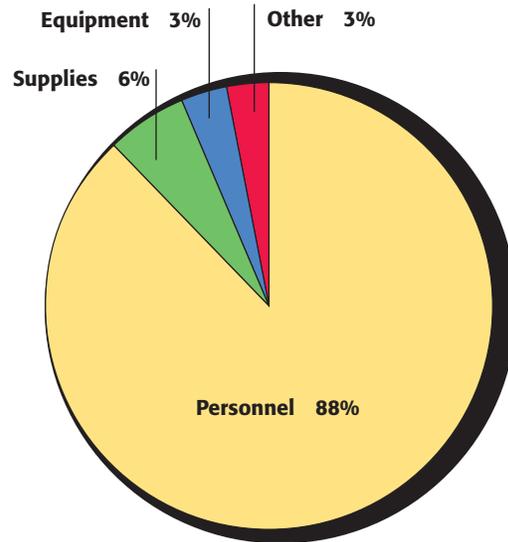
"They've proven their value to the community and to researchers; with the right support and funding, there's really no limit to what CUP can accomplish."

– Gloria Chalmers
Edmonton Public Schools



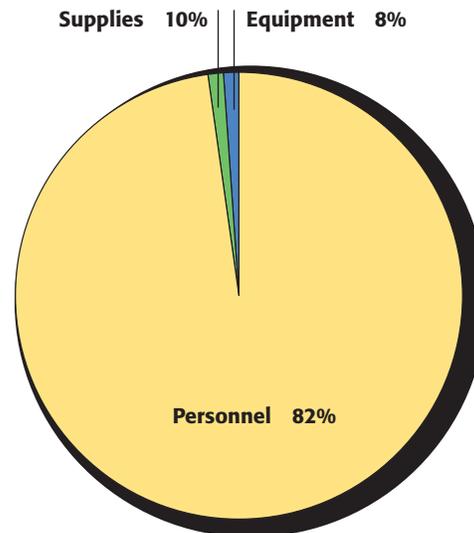
Project Expenditures

■ Personnel Costs	\$ 460,379.60
■ Supplies, Communications, Travel	30,584.80
■ Equipment	17,396.47
■ Other	14,765.47



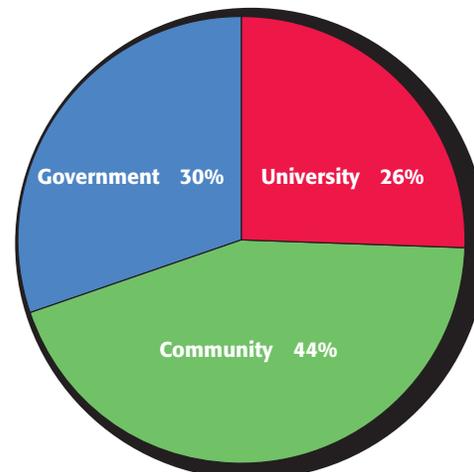
Operating Expenditures

■ Personnel Costs	\$ 144,859.00
■ Supplies, Communications, Travel	17,992.47
■ Equipment	14,624.72



Operating Revenue

■ University	\$ 62,000
■ Community	107,031.42
■ Government	73,000.00



People of CUP

Jeff Bisanz – Director (on sabbatical July 2005 to June 2006)

In 1998, Jeff began to work with the community and university members who developed CUP, and subsequently became the first Director in July 2000. He is a developmental psychologist and a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alberta. His own research focuses on cognitive development, with emphases on mathematical cognition, scientific thinking, and instruction.

Current projects include research on the development of arithmetic knowledge and skill in preschoolers and school-aged children, on how people read and interpret reports of scientific research, and on measurement methods for use on school achievement data. He also teaches an undergraduate course on Applied Research in Developmental Psychology in which students serve as volunteers in community agencies and schools as part of the course.

Prior to his current role at CUP, Jeff was the Director of the Centre for Research in Child Development and Coordinator of Applied Developmental Sciences in the Department of Psychology.

Laurie Schnirer – Acting Co-Director/Research Associate

Laurie joined CUP in July 2000, after completing her doctorate in Learning, Development, and Assessment in the Faculty of Education. She is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, and for the past six years she has been involved in various community-based research projects on child and adolescent development. Her own research has been in the area of vulnerable youth and adolescent sexual decision making. She has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses on child development and educational psychology in the Departments of Educational Psychology and Psychology. Prior to her academic career, she was a secondary school teacher and plain language coordinator at Alberta Health.

Her role at CUP involves: a) facilitating multi-disciplinary, applied research by coordinating research projects and writing grant proposals for funding support; b) developing liaisons and maintaining effective communication among potential collaborators in the community, government, and the University; c) gathering and analyzing information from University and community organizations about research goals and interests; and d) strategic planning, policy development, problem solving, and budgeting.

While Jeff is on sabbatical, Laurie, along with Sue Lynch, has been serving as Co-director in his absence.

Susan Lynch – Acting Co-Director/Liaison Development

Sue Lynch is currently an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Elementary Education. She has a background in Early Childhood Education and has worked in public education in many capacities over the past 35 years. Her background includes 14 years of teaching in both elementary schools and at the University of Alberta. She has 8 years of experience in public school administration as both a school-based administrator and in the central administration as an associate superintendent. Sue worked for the Alberta Government in the Department of Education (formerly the Department of Learning) for 13 years in a number of capacities, most recently as Assistant Deputy Minister, until her retirement in 2001.

Since that time, Sue has been involved in a number of activities including Director of the Child Study Centre at the University of Alberta. She has taught a course on Educational Reform in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and is involved in a number of committees, boards, and research activities. Sue, along with Laurie, has been serving as Co-director while Jeff is on sabbatical.

Miranda Diakiw – Information Coordinator

Miranda joined CUP in July 2001. Previously she was working for a local industrial software company as their marketing coordinator. Miranda brings with her graphic and web design experience, database design and maintenance, and marketing strategy coordination as well as administration. She is responsible for many of the day to day tasks for CUP such as administration of human resources and finance.

Kelly Shaw – Project Development Officer

Kelly joined CUP in December 2001. She has a Bachelor's in Zoology and a Master's in Environmental Psychology. Prior to joining CUP, she was in Victoria, B.C, where she worked for the provincial government for several years in the Ministry for Children and Families and in the Ministry of Finance.

Kelly has recently shifted within CUP from being the Project Coordinator for the In-School Mentoring (ISM) project to Project Development Officer. In this position, she will be facilitating and assisting with new and developing projects for CUP.

Lily Tsui – Knowledge Sharing Intern/Facilitator

Lily joined CUP in September 2005 for a knowledge sharing internship (for more on this internship, see page 6). She has a Bachelor's in psychology, and prior to joining CUP had worked as a research assistant at the Civil Justice Forum on a research project examining the experiences of people involved with the civil justice system, and as a projects assistant at the Edmonton Mental Health Clinic.

Lily is currently working with us as the Knowledge Sharing Facilitator to continue developing CUP's communication vehicles and knowledge sharing activities.

"It will be amazing to see what changes occur here and how much we'll be able to achieve... it's an exciting time to be at CUP, to see where CUP can go and how I can be a part of that."

– Kelly Shaw
Project Development Officer, CUP

Steering Committee

Our steering committee consists of both university and community representatives that meet once a month with the secretariat to direct CUP's activities.

Gloria Chalmers (Co-Chair)	Edmonton Public Schools
Jane Drummond (Co-Chair)	Faculty of Nursing & Health Sciences Council, University of Alberta
Rhonda Breitreuz	Children's Services, Government of Alberta
Al Cook	Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta
Martin Garber-Conrad	Edmonton Community Foundation
Darrell Dancause	Edmonton & Area Child and Family Services – Region 6
Barbara Dart	Community Building and Investment, United Way – Alberta Capital Region
Lionel Dibden	Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta
Michael Farris	Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation
Jane Hewes	Early Childhood Development, Grant MacEwan College (on sabbatical)
Susan Lynch	Child Study Centre, University of Alberta
Linda Phillips	Centre for Research in Literacy, University of Alberta
Delmarie Sadoway	Community Health Services, Capital Health
Carol Watson	Community Services, City of Edmonton
Brenda Willis	Edmonton Catholic Schools
Deanna Williamson	Human Ecology, University of Alberta (on sabbatical)
Doug Wilson	Public Health Sciences, University of Alberta

We would like to thank Tricia Lirette (Grant MacEwan College) and Lori Harach (Human Ecology, University of Alberta) for their participation this year on the Steering Committee while Jane Hewes and Deanna Williamson were on sabbatical.

"CUP's staff are incredible and the way they just won't give up when it comes to getting research dollars to support community research is inspiring."

– Barbara Dart

Vice President, Community Building and Investments,
United Way – Alberta Capital Region



Research Projects

Completed

Head Start Child Care (HSCC) Evaluation Study

The HSCC was one of several initiatives in the Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services Authority – Region 6 funded through the ECEDI. With funding from ECEDI, the program began operating in August 2002.

The HSCC initiative was created to provide frontline supports to child care programs that serve a large number of at-risk children and families. The initiative includes four resource teams that operate out of Alex Taylor School and provide support to five centre-based child cares, one full day child care, and one day home agency that supervises 27 day homes.

The evaluation study examined the use of the four resource teams as a support strategy within the different child care settings. The research proceeded in four phases:

Phase 1: (August 1 to December 31, 2002) Program and research developers were consulted and an initial research plan was created.

Phase 2: (January 1 to March 31, 2003) The plan was revised after consultation with the program and child care staff, and methods and measures were developed, tested, revised, and implemented.

Phase 3 and 4: (April 1 to September 30, 2005) The research regarding program implementation and effectiveness was conducted, and the effectiveness of the program in achieving stated goals were evaluated.

The results of this study have been disseminated via a report and eleven separate presentations:

Five presentations were given in 2003 on the interim results of the study to the operations committee, the ECEDI Steering Committee, the program team, and the faculty and students of the Educational Psychology Department at the University of Alberta, as well as a public presentation at the Alberta Early Years Conference.

Six presentations on the final outcomes of the study were given to the operations committee, the ECEDI Steering Committee, the Capital Health team, the partners group and to CUP's Steering Committee.

Information from this study has already been used by program personnel to improve program delivery.

Researcher: Darcy Fleming (CUP)

Research Assistants: Michelle Anderson
Margaret Goldberg
Sari Honkanen
Sima Shajjiei

Funding: Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, c/o Faculty of Law,
University of Calgary

Phase 1: \$7,195

Phase 2: \$15,555

Phase 3: \$38,989

Phase 4: \$19,950

Diagnosis Inventory for Screening Children (DISC) Validation

The DISC is an individually administered developmental assessment tool that is frequently used in early intervention and education programs in Alberta as well as the rest of Canada. However, there is very little research to support the use of test results for screening, program planning, or the measurement of treatment effects. The purpose of this validation study was to examine the sensitivity and specificity of the DISC as a screening tool for children in Head Start programs.

The results of the study did not support the use of the DISC as an evaluation tool for children over the age of four, and raised questions about the usefulness of DISC as a screening tool for programs that have clinical staff available to conduct more thorough assessments of children's functioning.

As part of this study's dissemination, presentations have been given to the ECDI Steering Committee, interagency Head Start executive operators and directors, ABC Head Start clinical staff, the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, faculty and students in the Department of Educational Psychology, and at a Developmental Lunch hosted by the Department of Psychology. Findings from this study was also part of a Developmental Screening Workshop co-hosted by CUP and ECDI in February 2006.

Findings from this study has been invaluable at a forum discussion on assessment at the Alberta Early Years Conference and in providing consultation services to ABC Head Start, Clareview Head Start, and Early Head Start staff and directors. Many Head Start programs have made changes to the assessment procedures and chosen new measurement tools as a consequence of this validation study.

Research Team: Darcy Fleming, Principal Investigator (CUP)
Jeff Bisanz (CUP and Psychology, University of Alberta)
Michelle Craig (Head Start)
Peter Faid (Community Services Consulting, Ltd.)
Mark Gierl (Educational Psychology, University of Alberta)
Jane Hewes (Grant MacEwan College)
Sue Lynch (CUP and Child Study Centre, University of Alberta)
Kelly Shaw (CUP)

Research Assistants: Jessie Salter and Xuan Tan

Funding: Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, c/o Faculty of Law,
University of Calgary

\$19,979

About ECDI

The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) is a joint commitment by the federal and provincial governments to provide new resources to support early learning and care in communities across Canada.

In Progress

Families First Edmonton (FFE)

A critical and persistent challenge faced by Canadian policymakers and service providers is to promote access to the determinants of health and social development for low-income families in a proactive, efficacious, and cost-effective manner. Because the issues facing these families are rooted in an array of social, economic, and political conditions that extend beyond the control of any one service sector, government and community systems must collaborate to coordinate programs.

Families First Edmonton (FFE) is a community-government-university collaboration formed to test the social, health, and economic impact of four service-delivery models on low-income children, their families, and their communities. The purpose of this project is to describe the nature and effectiveness of the FFE collaboration at the policy, planning, and service-delivery levels.

In April 2003, CUP was asked to develop the FFE project. A research team consisting of nineteen members from across the country was assembled, and a logic model and conceptual framework was developed. Research questions and associated design issues were finalized. In March and April of 2005, CUP secured the full amount of funding needed to implement FFE. FFE was officially launched on November 1, 2005.

CUP's role in FFE is to facilitate and coordinate the research component. This includes the coordination of the research team and all research administration including the hiring of the research coordinators, research administrator, research assistants, data collection supervisor, data collectors, and interpreters for data collection.

Findings from this project will provide management and policymakers with detailed descriptions of the skills, processes, technology, and structures necessary for collaboration, especially around delivery of service to low-income families. Advances in these areas are essential for informing decision makers about collaborative efforts to improve health-care policy and optimize delivery of health services for low-income families across the country.

FFE is currently in its recruitment phase and has begun data collection. Due to the scope of the project, this summary is a brief description of the research component only; please go to www.familiesfirstedmonton.ualberta.ca for more detailed information.

Research Team:	University of Alberta:	McMaster University:
	Jane Drummond, Principal Investigator, (Nursing)	Gina Browne, (Nursing)
	Jeff Bisanz (CUP and Psychology)	
	Robin Everall (Educational Psychology)	University of Calgary:
	Konrad Fassbender (Health Economics)	Richard Feehan (Social Work)
	Terry Klassen (Pediatrics)	Erin Gray (Social Work)
	Kathy Kovacs-Burns (Nursing)	
	Maria Mayan (CUP)	University of Waterloo
	Barb Paulson (Educational Psychology)	Ron McCarville (Recreation and
	Linda Reutter (Nursing)	Leisure Studies)
	Laurie Schnirer (CUP and Educational Psychology)	
	Berna Skrypnek (Human Ecology)	
	John Spence (Physical Education and Recreation)	
	Deanna Williamson (Human Ecology)	
	Natasha Wiebe (Medicine)	
	Douglas Wilson (Public Health Sciences)	

Funding: Canadian Institutes of Health Research: \$2,457,447 (March 2005 – March 2011)
Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research: Programs in Health Services: \$869,960
Canadian Health Services Research Foundation and Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (1 to 1 matched funding): \$197,954 (November 2004 – November 2006)

In-School Mentoring (ISM)

In November 2000, CUP was invited to submit a proposal to evaluate the new citywide literacy-based ISM program. This program was developed and delivered by Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area in collaboration with the Centre for Family Literacy.

The evaluation plan was divided into two phases: Phase 1 focuses on the implementation of ISM and Phase 2 focuses on “mentoring-in-practice” and subsequent outcomes.

Phase 1 was completed in December 2001. Results provided information on program design, goals and delivery, development of relationships, communication, program changes, impact and improvement, overall satisfaction, and outcome evaluation. Phase 2 of the research began in fall 2002 and is expected to be completed in August 2006. Data analysis is currently underway.

Knowledge dissemination activities will take in place in summer 2006 and a final report will be available in August 2006. We expect that the results of the project will yield valuable information on the benefits of mentoring and how the ISM program can better serve all those involved.

Research Team:	Jeff Bisanz, Principal Investigator (CUP and Psychology, University of Alberta) Jose de Costa (Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta) Julia Ellis (Elementary Education, University of Alberta) Rauno Parrila (Educational Psychology, University of Alberta) Christina Rinaldi (Educational Psychology, University of Alberta) Phyllis Schneider (Speech Pathology/Audiology) Laurie Schnirer (CUP and Educational Psychology, University of Alberta) Stanley Varnhagen (Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta)
Research Manager:	John Burger (Alberta Learning)
Research Coordinator:	Kelly Shaw (CUP)
Research Assistants:	Nyla de Los Santos Andrea Fragomeni Nicole Green Janelle Hansen Geoff Hollis Sari Honkanen Lisa Kohel Cathy Crocket Moore Roslyn Morgan Denis Mujibi Linda Pasmore Jessica Sherman Laren Starko Christine Vandenburghe Christine Welton Cynthia Yeoh
Funding:	Edmonton Community Foundation, Alberta Learning, anonymous donor, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area \$320,900 (September 2002 to March 2005)

Capacity Building as Crime Prevention: A Formative Analysis of Processes and Outcomes in an Employment-Based Social Development Program

Kids in the Hall (KITH) is a community program designed to help youth at-risk who are from abusive and poverty-stricken backgrounds, have substance abuse problems, prior involvement in criminal activity, and possess minimal marketable skills, education, and work experience. The program is designed to address some of the root causes of crime by providing counseling in life management and career planning, as well as help youth gain the work experience necessary to find useful employment.

The evaluation of KITH is a collaborative, community-based effort that combines the expertise and experience of front-line workers, program planners, and researchers from the University of Alberta. The focus of the research is to investigate the effectiveness of the social-developmental approach to intervention and crime prevention through the KITH program.

Data collection began in May 2003, and the Edmonton Police Service joined as a project partner in 2004 to analyze data related to KITH participants. In August 2004, we decided to extend data collection for an additional year in order to increase our sample size. Data collection ended in July 2005, and data analysis is currently underway. We believe that the end results will yield valuable knowledge regarding a) program evaluation frameworks in a community setting; b) the development of at-risk youth; and c) best practices for optimizing similar intervention programs aimed at reducing criminal behavior in youth.

Research Team:	Jeff Bisanz (CUP and Psychology, University of Alberta) Nancy Galambos (Psychology, University of Alberta) Tim Hartnagel (Sociology, University of Alberta) Laurie Schnirer (CUP and Educational Psychology, University of Alberta)
Research Coordinators:	Leslie Mackey (August 2002 to July 2004) Jessie Salter (August 2004 to July 2005)
Research Assistants:	Andrea Dalton Diane Dennis Jessie Salter
Community Partner:	Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation
Funding:	National Crime Prevention Strategy \$197,610 (April 1, 2002 to September 30, 2004) \$49,436 (January 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006)

"CUP has done an excellent job of bringing researchers and the community together...they've not only bridged the gap between the two, but they have also helped the community understand research in a much better way."

– Barbara Dart

Vice President, Community Building and Investments,
United Way – Alberta Capital Region

Early Childhood Development Community Mapping Project (EDCCM)

If community members and service agencies have access to information on early childhood development in their neighbourhoods, do they find the information useful in planning for change and for improved early childhood outcomes?

The EDCCM project was designed to answer this question by gathering and mapping information related to the development of young children, and to examine the possible links between the developmental trajectories of preschoolers in the city and the services available to support their families.

The project now has maps showing early childhood development data (gathered with the Early Development Instrument) for 29 of the 210 neighborhoods in Edmonton. Also, maps for many of the demographic characteristics of those neighborhoods have been completed. Work is currently underway to develop an atlas of community services maps for families in the neighborhoods and to examine the data for patterns that may explain the variation in the child development profiles for each location.

Of the neighborhoods that have early childhood development data, several have been identified in having unexpected patterns in the developmental profiles. Shortly, on-site studies of these neighborhoods will commence. Full reports for the 29 neighborhoods will be produced and provided to groups who live in or provide services at those locations. Follow up data will be gathered and analyzed to determine the usefulness of such information for community planning and development activities.

Project Partnership Team:	Alberta Education Capital Health City of Edmonton Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services – Region 6 Edmonton Catholic Schools Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation Edmonton Public Schools Success by 6 United Way of Edmonton
Project Coordinator:	Sue Lynch (CUP and Child Study Centre, University of Alberta)
Social Geographers:	Leanne DiMarcello and Michelle King
Funding:	Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services – Region 6: \$232,605 Edmonton Community Foundation \$90,524 Capital Health Authority \$20,000 United Way of Edmonton \$10,000 Edmonton Public Schools \$9,807

"The more we know about real results, real outcomes, and the quality and features of programs for children, youth, and families, the stronger the programs will be."

– Al Cook

Dean, Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta

Strategies for Critically Appraising Children's Health Web Resources

The World Wide Web has become a primary source of information for researchers, clinicians, and families on a wide range of issues related to children's health and development. However, the Web lacks safeguards such as scientific review, guidelines for information access and dissemination, and accreditation criteria. As a result, information from the Web varies widely in terms of credibility, accuracy, and currency.

The goals of this research study are to a) investigate critical appraisal strategies of various types of Web users; b) develop Web resources for several child health-related concerns; c) educate different types of Web users in appropriate critical appraisal strategies; and d) investigate the effectiveness of these resources and strategies in assisting users to critically appraise child health Web resources.

Research Team: Connie Varnhagen, Principal Investigator (Psychology, University of Alberta)
Jeff Bisanz (CUP and Psychology, University of Alberta)
Terry Klassen (Pediatrics, University of Alberta)
Bonnie Sadler Takach (Art and Design, University of Alberta)
Laurie Schnirer (CUP and Educational Psychology, University of Alberta)

Research Assistants: Heather Cuthbertson
Jason Daniels
Peggie McCrae
Sylvia Peskes

Funding: Canadian Institute of Health Research (Knowledge Translation grant)
\$293,000 (April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2007)

"Creating policies with no basis in research, can be problematic from both a cost-effectiveness and ethical perspective. Research allows us to anticipate those issues and make the best possible use of resources."

– Rhonda Breikritz

Senior Manager, Children's Services, Government of Alberta

Mother Earth Children's Charter School (MECCS) Longitudinal Study

Aboriginal children often face many challenges in school, including low teacher expectations and academic difficulties. The traditional European school curriculum focuses on logical-mathematic and verbal intelligence, and fails to address the skills of Aboriginal children.

MECCS, the first and only Aboriginal Charter School in Alberta, aims to provide culturally compatible schooling to Aboriginal children in Northern Alberta. The school addresses Aboriginal children's unique learning styles by being flexible and sensitive to students' needs and enhances learning by identifying and enhancing students' unique strengths. The MECCS curriculum includes modifications to instructional practice, classroom organization, and motivational management that are designed to meet the educational, cultural, health, and spiritual needs of Aboriginal children.

Educational level is positively associated with socio-economic status and income, both of which are key determinants of health. Education contributes to health by providing children and their families with the knowledge and skills needed for problem solving and by giving them a sense of control over their life circumstances. This innovative approach to Aboriginal children's education, if successful, will provide a model for the development of culturally compatible education for Aboriginal children in Alberta and beyond.

This study is evaluating the efficacy of culturally compatible education as provided by MECCS on the mental and physical health of Aboriginal children in Alberta. The research is currently in the data collection phase.

Research Team: Lola Baydala, Principle Investigator (Pediatrics, University of Alberta & Misericordia Community Hospital and Health Centre)
 Jeff Bisanz (CUP and Psychology, University of Alberta)
 Merle Kennedy (Misericordia Community Hospital and Health Centre)
 Nicole Letourneau (Nursing, University of Alberta)
 Marni Pearce (Misericordia Community Hospital and Health Centre)
 Carmen Rasmussen (Psychology, University of Alberta)
 Jody Sherman (Psychology, University of Alberta)
 Eric Wikman (Educational Psychology, University of Alberta & Misericordia Community Hospital and Health Centre)

Research Assistants: June Birch
 Julianna Charchun

Funding: Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Aboriginal People's Health: Opportunity for New Researchers
 \$210,177 (2004 – 2006)

"The things we produce are not concrete objects but rather ways of learning from each other that create health and well-being"

– Jane Drummond

Vice Provost, Health Sciences Council, University of Alberta



“Through CUP, members of the university can participate in the community and the community can participate in research; this combination is more powerful than either one alone.”

– Al Cook

Dean, Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta



“This sort of organization is still rare in North America; this makes CUP a leader not only here and in the immediate surrounding area but also among universities nationally.”

– Christina Rinaldi

Professor, Department of Educational Psychology,
University of Alberta



Community-University Partnership
for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

#306 Campus Tower
8625-112 Street
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 1K8

T: 780.492.6177
F: 780.492.2874
E: cup@ualberta.ca
W: www.cup.ualberta.ca