SSECR

Swiss Society for Early Childhood Research

6th Annual Meeting

January 21st and 22nd, 2025

"Growing up in the Digital Age "

Abstract book

Swiss Society for Early Childhood Research

Contact

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Registration https://www.conftool.org/ssecr2024

SSECR Full members	200 CHF
SSECR Junior members	100 CHF
SSECR Associated members	200 CHF
SSECR Non-members	250 CHF
BA and MA students	30 CHF

Conference Venue

UPK | University Psychiatric Clinics
Wilhelm Klein-Strasse 27, 4002 Basel

Date: Tuesday, 21/Jan/2025

10:00am - 11:00am	**SIG Perinatal Health Meeting**
11:00am - 12:00pm	**SIG Play Meeting**
12:00pm - 1:00pm	**SIG Neurocognitive Development Meeting**
2:00pm - 2:15pm	**Welcome & Opening of the Annual Meeting 2025**
2:15pm - 3:15pm	**Keynote I: "From Growing the Digital World ... to Growing Up in the Digital World"**
3:15pm - 4:45pm	**Poster Session I & Coffee Break**
3:30pm - 6:30pm	**Alliance Enfance Session (DE/FR)**
4:45pm - 6:15pm	**SSECR Junior Network Session: Poster Design** Poster Design for Researchers: Communicate Your Work Visually
4:45pm - 6:15pm	**Symposium I: "Play in Early Childhood Education"** Symposium of the SIG Play
6:15pm - 7:15pm	**Apéro**

Date: Wednesday, 22/Jan/2025

8:45am - 9:00am	**Welcome**
9:00am - 10:00am	**Keynote II: "The Digital Child: Lessons from Studying the Family Media Ecology"**
10:00am - 11:00am	**Poster Session II & Coffee Break**
11:00am - 12:30pm	**Symposium II: "Predictors and outcomes of digital media use in Swiss preschool-aged children. Concepts and preliminary results of the SWIPE spinoff projects"**
11:00am - 12:30pm	**Symposium III: "Neural underpinnings of developing mental and motor functions in health and disease"** Symposium of the SIG Neurocognitive Development
11:00am - 12:30pm	**Workshop I: HEY - Hometreatment Early Years. A mobile and digital treatment program in the first year of live**
12:30pm - 1:30pm	**Lunch**
1:30pm - 3:00pm	**Symposium V: "Smartphones in Early Childhood"**
1:30pm - 3:00pm	**Symposium VI: "Social-emotional learning in early relationships"**
1:30pm - 3:00pm	**Workshop II: Development of Swiss guidelines for the management of perinatal depression** Workshop of the SIG Perinatal Research
3:00pm - 3:15pm	**Break**
3:15pm - 4:15pm	**Workshop III: "Eltern kleiner Kinder ansprechen und beraten"**
3:15pm - 4:15pm	**World Café: "Science-Practice Transfer & Science Communication: What are the most requested topics?"**
4:15pm - 4:30pm	**Poster Award & Closure**

Annual Meeting 2024

"Growing up in the Digital Age "

Tuesday, 21st January

Keynote I

"From Growing the Digital World … to Growing Up in the Digital World"

Prof. Dr. Katherine Tombeau Cost

Dr. Katherine T. Cost will give an introduction to the historical context for digital media and technology development with a special focus on the media environment children grow up in today. While digital technology brings both, potential benefits and risks, the potential harms have given rise to diverse recommendations and guidelines by different health agencies globally. Dr. Cost will discuss these efforts to mitigate harms associated with media technologies and some of the challenges in researching media technology use. She will also present findings from her own studies on child health outcomes in relation to child digital media use and discuss the relevance of the findings for practice.

Growing Up with Digital Picture Books: The Potential of Digital Apps for Dialogic Reading

Silvana Kappeler Suter, Kerstin Pfannes, Johanna Quiring, Eva Heuss
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Dialogic reading is a method of shared picture book reading that is particularly well-suited for young children in the early stages of language acquisition, where children's active communicative participation is explicitly encouraged (Whitehurst et al. 1994). A wealth of studies has demonstrated the positive effects of dialogic reading on language development (Ennemoser et al. 2013, Pillinger et al. 2022).

Children's picture books are available not only in printed form but also as picture book apps. These formats differ in several aspects, particularly as apps often incorporate interactive elements such as hotspots, animations, sounds, and even tasks or games.

There is an ongoing debate, both in practical applications and in academic research, regarding the impact of digital picture book apps on children aged four to five. This question is central to the ongoing SNSF-Project presented in this poster. Among other objectives, the project examines how digital apps, compared to traditional printed picture books, affect quality of interaction, children's engagement during shared reading interactions and early literacy skills.

The poster presentation aims to outline the project design as well as the theoretical model that lies at the basis, focusing on how the choice of medium (book or app) is considered within a multidimensional framework of factors and discussing the implications of said framework. Furthermore, the poster presentation gives an insight into the ongoing work.

Investigating Fundamental Frequency in Children's Speech: Language Diversity and Adaptation to Miscommunication

Esmee Miron Aalders[1,2], Joanna M. Rutkowska[1,2], Stephanie Wermelinger[1,2], Moritz Daum[1,2]
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This study investigates how children's speech is affected by language-specific characteristics, and how these characteristics are related to the reparation of misunderstandings. Variability in children's communicative environments, such as the interaction partners and spoken languages, significantly shapes their communicative behaviour. Bilingualism in children, which inherently increases this variability, is associated with greater use of non-verbal means for communication, greater flexibility in using different

means to communicate, a stronger ability to adapt their speech to listeners, and a greater likelihood of repairing communication breakdowns.

While previous research explored these adaptive behaviours in bilingual children, the specific roles of speech elements like fundamental frequency (i.e., perceived pitch) and interjections (e.g., "Aha!" and "Oh!") - which serve to express emotions, arousal, and attract attention - remain underexplored. To address this gap, this study will examine language-specific differences in fundamental frequency among monolingual and bilingual preschool children (N = 100) in natural non-interactive speech during a picture-description task. Further, the study focuses on how children adapt their speech following misunderstandings, during natural interaction with the experimenter in which children describe the location of known and novel objects on a shelf.

This poster outlines the research design, methodology and preliminary results. The findings will offer insights into the role of speech in communicative development, particularly in how children repair communication breakdowns.

The Association of Parental Neuroticism with Child Emotion Regulation is Mediated by Parental Phubbing

Yamina Ahmadi[1,2], Jalisse Schmid[1,2], Christina Stadler[1,2], Eva Unternährer[1,2]

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Smartphones are omnipresent in today's society. Regarding the family context, there is a lack in knowledge of how parental smartphone use might distract some parents from interacting with their children, and what potential consequences thereof might be. Thus, we examined the potential role of parental problematic smartphone use, phubbing, and parenting in the relationship between parental neuroticism and child emotion processing (recognition and regulation).

We investigated data of German speaking Swiss parents and their children from a lab (N = 48, 87.5% mothers, 47.9% girls, parental age = 38.9 ± 5.4 years, child age = 5.7 ± 1.6 years) and an online (N = 193, 89.1% mothers, 52.3% girls, parental age = 39.9 ± 6.3 years, child age = 6.6 ± 3.4 years) study. Data were collected using questionnaires and a behavioral test. Data were analyzed using linear regression and mediation models.

We found no direct association between parental neuroticism and child emotion processing. However, parental phubbing mediated the effect of neuroticism on emotion dysregulation. Additionally, we found a positive indirect effect for parental neuroticism on child emotion dysregulation through parental problematic smartphone use. We only found effects for emotion regulation, but not for emotion recognition.

The findings suggest that parental neuroticism might negatively affect child emotion regulation abilities, not directly, but only through phubbing and problematic smartphone use. Thus, it might be important to target parental phubbing in interventions and prevention campaigns.

Solution-Oriented Family Counseling as a Low-Threshold Bridging Service while waiting for a Pediatric Occupational Therapy Place

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Background / Introduction

Transgenerational transmission of attachment insecurities can cause parents to be triggered in emotionally demanding situations (Brisch, 2016). The waiting period for therapy represents a highly stressful phase for many families. Social support can reduce stress levels and lead to behavioral changes in the child (Sroufe, 2022). The Milwaukee Model by de Shazer and Berg (1991-2009) is a low-threshold, solution-oriented brief intervention that can be utilized during the often months-long wait for a therapy slot. However, the effects of this intervention on the self-efficacy of families in this specific situation have not yet been studied.

Method

A case study was conducted with three families, each receiving four counseling sessions while waiting for the start of occupational therapy for their child. The impact of the intervention on perceived stress, self-efficacy, and family dynamics was examined through a qualitative analysis of the transcribed counseling sessions and a self-developed questionnaire sent to the families after the final session.

Results

After the first counseling session, the families already reported a noticeable reduction in their perceived stress. The waiting period was productively used to address family challenges and strengthen existing resources. Empowerment and family dynamics were positively influenced.

Conclusion

The brief intervention based on de Shazer and Berg appears to offer a way to make good use of the waiting time for therapy slots and to promote family empowerment. While it does not replace occupational therapy, it led to positive changes in all families in terms of self-efficacy (empowerment) and family dynamics.

Neonatal Brain Volumes and Their Association with Autism Symptoms at Age 2

Nicola Blom[1,2], Seline Coraj[1,2], Giancarlo Natalucci[1,2]

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Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is classified as a neurodevelopmental disorder in the ICD-11. Symptoms of ASD include social impairments, communication deficits, and repetitive behaviors, often observable as early as 2 years of age. Altered or increased cortical and subcortical volumes have been found in neonates at risk for ASD. This study aims to investigate whether MRI at term equivalent age (TEA) can predict ASD symptoms at 2 years corrected age, as measured by the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT).

Methods

This sample is part of an ongoing longitudinal cohort study at the University Hospital Zurich. Structural images were acquired without sedation on a 3T GE MR750 scanner using a T2-weighted sequence in the sagittal, axial, and coronal planes. T2 images will be reconstructed using super-resolution techniques (SVRTK) and segmented with nnU-Nets (Steger et al., 2023). ASD symptoms will be modeled in relation to total, cortical, deep gray matter (GM), and white matter (WM) volumes, adjusting for age and scanner upgrade covariates.

Results:

39 [gestational age (GA) at birth 34.9 ± 5.04 weeks; postmenstrual age (PMA) at MRI 41.06 ± 1.42 weeks; scanner up-grade before:after 30:9] neonates will be analyzed. Analysis is ongoing.

Discussion and Conclusion:

This project may provide insights into ASD brain development in at-risk neonates and potentially enable earlier detection of this disorder.

Cerebral Perfusion and Volume Alteration in Intrauterine Growth Restricted Neonates at Term Equivalent Age

Seline Coraj[1,2], Nicola Blom[1,2], Alexandra De Silvestro[3,4,5], Céline Steger[4], Ninib Yakoub[1,2], Thi Dao Nguyen[2], Cornelia Hagmann[3,6], Andras Jakab[4], Tilman Reinelt[1,2], Ruth O'Gorman Tuura[3,4], Giancarlo Natalucci[1,2]

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Introduction

Infants with intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR) are at risk for neurodevelopmental impairment. In IUGR altered cerebral blood supply may contribute to suboptimal brain maturation, including reduced grey matter (GM) and altered white matter (WM) volumes. Yet, the association between neonatal brain perfusion and cerebral volume remains to be investigated. Here, we aimed to assess the relationship between perfusion and cerebral volume in neonates with IUGR and intrauterine growth appropriate for gestational age (AGA) by arterial spin labeling and structural magnetic resonance imaging (sMRI) at term equivalent age (TEA).

Methods

Perfusion and structural images were acquired without sedation on a 3T scanner. Perfusion maps were registered to an in-house neonatal perfusion template and whole brain, cortical and deep GM perfusion were extracted using the automated anatomical labeling masks (Tzourio-Mazoyer et al., 2002). Structural images will be reconstructed using super-resolution reconstruction (SVRTK) and segmented using nnU-Nets (according to Steger et al., 2023). Total, cortical, and deep GM volumes will be modeled in relation to group and perfusion signals, adjusting for age and scanner upgrade.

Results:

46 infants with IUGR [22 female; postnatal age at MRI (mean±SD) 65.50 ± 26.98 days; gestational age (GA) at birth 32.10 ± 3.88 weeks; postmenstrual age (PMA) at MRI 41.46 ± 1.62 weeks; scanner up-grade before:after 16:30] and 56 with AGA [22 female; 51.55 ± 35.06 days; 33.94 ± 4.99 weeks; 41.30 ± 1.43 weeks; 21:35] will be analyzed. Analysis is ongoing.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The current project will provide insights into IUGR pathophysiology and eventually help inform clinical practice.

Bridging play and STEM: empowering early learners through pupil-initiated exploration

Gabriel Kappeler[1], Jérémie Passeraub[2]

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Since 2021, digital education has been a new compulsory subject in French-speaking Switzerland, covering media, computer science and the use of digital technology. Previously seen as a complement to other subjects, its teaching has met with some resistance from teachers. However, children's digital skills develop early, often stimulated by the home environment and access to technologies such as smartphones, tablets and online resources, highlighting a gap between children's personal digital experiences and their integration in school (Chaudron et al., 2015; Vaiopoulou et al., 2021). Studies by Edwards et al. (2020) and Thorpe et al. (2015) reveal a lag in the adoption of digital tools in preschool settings. This gap calls for consideration of the use of 'convergent play' (Edwards, 2013), which combines traditional and digital play to enhance learning and simulate the use of digital technology.

The integration of digital tools with traditional materials allows children to adapt pretend play to contemporary realities (Arnott, 2016).

As part of a research and training project conducted by HEP-VD and HEIG-VD in the canton of Vaud, we worked with five first cycle teachers who were motivated to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning through pupil-initiated play. Inspired by Fleer's (2018, 2019) work on pop-ups in conceptual playworlds and Vogt et al.'s (2020) work on "wir spielen Zukunft", our research allowed us to adapt an instructional engineering approach into an operational model designed for teaching foundation learning skills. This poster discusses the challenges and didactic perspectives of such an approach. The power of the model lies in its ability to recognise the pre-existing knowledge of the pupils, allowing the identification of learning objectives in line with the Plan d'études romandes (PER), while at the same time taking into account the needs and progress of young learners.

The Impact of Screen Exposure on Neurodevelopmental Outcome and Multi-sensory Competencies of Premature Toddlers

Maria Chiara Liverani[1,2], Lara Lordier[2], Manon Durand-Ruel[3], Sabrina Baertschi[3], Fleur Lejeune[1], Estelle Gilloz[1], Cristina Borradori Tolsa[1,3]

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Introduction: Very preterm (VPT) born children are at higher risk for developmental delays. Recent studies suggest that early screen exposure may further impact child development negatively. This study investigates whether cognitive, linguistic, motor, and multisensory competencies differ in VPT children exposed to screens at 12 months of age compared with those who are not.

Methods: Sixty-four 12-month-old VPT children (born <32 weeks) participated in this study. Parents completed an online questionnaire detailing family screen use and the total amount of children's exposure to screen. Cognitive, language, and motor skills were assessed using the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development. In addition, children were proposed short experimental tasks to measure prosocial behavior, joint attention, and emotion recognition and multisensory exploration.

Preliminary results: The average number of screens per household was seven, and the most used device by parents was the smartphone. Twenty-five (39%) VPT children were exposed to screens by 12 months, averaging 4 hours per week. Results showed a significant correlation between screen time and lower cognitive and linguistic scores. Additionally, screen exposure negatively correlated with tactile and visual exploration abilities, suggesting that increased screen time may hinder these critical developmental skills.

Discussion and Conclusions: These findings emphasize the vulnerability of VPT children to the negative effects of early screen exposure, demonstrating associations with poorer cognitive, linguistic, and sensory-motor outcomes. Given the importance of early developmental milestones, limiting screen time in infancy may be crucial, especially for preterm populations. Future research should examine long-term impacts and potential interventions to support optimal development.

Equitable digital education with teachers' continuous professional development

Marius Vogt[1], Valentina Ferraioli[2], Manuel Bernal Lecina[2], Victoria Abou Khalil[2], Lena Hollenstein[1], Francesco Mondada[2], Franziska Vogt[1]

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The ongoing digitalization and shifting technological landscape pose critical challenges for early years education: implementing transversal digital education (DE) in primary schools while ensuring teacher professional development to keep pace with these advancements. The research project DEEP development seeks to co-construct a long-term professional development (PD) strategy tailored to the needs of teachers in the first and second primary school years. In this way, the project aims to ensure equitable DE in primary schools.

The first phase of the project involved assessing the challenges and needs of teachers in delivering DE. For this purpose, a systematic literature review using PRISMA-methodology was conducted. Furthermore, focus group interviews with N = 16 primary school teachers (1st and 2nd grade) from the German, Italian, and French-speaking parts of Switzerland were conducted. This approach enabled the identification of barriers and opportunities pertaining to regional conditions.

Based on eight papers the systematic review identified key barriers (Hew and Brush, 2007) in implementing DE, such as teacher beliefs, knowledge and skills, resource constraints, institutional practices and subject culture.

First results of the content analysis indicate that the challenges identified by teachers are consistent with those previously documented in the review. However, they also reveal novel barriers and needs. For example, teachers reported that collaborating with parents on digital education issues is a major challenge. In addition, some teachers feel that expectations of their technological skills are too high.

An understanding of the needs and requirements for continuous and sustainable PD will be discussed.

Inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) from the Perspective of Pre-service Educators

Matthias Lütolf, Simone Schaub

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Inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) helps children with disability to develop socio-emotional, cognitive and friendship skills and contributes to shaping the vision of an inclusive society from an early age. In Switzerland, the educational landscape prior to formal school entry lacks robust guidelines, making inclusive ECEC vulnerable to various challenges. This study examines the attitudes, self-efficacy, training needs and motivation for further training in inclusive education of 946 pre-service ECEC educators in their final year of vocational training. The results show that the participants have generally positive attitudes towards inclusive education and moderate self-efficacy. In particular, knowledge and previous experience with people with disabilities has a positive influence on perceptions of inclusion, and further influences perceived training needs and motivation for further training. These findings underline the importance of providing knowledge and practical experience in vocational training to better equip future educators for inclusive ECEC environments. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential of post-graduate training to deepen the knowledge of educators and to support early childhood centers in developing and implementing inclusive educational frameworks.

Manual and Oculomotor Serial Reaction Time Tasks Provide Evidence of Distinct Temporal Order Response Learning performance in Williams Syndrome and Typically Developing Children

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Previous studies assessing procedural learning in individuals with Williams syndrome (WS) used traditional serial reaction time (SRT) tasks, which failed to provide evidence of temporal order response learning. In these tasks, participants must press keyboard keys corresponding to different spatially dissociated stimuli as fast as possible. However, because individuals with WS have severe visuo-constructive deficits, these tasks are likely inadequate to assess temporal order response learning in this population. We therefore designed two SRT tasks in which responses are not dissociated from the stimulus location: (1) a manual task using a touchscreen computer, in which participants responded by touching the stimulus; (2) an oculomotor task using eye-tracking technology, in which participants responded by visually fixating the stimulus. We measured reaction times (RT) to respond to stimuli appearing in random locations or in repeated sequences of three or four locations. Learning was inferred if RT were greater during random-sequence blocks than in repeated-sequence blocks.

Results showed that 19/30 individuals with WS and 36/51 typically developing children (TDC) demonstrated learning in the manual SRT task, whereas only 3 individuals with WS compared to 30 TDC did so in the oculomotor task. We conclude that: (1) Individuals with WS exhibit temporal order response learning in a manual SRT when the responses are spatially consistent with the stimulus locations; (2) As a group, individuals with WS do not

exhibit temporal order response learning in an oculomotor SRT, even though the responses are spatially consistent with the stimulus location.

Measuring and Promoting Children's Well-being and Socio-emotional Competences in Digital Age: Preliminary Evidence from a Character Strengths-Based Study

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Introduction

Children's social-emotional development, particularly in early childhood, is linked to social interactions. While digital tools can support the development of socio-emotional competences, an excessive use of technology may affect children's social development. Therefore, promoting socio-emotional competences and well-being from an early age is crucial. Positive education can be a supportive approach for this purpose. One of the most recent approaches in this field is that of character strengths. Character strengths are unique to each individual and are reflected in thoughts, feelings and actions. They are particularly effective in enhancing well-being and fostering socio-emotional competences, such as social awareness and relationship skills. Despite the benefits, studies focusing on the impact of character strengths in early education are still limited, and this study aims to address this gap.

Methods

The study includes a baseline data collection on children's well-being and socio-emotional competences in Ticino pre-primary and primary schools (September-October 2024). Further, using a quasi-experimental protocol including a control group, a character strengths-based intervention will be implemented in classrooms by teachers (previously trained in spring 2024). A second data collection is planned after the intervention (May-June 2025).

Results/Discussion

The study protocol will be presented and preliminary data on well-being and social-emotional competences will be shown and discussed.

Conclusion

The project shall promote children's socio-emotional competences and well-being by providing them with valuable tools for dealing with the digital age in which they already live at an early age.

Pediatric Primary Care in The Canton of Zurich: Parental expectations, views, and usage patterns

Leila Toumi[1,2], Michael von Rhein[1,3], Michelle Seiler[1], Devanshi Patel[2], Leo Brunner[2]

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Introduction: Pediatricians and family doctors (primary care providers, PCPs) provide the majority of outpatient care for children in Switzerland. While the number of pediatricians in private practice is decreasing in Switzerland, the number of consultations in pediatric emergency departments (EDs) has been rising continuously for years. However, a large proportion of the medical conditions treated in EDs could be managed by PCPs. We therefore aimed to investigate parents' expectations of PCPs and their usage patterns of pediatric EDs in the canton of Zurich

Methods: A telephone survey was conducted with 130 parents whose children were treated in an outpatient setting at one of the participating pediatric EDs (Kantonsspital Winterthur, Stadtspital Zürich, University Children's Hospital Zurich) in a.

Results: Most families (96.9 %) stated they have a PCP and expressed satisfaction with the care provided by their PCP (97.6 %). However, 30% of families were dissatisfied with the availability of timely appointments, particularly in cases of an acute illness. The most frequent reason for an ED-visit was that the pediatrician's office was closed, or no short-time appointment was available (56.2 %). Additionally, 38.5 % of families reported a perceived need for diagnostics or treatments not offered by their PCP. Although 83.8 % of parents believed that their child's condition was an emergency requiring rapid treatment, most consultations (95.2 %) were categorized as non-urgent.

Discussion: Even though most families have a PCP, the increasing reliance on pediatric EDs suggests different contributing factors. These include challenges in accessing short-term appointments at PCP`s offices and parental misconceptions of situations qualifying as emergencies. An approach to reduce the burden on EDs could therefore be to expand services such as wound care or diagnostic capabilities in PCP practices.

Podcasting as a Tool for Bridging the Gap Between Science and Practice in Early Childhood Education

Johanna Quiring, Mita Ray

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Currently there is scarce research on the use and benefits of podcasts for practitioners in the field of early childhood education and care (ECEC), but there is some evidence in the medical field that the use of podcasts results in knowledge retention and changes in practitioners' behaviours (Kelly et al., 2022).

How to design the communication between science and practice within the podcast is one of the key questions when producing a podcast format for practitioners in ECEC.

Theoretical frameworks on the relationship between research and practice were compared for the design of the podcast format.

One of the main results is to consider scientific and professional practices as two separate practices with their respective characteristics, bodies of knowledge and potential benefits

for each other (Leonhard, 2018). In this poster we present the implications of these results on the design of the podcast backed by user metrics.

Viewing research and the professional field as independent practices, with their own forms of knowledge, and at the same time working on the points of reference seems to be a laborious but worthwhile approach that meets with broad acceptance among both experts and listeners. Whether children profit from growing up among adults that use this digital resource for professionalisation, remains to be investigated.

Pre-conception violent trauma, related psychopathology, and prenatal attachment: Preliminary results of the Lausanne Prequel Study

Daniel S. Schechter[1,2], Ryan J. Murray[1,2], Shannen Graf[1,2], Barbara Garrido-Araujo[1,3], Sébastien Urben[1,2], Mathilde Morisod[1,2]

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Several studies of established adverse effects on prenatal attachment and postnatal infant outcomes in the presence of maternal risk factors including a history of interpersonal violent trauma exposure from infancy through adulthood and related psychopathology including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive disorder (MDD). The aim of this study was to identify which maternal-fetal psychobiological factors might be predictive of intergenerational transmission of maternal stress prenatally and psychobiological dysregulation postnatally at ages 4-6 months. Methods: This poster presents preliminary prenatal results on an ethical commission approved study of 80 women initially evaluated at 24-26 weeks gestion in a public hospital obstetrics clinic. Socio-demographic, adverse childhood event (ACE), psychiatric symptom and social support questionnaires were administered to mothers. Pregnancy-specific anxiety and attachment quality were measured via the Pregnancy-Specific Anxiety and Maternal Antenatal Attachment Scale (MAAS) respectively. Complete questionnaire data were available for 77 women and were analyzed using parametric and non-parametric correlations, multiple linear and Lasso regression and structural equation modeling. Results: Maternal prenatal levels of depression, maltreatment and other ACE- and later violence related PTSD and socio-economic status (SES) were together predictive of increased pregnancy-specific anxiety (p=.032, .003 and .012 respectively. ACE- and later violence related PTSD and MDD were predictive of lower quality MAAS scores (p<.011, <.001 respectively). ACE and later life-events themselves were not significantly predictive.

Conclusions: These preliminary analyses are consistent with the existing literature (Saravanan V, Desai G, Satyanarayana VA, 2023; Merrick & Narayan, 2024) for this Swiss sample. This bodes well for biological and postnatal analyses to follow and supports the need for prenatal intervention.

Alliance Enfance Session (DE/FR)

Prof. Dr. Nevena Dimitrova und Prof. Dr. Fabio Sticca: Was wissen wir über den Umgang von Vorschulkindern mit digitalen Medien? Erste Resultate aus der SWIPE-Studie

Digitale Medien sind allgegenwärtig und spielen eine grosse Rolle im Leben von Erwachsenen und Kindern. Die Bildschirmnutzung von Kindern wird aktuell heftig diskutiert – insbesondere aufgrund der Sorgen über mögliche Risiken. Doch bevor man über diese Risiken diskutieren kann, muss man wissen, wie Säuglinge und Kleinkinder digitale Medien nutzen. Die SWIPE-Studie (SWIss study on Preschool screen Exposure) ist ein schweizweites Forschungsprojekt, das untersucht, wie Kleinkinder und ihre Eltern digitale Medien nutzen. An der Studie nahmen über 3'500 Eltern mit Kindern ab Geburt bis 5 Jahre aus allen Regionen der Schweiz teil.

In dieser Präsentation stellen Prof. Dr. Nevena Dimitrova (HETSL) und Prof. Dr. Fabio Sticca (HfH) die ersten landesweiten Ergebnisse zur Nutzung digitaler Medien (Bildschirmzeit, Inhalt und Kontext der Bildschirmnutzung etc.) durch Schweizer Kinder im Vorschulalter vor. Die Forschenden präsentieren auch Erkenntnisse darüber, wie wichtige demografische Faktoren die Bildschirmnutzung von jungen Kindern beeinflussen. Die Studienergebnisse sind von grosser Bedeutung, um Strategien zur Prävention und Verminderung möglicher Risiken zu entwickeln und um eine gesunde Nutzung digitaler Medien bei Vorschulkindern und ihren Familien zu fördern.

Prof. Dr. Selina Ingold und Dipl. Päd. Mandy Falkenreck: Kinderrechte im digitalen Raum und wie wir mit Kindern zu besseren Rahmenbedingungen gelangen

Viele Kinder haben schon mal in der Krippe, im Kindergarten oder der Schule von den Kinderrechten gehört, aber nur wenige wissen, was deren Inhalte sind. Um zu ermöglichen, dass Kinder sich diese aneignen können, wurde in einem partizipativ gestalteten Prozess mit Kindern und Fachpersonen aus der ganzen Schweiz eine digitale Web-Anwendung entwickelt: die Kinderrechte-App «Kidimo».
In ihrer Präsentation gehen Prof. Dr. Selina Ingold und Mandy Falkenreck darauf ein, wie sich Medienaneignung aus der Sicht von Kindern darstellt und was aus ihrer Sicht zentral ist bei der Nutzung digitaler Medien. Sie geben auch einen Einblick, wie sich solche digitalen Anwendungen in der Arbeit mit Kindern sinnvoll einsetzen lassen. Schliesslich geht es auch darum, wie – unter Beteiligung von Kindern - die Rahmenbedingungen für den Umgang mit digitalen Medien proaktiv gestaltet werden können.

SSECR Junior Network Session: Poster Design

In this session, illustrator Evelyn Trutmann will guide us through fundamental design principles tailored for researchers. Learn practical, accessible techniques to create impactful posters or visuals for your research, without the need for expensive software. Participants will also receive comprehensive resources to continue refining their design skills after the workshop.

SIG Neurocognitive Development – Session "SIG proper"

Mirella Manfredi: **"Humour in adolescents on the autism spectrum: a window into cognition and a tool for well-being"**

Nina Raduner: **"Neural Correlates of Multisensory Learning in Middle Childhood "**

Tugce Aras: **"Neurocognitive Development and Prediction, Intervention of Learning Disorders "**

Paul Matusz: **"Harnessing cognition and technology for improving outcomes in healthy and atypical pediatric populations "**

Symposium I

Symposium of the SIG Play

Play in Early Childhood Education – Symposium of the SIG Play

Chair(s): **Sonja Perren** (University of Konstanz and Thurgau Teacher Education University, Switzerland), **Corina Wustmann Seiler** (Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich)

The "SIG Play" aims to foster collaboration and networking among researchers and science-practice transfer on the topic of play in early childhood (0-9 years). Two overarching research interests have been defined: What do we know about the significance of play for children's development and well-being? How can adults promote children's play?

The current symposium presents findings from four different research groups. All contributions are concerned about the role of adults in children's play in early education settings. The first contribution presents results from a qualitative study about the experiences of teachers after implementing the Conceptual PlayWorld in kindergartens. The second contribution investigated the role of teacher play beliefs for observed caregiver-child interactions in free play settings in childcare centers and playgroups. The third contribution reports results of a qualitative study about the challenges of teachers to facilitate peer play between children in the autism spectrum and typically developing peers in inclusive early childhood education. The fourth contribution examined the role of gender-specific teacher expectations on their behaviour in guided pretend play settings about digital transformations in kindergartens.

All contributions will shed light on the question what adults might do that children can benefit from provided play opportunities in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Presentations of the Symposium

Transforming teachers' relationship to knowledge and play skills through Conceptual PlayWorld

Anne Clerc-Georgy, Isabelle Truffer Moreau, Béatrice Maire Sardi
Haute école pédagogique Vaud

In the French-speaking Swiss kindergarten, learning activities are essentially imposed by adults. Teaching implements pedagogical practices derived from elementary school and poorly adapted to children's needs, evacuating play (Clerc-Georgy & Duval, 2020). Learning activities are essentially imposed by adults. However, a number of studies have highlighted the importance of taking account of activities initiated by children (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). Teachers are trained to anticipate, initiate, and direct activities.

To meet both the demands of the curriculum and the need to offer age-appropriate ways of working, teaching should be based on the emerging curriculum (Clerc-Georgy, 2024; Osberg et al., 2008). Fleer's work (2019, 2021) on Conceptual PlayWorld (CPW) opens up an interesting way, because 1) the support provided by stories helps teachers to develop their

play skills, 2) this type of activity allows all children to participate, with their own motives (Hedegaard & Edwards, 2023), 3) the identification of dramatic situations and the knowledge required to resolve them is a lever for building a form of historical and cultural knowledge, linked to the identification of meaning (what the appropriation of its use enables in terms of increasing one's ability to act, communicate, or think; Clerc-Georgy, 2021).

In this contribution, we will present analyses of collective discussions resulting from FCPW training. The results will consist in the identification of how implementing CPW 1) helps teachers to play a role in children's play; 2) promotes an understanding of the meaning of knowledge needed to seize or provoke learning opportunities from child-initiated activities.

"Should teachers remain passive during children's free play?" – Associations between teacher's beliefs about play and the quality of engaged support for learning during free play

Geisa Bragança[1], Johanna Lieb[1], Sonja Perren[2]
[1]Pädagogische Hochschule Thurgau, [2]Universität Konstanz

Supportive teacher-child interactions (e.g., engaged support for learning) in early childcare and education settings are important for children's positive development. Studies on the quality of teacher-child interactions have shown that the quality of Engaged Support for Learning (ESL) is lower during free play (child-initiated) than during activities organized and directed by the teacher. This study examined the relationship between the proportion of free play taking place in early childhood education groups and the quality of ESL. We hypothesized that the higher the proportion of free play the lower observed learning support. We also investigated whether teacher beliefs about play (attitudes toward active guidance and support in play) moderate this association. We hypothesized that teachers with high play support beliefs show a higher learning support also in free play settings.

The participants were 138 groups (79 daycare groups and 69 playgroups) in 14 municipalities in the canton of Zürich in Switzerland. The quality of ESL was measured using CLASS Toddler (La Paro et al., 2012). The ESL domain showed low to medium quality ratings. Observers also recorded the activity setting (e.g., free play). The educators at both institutions completed the "Play Beliefs Scale" (Wustmann Seiler et al., 2024) to assess their beliefs regarding guidance and support during play. Most educators in the daycare center and in the playgroup strongly agreed with active support during the children's play. However, they also showed a tendency to agree about remaining passive. The results of this study will be presented, and their practical implications discussed.

Playing with Peers – All fun and games? Children with autism in early childhood education: A qualitative study

Johanna Linimayr[1], Line Lindahl-Jacobsen[2], Lisette Farias[3]
[1]ZHAW School of Health Sciences, [2]University College Absalon, Naestved, Denmark, [3]Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

Introduction: Children in the autism spectrum (ASD) are increasingly being integrated into primary and secondary mainstream education. Yet, little is known about teachers' challenges in supporting their peer play in early childhood education. This study explores teachers' perspectives on the barriers and facilitators to supporting peer play between children in the autism spectrum and their typically developing peers.

Methods: Observations and research circle meetings were conducted with eight teachers from an urban area in Austria. Material from the meetings was analysed using qualitative content analysis and participants' feedback.

Results: Findings illustrate how teachers perceive and manage multiple factors that influence peer play, including child-level factors (e.g., irritability to noise), peer and family factors (e.g., negative roles attributed to children with ASD), and institutional factors (e.g., large group sizes and lack of rooms without distractions). This study also highlights teachers' ambivalence about safeguarding children's participatory rights when encouraging children in the autism spectrum to engage in peer play when they need to disengage. This ambivalence is linked to the need to expand the comfort zone of typically developing children by raising their awareness of diverse ways to interact and participate in play to support all children's needs in inclusive education.

Conclusion: Teachers perceived barriers and facilitators to peer play between children in the autism spectrum and typically developing peers. They used multiple strategies on levels of the child, peers, family, and institution. Teachers sometimes felt insecure when trying to support all children's needs in inclusive education.

Equitable digital education through guided pretend play? Exploring early childhood educators' high expectation play behaviours and differences between boys and girls

Lena Hollenstein, Marius Vogt, Olivia Benz, Franziska Vogt
Pädagogische Hochschule St. Gallen

In digital education, the risk of different interactions between boys and girls is high: The accuracy of teachers' judgments of technical skills is low, with gender bias and underestimation more common than overestimation (Wammes et al., 2022). Differences in interactions based on gender lead to differences in learning opportunities and thus to inequalities in education (Wang et al., 2018). Gender bias and low expectations (based on underestimation) are mediated by teacher behaviour (Rubie-Davies et al., 2015).

The aim of the present paper is to investigate differences in educators' play behaviour towards boys and girls during guided pretend play about digital transformation. The questions are (1) whether this high expectation play behaviour of teachers is also found in the behaviour of early childhood educators during guided pretend play, and (2) whether the play behaviour differs between boys and girls.

The data are based on the exploratory intervention study "we play the future" (Vogt & Hollenstein, 2021). The analyses follow a qualitative approach with content analysis

(Mayring, 2021). A $\chi 2$-test is used to examine differences in educators' play behaviour between boys and girls.

The results show that high expectation play behaviours are found during guided pretend play sequences. Low expectation play behaviours, such as closed-ended questions or unrequested support, are significantly more common in interactions with girls than with boys.

The findings discuss implications for further research into high expectation play behaviours in guided pretend play so that all children can benefit from equitable digital education.

Keynote II

"The Digital Child: Lessons from Studying the Family Media Ecology"

Prof. Dr. Heather Kirkorian

Prof. Kirkorian's talk will synthesize research on digital media and early child development using the Dynamic, Relational, and Ecological Approach to Media Effects Research (DREAMER) framework. The DREAMER framework emphasizes the regulatory and relational processes that shape how young children and families use and respond to media, balancing the needs of different family members. Prof. Kirkorian will use examples from her own and others' research to illustrate how different types of media use predict different short- and long-term outcomes. Prof. Kirkorian will also translate these research findings into practical advice for supporting digital well-being in families with young children.

Growing Up with Digital Picture Books: Usage of Interactive Elements

Eva Heuss
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Since digital gadgets are widespread in children's home learning environments, picture book apps have the potential to provide even more children with the experience of dialogic reading. Picture book apps differ from printed picture books through features such as embedded sounds, animations, hotspots, or games. Hotspots—interactive areas within the app that trigger effects, such as animations or sounds, when touched—are suspected of significantly influencing the reading experience (Smeets & Bus, 2014). For instance, congruent hotspots, whose content aligns with the narrative, are believed to support children's comprehension of the story (Eng et al., 2019; Takacs et al., 2015). However, knowledge about the actual usage of these interactive elements remains limited.

As part of an ongoing SNSF-Project, reading sessions involving both printed and digital picture books are being recorded and analysed. This presentation closely examines various aspects of how both adults and children interact with hotspots during reading sessions that involve digital picture books. It is hypothesized that the usage of hotspots differs due to various characteristics of them (e.g. congruent vs. non-congruent). An overview of the hotspots included in this research project is provided and a descriptive analysis of their usage offered. Preliminary results will be discussed and within a theoretical framework, it will be outlined, how these insights can inform further research in the field.

Parental satisfaction after Pediatric Emergency Department Consultations at the Cantonal Hospital of Winterthur

Leo Brunner[1,2], Devanshi Patel[3], Leila Toumi[1], Traudel Saurenmann[2], Michael von Rhein[1]
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Introduction: In Switzerland, pediatric emergency department (ED) visits have steadily increased. However, parental satisfaction after these visits has not been systematically studied so far. Therefore, we aimed to assess overall parental satisfaction, as well as its variation depending on the time of the visit, or the place of residence of the families.

Methods: This prospective cohort study assessed parental satisfaction after pediatric ED consultations at the Cantonal Hospital of Winterthur. In January 2024 parents of patients were contacted by telephone in a 10-day window shortly after their visit and asked about their satisfaction with the ED visit. We assessed satisfaction with the first contact, waiting time, age-appropriate interaction, communication, medical explanations, examination and

treatment, and likelihood of returning on a Likert scale (1: lowest, 5: highest). Overall satisfaction was also calculated as a mean of the above.

Results: We interviewed 246 parents (mean patient age 5.55 years, SD 4.69), representing 60% of all recorded patients during the observation period. The average overall satisfaction score was 4.39 (SD 0.55). Satisfaction was highest for the category age-appropriate handling (4.79, SD 0.78), followed by likelihood of returning (4.77, SD 0.86), and waiting time (3.52, SD 1.32). No significant differences were found in satisfaction between consultations during or outside regular office hours of primary care providers, nor across residential environments.

Discussion: Parental satisfaction at the Cantonal Hospital of Winterthur was good to very good. Lower satisfaction with waiting times did not affect overall satisfaction with treatment quality, or interaction with patients and families.

What Collaboration Among Professionals of Parenting Support in Early Childhood Education and Between Them and School in a Swiss Canton?

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Parenting support measures are now set to play an important role in early childhood education policies (OFAS, 2018). They raise questions in terms of collaboration and coordination of actions between professionals from different fields, including social work, education, health, psychology or special education (Daly, 2013). The attention paid to the issue of the transition to school also raises the question of collaboration and coordination of actions between the various professionals involved in parenting support and school staff (Garcia 2021). In our research work carried out in the canton of Fribourg, we conducted semi-structured interviews to discuss this twofold level of collaboration and coordination with managers of organisations from various professional fields supporting parents of young children, and with school executives responsible for the school-entry transition issue within the cantonal school administration. The results presented will show that fruitful collaboration exists on the ground, but that it is poorly institutionalised and poorly supported by public policy. What also emerges is a limited, asymmetrical and mostly unilaterally oriented collaboration between parenting support and school professionals, and differences of opinion as to the respective roles and the way in which the transition to school should be viewed. The poster will suggest ways of strengthening networking between the various professionals working with young children before and around the time they start school. This requires both the creation of an institutional environment that is more supportive of collaboration and the promotion and enhancement of initiatives that stem from the agentivity of players on the ground.

Brain Structures and Their Association with Executive and Attentional Abilities in Very Preterm 8-Year-Old Children

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Very preterm children are prone to a variety of neurodevelopmental deficits, particularly regarding their attention and executive functions (i.e., inhibition, shifting, and working memory). Yet, the underlying neural structures and processes are not yet clearly defined. Here thirty-three very preterm children (Mgestational age = 27.22 weeks, SD = 1.36) aged 8-10 years chronological (Mage = 8.85, SD = 0.49, 17 girls) underwent a brain MRI session alongside neurodevelopmental testing. We performed a factor analysis to group the different variables measuring executive functioning and attentional capacities. The analysis revealed a three factors design, in which the first factor was mostly driven by inhibitory abilities, the second factor by attentiveness and the third factor by flexibility. From T1-weighted MRI images, we extracted the anterior cingulate cortex, and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, based on fMRI meta-analyses to encompass brain regions involved into attention and executive processes. We estimated their cortical thickness, fractional anisotropy, volume, cortical surface area, and betweenness centrality. Significant negative associations were found after multiple comparisons corrections and adjustment for age and gender between cortical thickness and executive functions and attentional abilities. While thinner left anterior cingulate cortex was related with higher factor 1 (i.e., mostly inhibitory capacities) and factor 2 (i.e., primarily attentiveness), thinner right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex was associated with better factor 3 (i.e., largely flexibility). These findings provide new insights of brain structures underpinning executive and attentional abilities in very preterm children at school-age.

Measuring audiovisual integration abilities in prematurely-born children at school-age

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Audiovisual integration is a multisensory process central for understanding human speech. This crossmodal matching seems to be impacted by prematurity. A common paradigm to evaluate this ability in the laboratory is the McGurk illusion. It consists in an illusion elicited by the incongruency between visual and auditory stimuli. In premature as well as term-born

children at school-age, little is known about the presence of the McGurk illusion, knowing that multisensory integration is still developing during this period. Using behavioral assessment in more than 40 subjects aged between 6 and 10 years old, we aimed at identifying whether we could elicit the McGurk illusion and assessing audiovisual speech integration. The acquisition of data is still ongoing. As of now, 21 preterm children and 25 term controls were recruited. We designed a paradigm in which we presented McGurk incongruent syllables as well as congruent audiovisual syllables and unisensory stimuli in different levels of auditory noise in a behavioral setting. By recording the responses to the open-choice behavioral task, we showed that both groups experienced the illusion (full-term: mean(sd) = 54.3%(25.2), preterm: mean(sd) = 50.7%(22.7)). Furthermore, a comparison of the accuracy of audiovisual with audio-only perception showed a significantly better performance in the audiovisual condition (full-term: $t = 5.95$, $p < 0.001$, mean difference(sd) = 14.8%(12.4), preterm: $t = 5.52$, $p < 0.001$, mean difference(sd) = 11.5%(9.51)). These results confirm that children at school-age with or without prematurity exhibit audiovisual integration capacities in noisy environments.

Problematic Smartphone use: The Association between Parental Phubbing and Parent-Child Interaction in a Laboratory Setting

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Background: Problematic Smartphone use has severe negative effects on individuals' physical and psychological health, and is posing substantial challenges to social interactions. Parents are often distracted by their smartphones during daily family routines; a behavior also known as parental phubbing. Parental phubbing has been shown to negatively affect children's socio-emotional development; however, its impact remains underexplored, particularly within European populations. Furthermore, to our knowledge, no studies have examined this relationship within a controlled laboratory setting.

Objective: This study aims to investigate the association of parental phubbing with parent-child interactions in a laboratory environment. The focus is on behavioral variables such as the child's solo play, eye gaze, the child's demands and parental responsiveness and how these differ across experimental conditions.

Methods: 51 parent-child dyads (Mage_parent=38.7 years, SD=5.6; 86.3% females) with children aged 4-8 years (Mage_child=6.0, SD=1.5; 43.1% females) participated in a laboratory experiment consisting of four conditions: two free play phases (baseline and interaction) and two distraction phases (paper-pencil vs. smartphone). Additionally, parents completed the Parental Scale of Phubbing (PSP), a 15-item questionnaire, which assesses their phubbing habits.

Results: Data analysis is currently ongoing and results will be presented and discussed at the conference.

Conclusions: This study will shed light on the potential effects of digital distractions on parent-child interactions. The findings are expected to enhance our understanding of how

parental phubbing influences parent and child behaviors, highlighting the importance of awareness and intervention strategies when integrating digital media into daily family routines.

Language Hierarchies and Social Inequalities in Multilingual Swiss Daycare Centers

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Introduction

This contribution deals with language hierarchies and social inequalities in multilingual Swiss daycare centers. Multilingualism reveals different evaluations of and hierarchies between individual languages (Schwartz et al. 2023, Simoes Lourêiro & Neumann 2020), which are closely linked to social inequalities and issues of social participation, integration and equal opportunities for children. The following questions are addressed: How is multilingualism practiced in the everyday life of multilingual Swiss daycare centers? What language hierarchies can be observed and what do they mean in terms of inequalities between children?

Methods

To answer these questions, the article draws on ethnographic data (Breidenstein et al. 2013) collected as part of a research project on multilingual Swiss daycare centers (Knoll & Becker 2023). Observations of interactions between children and professionals were used to investigate how multilingualism is implemented in everyday daycare settings.

Results

On the one hand, it was found that languages with high prestige (including English) have a privileged status, which limits the recognition of children with other first languages. On the other hand, the children receive multilingual support, they have a significant influence on linguistic events and this enables them to further develop their language skills (Becker & Knoll, 2021).

Conclusion and Discussion

The results are discussed against the background of the tension between promoting the local majority language (in this case: German) for the purpose of participation, integration and educational opportunities on the one hand and the inclusion of children's languages of origin for the purpose of recognition and prevention of discrimination on the other. Directions and suggestions for further research are outlined.

An Analysis of Parental Satisfaction with the Paediatric Emergency Department in Stadtspital Zürich Triemli

Devanshi Patel[1,2], Maren Tomaske[2], Leo Brunner[3], Leila Toumi[1], Michael von Rhein[1]
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Introduction: The Swiss paediatric emergency care system is recognized for its high-quality care despite regional and linguistic differences. An increase in paediatric emergency department (ED) consultations, partly due to the discontinuation of paid consultation helplines, reflects growing parental concern and reduced accessibility. Parental satisfaction is influenced by factors such as communication, waiting times, and language congruity. This study aimed to assess parental satisfaction at Stadtspital Zürich Triemli, hypothesizing overall satisfaction but concerns over long waiting times and the need for a fast track by patients in lower triage categories.

Methods: A prospective cohort study was conducted using a structured telephone survey to assess parental satisfaction with outpatient care at the paediatric ED of Stadtspital Zürich Triemli during the period from 22.01.-31.02.2024. Satisfaction with factors such as medical care and consultation, waiting time, and communication were rated on a Likert scale (1 = "Very satisfied" to 5 = "Very dissatisfied") and analysed statistically.

Results: Interviews were conducted with 210 guardians, representing 51% of the patients recorded during the observation period. Overall satisfaction was high (Mean = 1.86). No significant differences in satisfaction were found across groups with different triage categories ($F=0.632$, $p=0.595$) or language groups ($F=0.914$, $p=0.402$).

Discussion: The high overall satisfaction suggests effective communication and quality care at the paediatric ED in Stadtspital Zürich Triemli. The lack of significant differences in satisfaction across various groups indicates a consistent perception of care, regardless of triage category or language spoken. Further research could explore additional dimensions of parental satisfaction in Switzerland.

Associations between early motor behavior and developmental outcomes at 2 years of age in children born very preterm

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Introduction:

Children born very or extremely preterm (VEPT; <32nd week of gestation) are at high risk for developmental delays in various domains, such as cognitive, language or motor development. This makes VEPT a public health concern and the early identification of such developmental delays a high priority.

Although General Movements (GMs), i.e., spontaneous movement patterns which persist until about 5 months corrected age, are indicators for the integrity of the nervous system and a highly sensitive predictor for Cerebral Palsy, associations of GMs with long-term developmental outcomes are not well established yet.

Aims:

Investigate the association between GMs and cognitive outcomes in children born VEPT.

Methods:

N=322 Children born or hospitalized at the University Hospital of Zurich between 2014 and 2018 participated in this study. Those infants have recordings of their GMs at 3 months corrected age and neurodevelopmental test scores at 2 years corrected age measured with the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development (3rd Edition). The GMs have been analyzed using the Motor Optimality Score – Revised (MOS-R).

Results:

Mean cognitive composite scores of the cohort at 2 years of age was M= 103.4 (SD= 15.2). Multiple linear regression analysis showed no significant relationship between the MOS-R total score and cognitive outcomes. Among the different sub-scales of the MOS-R, only the movement character sub-scale significantly predicted cognitive outcomes at 2 years corrected age.

Conclusion:

The ability of the MOS-R to identify children at risk for developmental delays might depend on the quality of neonatal and post-discharge. Future research with a higher sample size is needed to determine the effectiveness of the MOS-R.

Comparison of Polar V2 Sports Watches and Polar Verity Sense Sensors for Measuring Emotional Processes in Preschool-Aged Children

Sonja Beatrix Lorusso[1], Pablo Nischak[1], Ori Harel[2], Tatiana Diebold[1], Carine Burkhardt Bossi[1], Jens Pruessner[1], Sonja Perren[1,2]

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Emotion regulation is an internal process that cannot be directly observed, requiring reliance on emotion-related behavior and (changes in) emotional expression. Optical pulse rate measurements offer a complementary, simple, and non-intrusive way to quantify these processes. Compared to well-established upper-arm sensors, sports watches are less intrusive, and well accepted. This study examines whether sports watches (a) provide valid heart rate measurements comparable to upper-arm sensors and (b) are suitable for measuring emotional arousal in preschoolers. A total of N = 113 children (Mage = 3.8 years, SDage = 0.5 years, 57.3 % female) from 16 Swiss playgroups participated. Each child wore both a Polar V2 watch and a Polar Verity Sense sensor during different emotion-eliciting tasks (e.g. an attractive toy in a locked transparent box) to induce emotional arousal. To assess data quality, for half the participants (n = 54), raw data was collected live using the Kubios® app, while for the others, data was stored on the devices and exported later. Data processing is currently ongoing. To determine the validity of sports watches, Intraclass Correlation Coefficients and Bland-Altman analyses will compare the Polar V2 watches with upper-arm sensors. Mixed linear models will evaluate the suitability of sports watches for measuring emotional arousal in preschoolers. The results will provide insights into the effectiveness of sports watches for tracking preschoolers' physiological responses during emotional tasks. If validated, this approach could offer a child-friendly, accessible tool for

monitoring emotion regulation, potentially enhancing assessments in both research and early childhood education settings.

Improving early detection and support of preschool children with developmental delay: Combining the benefits of two different cantonal systems of care.

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The 2007 Intercantonal Agreement on Collaboration in Special Education recommends harmonizing the care for children with special educational needs and implementing standardized tools across cantons. In this context, our research compares two cantonal systems – Zurich and Geneva – focusing on data collection and the coordination of specialized services for preschool children at risk or with developmental delay requiring early intervention, with the goal of identifying areas for improvement. This poster will present the findings of this study collected from interviews with known healthcare and education institutions, as well as from available data and literature, revealing notable differences between Zurich and Geneva, particularly in the systematization of data and individualized support. These insights foster discussions on best practices that can be modeled in other cantons or nationwide. By optimizing the identification of children with developmental delays and addressing their specific needs, this research seeks to contribute to a more cohesive and effective approach to early detection and support of these children across Switzerland.

Neural Synchrony, Mother–Infant Relationship and Child Development - Ad Interim Results

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Background: Neural synchrony, refers to the time-dependent association of two or more brain signals. In adults, increased neural and physiological synchrony are associated with attachment and communication facilitation. Physiological and behavioral synchrony have been observed in infants and their parents, which have been associated with bonding and infant development. So far, no study has investigated whether neural synchrony is also associated with mother-infant relationship and child development.

Method: 42 mothers (Mage = 33.44 years) and their infants (52.94 % female; Mage = 220.17 days). In a free play interaction, the mother and infant play with each other, whilst the infant

is in a high chair or is held by their mother. During baseline, they watch a cartoon with no interaction. During all conditions, systemic-augmented fNIRS hyperscanning is applied in bilateral prefrontal (PFC) and temporo-parietal (TP) regions. Mean coherence was calculated with wavelet transform coherence (WTC) for the low frequency band (LF, 0.015–0.15 Hz) and the heart rate band (HR, 1–2.5 Hz).

Results: Preliminary results in the LF band showed significant difference between the physical contact compared to the baseline in the left TP ($p < 0.05$). A trend for highest synchrony during physical contact was observed in other regions of interest. For the HR band, statistically higher coherence for physical contact compared to baseline and high-chair interaction was found in all regions of interest (ps < 0.05). Left PFC synchrony during physical touch correlates positively with maternal confidence ($p = .045$). Synchrony in left PFC was associated with better fine motor skills at 6 months of age.

Discussion: Results present evidence of mother-infant brain coupling at 7.5 months during social play interaction. Highest levels of synchrony were observed during physical contact. Mother–infant neural synchrony may give insight into mother–infant relationship and child development.

Parent-, Parenting-, and Child-Related Correlates of Parental Phubbing in a Sample of Parents with Children Aged 2 to 16 Years

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Introduction: A recent phenomenon in connection with the widespread use of smartphones is phubbing, defined as ignoring a person in a social setting by focusing on one's smartphone. Parental phubbing denotes parents phubbing their children and has been associated with a range of negative outcomes. However, it is not yet clear if some parents are at higher risk of showing greater levels of parental phubbing. To address this gap, this paper aims to identify potential correlates of parental phubbing.

Methods: We conducted two cross-sectional observational studies in which German-speaking parents with children aged 2-16 years (Study 1, N = 147) and 4-8 years (Study 2, N = 49) completed an online survey on parent-, parenting-, and child-related psychosocial variables. These variables were used as predictors in a LASSO regression to identify meaningful correlates of parental phubbing. Training and testing were performed on data from Study 1, and results were validated on data from Study 2.

Results: The results indicate associations of parental phubbing with 11 potential correlates. The three most robust correlates were parental stress experience, parental partnership satisfaction, and child age. We are currently testing these correlates in the validation sample to corroborate the findings. The final findings will be presented at the conference.

Discussion: The preliminary findings suggest that factors related to parents, parenting, and children are associated with the level of parental phubbing. This knowledge could help identify parents at risk of showing greater levels of phubbing.

Pebbles App: A Comprehensive, Caregiver-Driven Tool for Longitudinal Tracking of Early Childhood Development

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Tools for assessing early childhood development typically rely on standardized assessments in controlled environments or parental questionnaires, which can be time-consuming and limited in scope. Capturing developmental changes over time necessitates frequent, detailed assessments, which can be challenging to implement consistently. To address these limitations, we introduce the Pebbles App (formerly known as the kleineWeltentdecker App), a smartphone-based developmental diary designed to enhance the tracking of a child's development across multiple domains. This app enables caregivers to document their child's progress continuously, providing a flexible and comprehensive tracking tool. With the use of the Pebbles App, we aim to achieve three major goals: 1) to establish a comprehensive data set of child development, 2) to account for developmental variability across cultures beyond WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) countries, and 3) to outsource data collection to caregivers, thereby enhancing the breadth and applicability of developmental research. The Pebbles App supports open data access, facilitating collaboration with a wider community of researchers and enabling more comprehensive studies of early childhood development. The updated version has new features, developmental milestones are better tailored to individual children, and it is now accessible across multiple devices. We describe the design, questions, and questionnaires embedded in the app, as well as its technical features.

Registered Report : From pre- to post-natal brain asymmetry - callosal contribution and relationships with cognitive and genetic factors

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The human brain, despite initial symmetry, exhibits intriguing asymmetrical features. Strong associations have been established between brain asymmetry and corpus callosum structure. Prenatal brain asymmetries appear around 11-13 weeks of gestation, reflecting early genetic-developmental left-right axis formation. These asymmetries affect cognitive

and socio-emotional processes, with implications for neurodevelopmental and psychiatric disorders. However, the developmental trajectory of brain asymmetry from prenatal to postnatal stages, its interaction with corpus callosum integrity, and its effects on cognitive and socio-emotional development remain unclear.

This study aims to trace anatomical brain asymmetry from pre- to postnatal periods in typically developing (TD) children and those with corpus callosum dysgenesis (CCD). Using longitudinal, multimodal data from Lausanne and Geneva University Hospitals, it will evaluate relationships between callosal biomarkers, cognitive and socio-emotional development, and genetic origins. The study includes T2-weighted foetal brain MRI scans acquired between 20-35 gestational weeks and follow-up data (T1-weighted MRI, neuropsychological tests, questionnaires and saliva DNA sampling) at school age (6-12 years) from 90 children (60 TD, 30 CDD) born between 2012 and 2021.

Brain images will be segmented using FoetalSynthSeg and SynthSeg to calculate hemispheric asymmetry indexes. Genetic analysis will focus on TUBB3 Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms, linked to callosal formation and brain asymmetry. Random effects models will assess group differences and asymmetry maturation. Associations between asymmetry indexes, cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes, and SNPs will be examined using sparse partial least squares correlations.

This study leverages unique longitudinal data to enhance understanding of brain asymmetry development and its relationships to cognition and genetic variations.

The role of co-sleeping in the association between emotion regulation and sleep quality in early childhood

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Emotion regulation (ER) and sleep are essential for healthy development. Yet, more than a third of children suffer from poor sleep. Here we aim to examine the effects of ER on sleep, specifically investigating the role of co-sleeping.

We hypothesize that low emotion regulation is associated with a lower sleep quality and more co-sleeping. Co-sleeping is a controversial factor since children who co-sleep tend to show poorer sleep quality. However, cultures that tend to co-sleep show various benefits. Co-sleeping can be considered as a form of social support. Since social support has been shown to moderate the effects of stress on sleep, we hypothesized that co-sleeping would moderate the relationship between ER and sleep quality as a protective factor. To better explain the mechanism of co-sleeping, we hypothesized that sleep anxiety would mediate the relationship between ER and co-sleeping.

A sample of 105 children aged 3-4 years from 16 playgroups was assessed in various ways to measure their ER and sleep. ER was measured through observations in a semi-standardized group play situation. Videos were analyzed with a standardized manual (ERSS).

Additionally, educators provided reports on the children's ER, and parents reported on their children's sleep quality (e.g. sleep duration, sleep anxiety, and co-sleeping).

Generalized Linear Models were used to analyze the data, showing that high levels of observed and teacher-reported ER are associated with lower sleep quality and more co-sleeping. A full mediation emerged: Children with lower observed and teacher-reported ER were more likely to co-sleep because they experienced more sleep anxiety. Contrary to our prediction, co-sleeping moderated only the relationship between observed ER and sleep duration, but not as a protective factor. Children with lower ER slept for a shorter duration if they were co-sleeping.

Our findings shed new light on the importance of addressing ER to improve children's sleep.

"So Early Already?" Why Media Education In Schools Needs To Start Early. Requirements For The Teachers Of Today And Tomorrow."

Dr. Eveline Hipeli
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It is now undisputed that media play a major role in the lives of children and young people. In order for them to learn to become responsible members and decision-makers in a media society, they must acquire skills from an early age that will benefit them in their dealings with all media. They acquire these skills at home with their parents, partly at school and also through communication with peers. But what exactly can schools contribute?

The prospective teachers who are training at teacher training colleges have heterogeneous media and user skills. The curriculum in Switzerland clearly specifies what knowledge teachers should pass on to children. However, not all teachers are equally media literate due to their personal use and experience. Furthermore, a high level of personal media affinity or competence does not mean that this knowledge can be passed on to pupils in an age-appropriate setting. This requires media education expertise. And this is constantly evolving in its subtleties due to the development of new tools such as artificial intelligence, which requires a more in-depth examination of these topics.

Using examples from Switzerland, specifically from the Zurich University of Teacher Education in the field of media education, this contribution to a panel discussion will show how prospective teachers are currently being prepared for their task of teaching young children the necessary media skills. It will illustrate what future-relevant knowledge nursery and primary school teachers acquire in modules and how they learn to prepare themselves and their pupils for the world of today and tomorrow.

Predictors and outcomes of digital media use in Swiss preschool-aged children. Concepts and preliminary results of the SWIPE spinoff projects.

Chair(s): **Fabio Sticca** (Interkantonale Hochschule für Heilpädagogik, Switzerland)

Digital media is a central part of modern life, significantly impacting both adults and children. The use of screens by children is a widely debated topic due to concerns about potential risks. The SWIPE Study (SWIss study on Preschool screen Exposure) is a nationwide project in Switzerland that investigates how young children and their parents engage with digital media. The study involves over 3,500 parents with children aged from birth to five years across various regions of Switzerland. In addition to the main research on the frequency and nature of digital media use within families, several spinoff projects explore additional research questions. In this session, three of these spinoff studies will be presented, focusing on their concepts, data analysis plans, and preliminary findings. Specifically, these spinoffs examine associations with children's emotional and behavioral disorders, children's media fandom, and parental expectations of educational professionals.

Presentations of the Symposium

Behavior, emotions and media use in early childhood - interrelations between young children's screen time, mental health problems and parental emotion regulation

Jalisse Schmid[1], Margarete Bolten[2], Eva Unternährer[3]
[1]HETSL, [2]UPK Basel, [3]Universität Basel

Early childhood is an extremely fundamental phase for the behavioral and emotional development of children due to the rapid brain development during this period in life. In early childhood, children acquire, among other things, socio- emotional skills in interactions with their environment. If important developmental stimuli are not provided during this early developmental phase, or if the wrong stimuli are encountered, it can have consequences well into adulthood. Some studies show that excessive consumption of digital media in early childhood may impact neurodevelopment with a potentially unfavorable effect on the development of various behavioral and emotional competencies. However, especially for infants and toddlers, the association between screen media exposure and developmental outcomes is still very limited.

In our spin-off study, we focus on the potential effects of screen media use by children as well as their parents on emotional and behavioral problems in children aged 0 to 5 years. We expect an association of child screen media exposure (longer duration, passive versus more active consumption, and use interfering with daily routines) with emotional and behavioral difficulties. In addition, we expect that children will have more emotional and

behavioral difficulties if their parents use their smartphones during parent-child interactions more often. Acknowledging that this relationship is complex, we will evaluate moderating factors influencing the impact of early media use on social-emotional development like child age and gender, parental emotion regulation, or socio-economic status.

Media fandom between parents and children

Eleonora Benecchi, Petra Mazzoni
USI

We explore the concept of intergenerational media fandom between parents and children, offering preliminary results from our SWIPE spin-off. Media fandom, characterized by passionate and creative engagement with popular texts, has largely overlooked young children, despite their early participation in fan-like behaviors such as imaginative play, cosplay, and media rewriting. Drawing on insights from Kyra Hunting (2019) and other foundational works, this study fills a crucial gap by focusing on children under 6, a demographic often ignored in fandom research. Methodologically, the spin-off adapts the Fan Identity Questionnaire (Lozano et al., 2020) to assess fan behavior through four dimensions: experience, viewing, collecting, and knowledge. We will address the challenges of studying young children by collecting data from parents as intermediaries, allowing for better access, consent, and insights into how children may be socialized into fandom through their parents. Additionally, we examine the reverse socialization process, how children's engagement with media may influence their parents' fan experiences.

This spin-off offers insights into the current state and future trajectory of fan cultures, expanding the understanding of how early childhood experiences shape fan identities and the intergenerational dynamics of fandom in contemporary society.

Parents' expectations and wishes for pedagogical professionals

Karina Iskrzycki, Carine Burkhardt Bossi
PHTG

Children's daily lives are increasingly shaped by digital devices. Early childhood media use mainly takes place in two settings: the family and educational institutions. The younger a child is, the more these environments influence media-related factors such as duration, content, and function. Therefore, sustainable digital education should be viewed as a shared responsibility between families and educational institutions.

This spin-off examines the importance of media-related cooperation between educational institutions (e.g., daycare centers) and parents. Using the Spinoff questionnaire, we aim to identify parents' expectations and wishes towards early childhood professionals and educational settings regarding digital media use. Do parents consider early childhood settings as "safe spaces" where children are sheltered from media exposure, or do they view professionals as valuable resources for early childhood media education?

The spin-off provides insights into preliminary results and opens up a discussion on conceptual considerations in this field.

Symposium of the SIG Neurocognitive Development

Neural underpinnings of developing mental and motor functions in health and disease: The SIG Neurocognitive Development Symposium

Chair(s): **Paul Matusz** (University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland (HES-SO) Valais, Switzerland)

Human development involves dynamic, multi-level interactions between genetic, epigenetic and experiential factors. Thus, to support healthy development and improve clinical care, we need to study the neural underpinnings of developing mental and motor functions. In Switzerland, state-of-art neurodevelopmental research is conducted, however, too often in isolation. This symposium presents a selection of inter-disciplinary research done by scientists federated under the SSECR's SIG Neurocognitive Development. Nadine Messerli-Burgy discusses a study of stress regulation in children during a moderate stressor. Diurnal cortisol and ECG were measured at 3 months prior, during and 3 months post kindergarten entry. Preliminary analyses indicate, intriguingly, high stability of cortisol regulation. Pamela Banta Lavenex discusses differences between typically developing (TD) children and individuals with Down (DS) or Williams (WS) syndrome in conditional learning (which enables flexible reasoning). In three touch-screen tasks, TD children manifested it at 7.5 years of age, present only in 12% DS and 15% WS individuals. Thus, some forms of flexible reasoning may be not available to genetic populations. Marion Décaillet discuss results on links between brain structure and executive/attentional capacities in 8-years-old very-preterm children. A factor analysis showed that inhibition, attentiveness, and flexibility are inversely related to cortical thickness in cognitive-control cortices, clarify neural underpinnings of cognitive abilities in preterm children. Vanessa Siffredi presents a systematic review of non-pharmaceutical interventions on neurodevelopmental outcomes in preterm children aged 4-18 years. Extant interventions have de facto limited impact, due to methodological limitations. Symposium then discusses the scientific and practical implications of neurocognitive research in Switzerland.

Presentations of the Symposium

Development in biological stress regulation in preschool children around typical stressful life events

Nadine Messerli-Bürgy
CHUV, University of Lausanne

The aim of the study was to investigate how biological stress regulation changes in preschool children during a moderate stress exposure (kindergarten entry). Methods: repeated home measures of stress regulation (diurnal cortisol profiles and ECG

measurement) at 3 months pre-kindergarten entry, during kindergarten entry and 3 months post-kindergarten entry. Findings: Preliminary analyses indicate a high stability of cortisol regulation.

Conditional learning abilities in Down syndrome, Williams syndrome and typically developing children

Pamela Banta Lavenex[1], Emilie Bochud-Fragnière[2], Pierre Lavenex[2]
[1]UniDistance Switzerland, [2]University of Lausanne

We investigated whether 3-12-year-old TD children and individuals with Down (DS) or Williams (WS) syndrome are capable of conditional learning, a hippocampus- dependent process enabling flexible reasoning, using three touch-screen tasks: a visual learning task to assess unconditional learning (A > B and C > D), a 3-item conditional learning task (A > B, B > C), and a 5-item conditional learning task (A > B, B > C, C > D, D > E) to further assess transitive inference abilities. Most participants exhibited unconditional learning, but only 12% of individuals with DS and 15% of individuals with WS exhibited conditional learning, and the majority of TD children did not exhibit conditional learning until 7.5 years of age. Our findings indicate that conditional learning and transitive inference, which depend on late-developing brain structures including the hippocampus and the prefrontal cortex, emerge tardively in children and are beyond reach for most individuals with DS and WS, likely due to impairments in hippocampal and pre-frontal processing in these syndromes.

Brain Structures and Their Association with Executive and Attentional Abilities in Very Preterm 8-Year-Old Children

Marion Décaillet, Yasser Alemán-Gómez, Mikkel Schöttner, Solange Denervaud, Cleo Huguenin-Virchaux, Laureline Besuchet, Céline J. Fischer-Fumeaux, Patric Hagman, Juliane Schneider
CHUV, University of Lausanne

Very preterm children are prone to a variety of neurodevelopmental deficits, particularly regarding their attention and executive functions (i.e., inhibition, shifting, and working memory). Yet, the underlying neural structures and processes are not yet clearly defined. Here thirty-three very preterm children (M gestational age = 27.22 weeks, SD = 1.36) aged 8-10 years chronological (M age = 8.85, SD = 0.49, 17 girls) underwent a brain MRI session alongside neurodevelopmental testing. We performed a factor analysis to group the different variables measuring executive functioning and attentional capacities. The analysis revealed a three factors design, in which the first factor was mostly driven by inhibitory abilities, the second factor by attentiveness and the third factor by flexibility. From T1-weighted MRI images, we extracted the anterior cingulate cortex, and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, based on fMRI meta-analyses to encompass brain regions involved into

attention and executive processes. We estimated their cortical thickness, fractional anisotropy, volume, cortical surface area, and betweenness centrality. Significant negative associations were found after multiple comparisons corrections and adjustment for age and gender between cortical thickness and executive functions and attentional abilities. While thinner left anterior cingulate cortex was related with higher factor 1 (i.e., mostly inhibitory capacities) and factor 2 (i.e., primarily attentiveness), thinner right dorsolateral prefrontal cortex was associated with better factor 3

(i.e., largely flexibility). These findings provide new insights of brain structures underpinning executive and attentional abilities in very preterm children at school-age.

Non-pharmacological interventions and neurodevelopmental outcomes in school-age preterm children and adolescents: A systematic review

Vanessa Siffredi[1], Russia Ha-Vinh Leuchter[2]

[1]CHUV, University of Lausanne, [2]independent researcher

Children born preterm (born <37 weeks of gestation) are at increased risk of neurodevelopmental disabilities in the long-term. This study aims to systematically reviewed non-pharmaceutical interventions aiming to enhance neurodevelopment in preterm children and adolescents (aged 4-18). A systematic review of the literature was conducted for all studies published up to May 1st, 2022. Eligible studies were identified in Medline, Web of Science and PsychInfo databases, and were evaluated for inclusion by 2 independent reviewers using predetermined inclusion criteria. All studies were screened with the Bias In Non-randomized Studies of Interventions (ROBIN-I) tool and when relevant, the version 2 of the Cochrane risk-of-bias tool for randomized trials - RoB 2. Out of 1778 articles identified, 23 were included in this review. Quality assessment indicated 52.2% with moderate, 21.7% with low, and 26.1% with serious bias. 60.9% were randomized controlled trials and 21.7% used a pre vs post design. Interventions included Cogmed Working Memory Training® (43.5%), BrainGame Brian (13%), physiotherapy (13%), and others (30.4%). Qualitative examination of the impact of the different interventions showed only limited effect of all interventions on neurodevelopmental outcomes in preterm children and adolescents aged 4 to 18 years.

Although initial research examining school-age interventions and their impact on neurodevelopmental outcomes of preterm children and adolescents showed important methodological limitations, significant efforts have been undertaken in recent years to employ robust methodologies. Nevertheless, there is still a pressing need for well-designed large-scale clinical trials to investigate the efficacy of non-pharmaceutical interventions in this vulnerable population.

HEY - Hometreatment Early Years. A mobile and digital treatment program in the first year of live

Katrin Braune-Krickau[1], Laura Wade-Bohleber[1], Heike Edmaier[2], Jessica Pehlke-Milde[2]

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Psychiatric disorders in the parents, regulatory problems in the infant and other family stressors can affect the parent-infant relationship and influence child development.

HEY is a psychotherapeutic treatment program for families with infants (up to one year) that combines home visits and digital sessions (2 sessions per week for 3 months). HEY is designed to fill a gap in treatment for families who need more support than outpatient services can provide. The treatment interventions are attachment focused and aim to strengthen parental reflective skills, parental sensitivity, and infant affect regulation.

The program is run by two experienced psychotherapists. Collaboration and coordination with midwives are an important part of the program, especially at the time of referral. HEY will start in September 2024 with two families, accompanied by an evaluation using questionnaires and observational measures such as the Infant Care Index.

HEY was developed in collaboration with the Institute of Midwifery and Reproductive Health and the Section of Clinical Psychology and Health Psychology at ZHAW Departments of Psychology and Health Sciences. The development of the program was financially supported by the Child and Youth Public Health Research Competence Network (CYPHER) at ZHAW.

The workshop will give an overview of the development of the program and present the treatment concept, but mainly focus on our first experiences with HEY, including clinical impressions.

Workshop-Methods: Presentation of Model, Case illustration, interactive discussions with participants during presentation, short group exchanges about specific topics.

Goals: The participants will

- learn about our HEY-treatment model and it's application with 2 families
- broaden their knowledge of various aspects of hometreatments
- learn about the digital (online) element within the model
- get an insight into the HEY-model development process and be able to make use of model development steps for own treatment ideas

Symposium V

Smartphones in Early Childhood

Chair(s): **Katrin Braune-Krickau** (ZHAW, Department of Applied Psychology, Switzerland)

We still know little about the effects of parental and child use of digital devices in early childhood on parents and children and the parent-child relationship. The symposium will give an overview of results from three research studies on these topics: the iKiDiM-Study, conducted at the Marie Meierhofer Institute for the Child and the Smart Start and Smart Toddlers Studies, funded by the SNSF and conducted by a research team at the Institute of Midwifery and Reproductive Health and the Section of Clinical Psychology at ZHAW Departments of Psychology and Health Sciences.

The first presentation of the symposium will give an overview of quantitative data from the Smart Toddlers and Smart Start Studies, including aspects and determinants of parental smartphone use from pregnancy to 36 months and correlations between parental smartphone use and the quality of parent-child interaction.

This second contribution will focus on qualitative findings from the Smart Toddlers study, examining parental smartphone use from the first year after birth to the age of three. Based on 47 in-depth interviews, it explores how parents' smartphone use and attitudes change over time, highlighting differences between mothers and fathers, and across different social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

The third contribution assesses challenges of parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds regarding their young children's media use. Understanding these challenges is a prerequisite to develop useful interventions. The study applied a thorough outreach strategy.

Participants will

- learn about aspects of parental smartphone use that are relevant for the quality of parent-child interaction in early childhood

- understand how parental perspectives on smartphone use evolve over time, influenced by social, cultural and economic factors.

- gain insight into the evolving dynamics of parental smartphone use in early childhood and its impact on family life.

Presentations of the Symposium

Parental Smartphone Use in Early Childhood - Results from the Smart Start and Smart Toddlers Study

Katrin Braune-Krickau[1], Agnes von Wyl[1], Schneebeli Larissa[1], Gemperle Michael[2]
[1]ZHAW Angewandte Psychologie, [2]ZHAW Gesundheit

The goal of our two research studies Smart Start and Smart Toddlers is to understand the role and significance of parental smartphone use in early childhood, both for parents, but also regarding parental sensitivity and the quality of parent-child interactions and various aspects of child development.

In our SNSF-studies Smart Start (pregnancy to 3 months, N=190) and Smart Toddlers (14-36 months, N=263) we assessed various aspects of parental smartphone use such as use time, type of use, smartphone addiction, use in the presence of the infant as well as changes in parental smartphone use over time, correlations between parental smartphone use and the quality of parent-child interaction, and various child outcomes. We also collected data on children's use of digital media. Parents completed online surveys at 6 timepoints between pregnancy and age 36 months of their first-born child. At child-age 3 months parent-infant interaction was videotaped and assessed with the Care-Index (Crittenden, 1979), when children were 20 months old we conducted a smartphone-adapted still face experiment (Tronick et al., 1978). In addition to quantitative data, we also conducted qualitative interviews – their analysis will be presented in the contribution of Dr. Michael Gemperle.

Results from the Smart Start Study will be presented regarding changes in parental smartphone use from pregnancy to 3 months after birth (Wade-Bohleber et al., 2024) and regarding parental smartphone use and the quality of parent-child interaction (von Wyl et al., in work) and regarding contributors to parental smartphone addiction in toddler age (Schneebeli et al., 2024, submitted for review) and our smartphone adapted still face paradigm (Schneebeli et al., in work).

Results will be discussed with a focus on recommendations for parents of infants and young children and further research needs.

Ambivalence and Adaptation: A Qualitative Analysis of Parental Smartphone Use from Postpartal Period to Toddlerhood

Michael Gemperle
ZHAW Insitute for Midwivery and Reproductive Health

Within the Smart Toddler Study – described in the abstract of Dr. Braune-Krickau - we conducted qualitative interviews with parents one year after the birth of their first child, and again two years later. These interviews explored the real-world significance of smartphone use in everyday parenting. In 47 in-depth interviews with mothers and fathers, we examined the evolving dynamics of smartphone use and its impact on parents over time.

Initial analysis shows that parents often feel ambivalent about smartphone use, particularly in the immediate postpartum period, expressing concerns about balancing attention to their child and digital engagement. However, by the time their children reached the age of three, parents adopted a more pragmatic view, seeing smartphones increasingly as tools for managing personal and parental responsibilities, with less concern about negative effects. At the same time, there are clear differences between mothers and fathers in how they use and perceive smartphones, as well as between parents with more or less social, cultural and economic resources.

These findings highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of parental smartphone use, recognising the different ways in which parents manage their use in response to personal and social demands, the different situations of mothers and fathers, and the influence of social, cultural and economic factors on parental smartphone use and its perception.

Daily Challenges Faced by Parents with Lower Socio-Economic Status Regarding Their Child's Media Usage

Raquel Paz Castro
Marie Meierhofer Institute for the Child

Aims: Little is known about the readiness of parents with lower SES to change the media usage of their young children and the daily challenges they face with digital media. However, these information are important for building tailored interventions.

Method: In March 2024, 107 parents with at least one young child (< 5 years old) were surveyed regarding their daily challenges with digital media. To reach individuals with lower SES, an outreach approach was implemented in family centers and pediatric practices in areas with geographically lower SES in the Zurich region.

Results: The majority of respondents were female (82, 76.6%) and on average 35.3 (SD: 4.7) years old. Over three-quarters (82, 76.6%) had a migration background, and 56.6% (60) attended at most a secondary school. Participants reported on average a subjective SES of 6.1 (SD: 1.5; scale 1-10). Following daily challenges were identified: implementation of rules, unequal attitudes in the family environment, media exposure through siblings, and managing household tasks without digital media usage. SES correlated with the readiness to change regarding their own (ρ = .256, p = .012) but not the child's media usage (ρ = .12, p = .23; lower vs. higher SES: 25.7% vs. 21.3%). These results remain unchanged when controlling for other factors (number of children, age of focus child, education, gender, age of parents, etc.).

Discussion: The outreach approach was successful in reaching the target group. SES is not related to the readiness to change child media usage. The intervention "Kinder und Digitale Medien" (iKiDiM) of the MMI will build upon this and the relevant daily challenges.

Social-emotional learning in early relationships

Chair(s): **Tatiana Diebold** (Thurgau University of Teacher Education)

Preschool and early school years are critical periods during which children face increasing social and emotional challenges while simultaneously developing essential skills to navigate these challenges and to meet the social demands of everyday life. Growing research indicates that early social and emotional skills are crucial for both current and future psychosocial adjustment. Evidence also shows that socialization agents, including parents, educators, and peers, play a significant role in supporting social-emotional development across various levels of a child's environment. This symposium brings together recent studies that focus on social-emotional competence in early relationships and offers key insights for enhancing social-emotional development both in family settings and in (pre-)school classrooms. The first study uses behavioral data to examine how individual social skills contribute to a positive peer climate in kindergarten classrooms. Also focusing on peer interactions, the second study relates preschoolers' emotion regulation in dyadic play situations and emotion knowledge with their peer relationship quality. The third study addresses the association between emotion regulation and externalizing behaviors in preschool children, with a focus on the moderating role of emotional and behavioral support by educators. Finally, the fourth study examines the long-term effects of early intervention on behavior regulation in psychosocially stressed families.Together, these studies highlight the critical importance of social and emotional skills in early childhood development. They demonstrate how individual competencies, educator support, and early interventions contribute to positive social and behavioral outcomes, providing valuable implications for practical applications in both educational and familial contexts.

Presentations of the Symposium

How to get along with others: the contribution of individuals' social skills to a positive peer climate in kindergarten classrooms

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A positive peer climate is an important prerequisite for academic engagement in kindergarten classrooms, yet it is unclear how individuals' social skills contribute to positive peer relations at the classroom level. To examine these associations, we assessed children's social skills in direct assessments with vignettes and a behavioral task. We hypothesize that children's observed behavior is more predictive of peer climate than children's hypothetical scenario responses. Interpersonal negotiation strategies were assessed using a short version of the SERAIS (Kim & Tubbs Dolan, 2019), delivered through an app. Children were presented with three vignettes depicting challenging social situations with peers—such as not being asked to join a game or having their artwork damaged by spilled water—and were

asked to indicate whether they would employ certain negotiation strategies, e.g. appeal to authority, aggression and resolution oriented. Children's cooperative skills were evaluated in a collaborative problem-solving task with the BASES (Lieb et al., 2023). In groups of up to six peers, children solved a puzzle. Their behavior was evaluated from video recordings of these sessions using a detailed scoring manual. Peer climate was assessed through a teacher questionnaire. Participants included 654 children of the first cohort of the LEAPS study, in their first year of kindergarten (M(age) = 60 months; SD(age) = 4 months), from 94 classrooms. Data collection has been completed, and the rating process is currently underway. The findings will be discussed regarding their practical and research implications.

The role of emotional competence for the quality of peer relationships in preschool classrooms

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The development of emotional competence is a major milestone in early childhood and is interconnected with other developmental areas. Providing a key foundation for children's healthy development, emotional competance has been identified as having short- and long-term impact on children's social development and behavioral adjustment (Valiente et al., 2020). Studies have also shown that skills comprising emotional competence are crucial for successful social relations in preschool children (Lemerise & Harper, 2014).Being able to form positive peer relationships is also critical for children's healthy development and their concurrent and later psychosocial adjustment (Denham, 2007). The present study therefore aims to investigate associations between preschoolers' emotional competence and their relationships with peers. Based on previous research, we hypothesized that there would be a positive association between both emotion knowledge and emotion regulation competence and the quality of preschooler's relationships with peers. 113 children (M = 46.4 months, SD = 6.6; 45% girls) from Swiss playgroups were observed playing with randomly assigned peers in semi-standardizes dyadic play situations. Videorecorded play situations were then coded using the Emotion Regulation Scoring System (ERSS). Children's emotion knowledge was assessed with the Adaptive Test of Emotion Knowledge (ATEM). Furthermore, playgroup educators completed the SOCOMP questionnaire on children's peer relationship quality. First results suggest that both emotion knowledge and emotion regulation but, most importantly, regulation strategies that children use during play situations seem to be relevant for the quality of peer relationships in preschool classrooms. The results underscore the importance of emotional competence in early peer relationships.

The Association of Emotion Regulation and the Development of Externalizing Behavior in Preschool Children: The Moderating Role of Emotional and Behavioral Support by Playgroup Educators

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Emotion regulation (ER) is a process that occurs when the experience and/or expression of emotion risk compromising the goals and expectations of the individual and/or social partners and leads to changes in intensity, duration or type of emotion. Deficits in ER are considered to be a predictor of lower academic achievement, well-being and more externalizing behavior cross-sectionally and longitudinally. The emotional and behavioral support (EBS) of early childhood professionals can be regarded as a protective factor that weakens the negative relationship between ER and externalizing behavior.

ER was observed with the Emotion Regulation Scoring System (ERSS) at timepoint one, when N = 99 preschool children (Mage: 44.87 months; 40% girls) participated in a semi-standardized group situation on the playgroup premises. On the same day of visit the EBS in the playgroups (N = 16) was assessed with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS Toddler) during the daily routine. The playgroup educators reported on the children's conduct problems and hyperactivity with the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) on three timepoints. Due to the nested structure of the dataset, analyses will be conducted with the use of mixed linear models with cross-level interaction.

It is hypothesized that lower scores of observed ER are associated with a stronger increase of reported conduct problems and hyperactivity while higher levels of EBS will weaken the expected relationship. The results will contribute to highlight the positive impact early childhood professionals have on the life of children if the quality of interactions is high.

Promoting Behavior Regulation in Psychosocially Stressed Families: Results from the ZEPPELIN Study

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Experiences in early childhood are important for the development of behavior regulation. Various prevention programs therefore aim to strengthen favorable developmental conditions from birth - especially in psychosocially stressed families. However, the medium and long-term effects of early interventions on social-emotional skills have rarely been investigated to date. Against this background, we address the question whether early support with the home visiting program «Parents as Teachers» (PAT) has a positive effect on the development of behavioral regulation at preschool and school age.

The data was collected in the ZEPPELIN longitudinal study in communities around Zurich, Switzerland. In this randomized controlled trial, 248 psychosocially stressed families with 261 newborns were assigned to the intervention group (IG; n = 139) or the control group (KG; n = 122). Families in the IG were supported with PAT during the first three years of the child's life. Families in the CG received no intervention apart from the general services provided by the communities.

After completion of the intervention at the age of three, experiments on self-control show that children from the IG have better self-regulatory skills than children from the CG. In the first and second kindergarten, the advantages of the intervention group over the control group are again evident. Analyses for school age indicate that early support with PAT also has a positive effect on children's behavior regulation in the second year of primary school.

The results are discussed regarding the strengthening of self-regulatory skills in children from psychosocially disadvantaged families.

Workshop II

Development of Swiss guidelines for the management of perinatal depression

Steering committee Perinatal SIG

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Background: The Perinatal Special Interest Group (Perinatal SIG) is currently developing the Swiss guidelines for the management of perinatal depression. Perinatal depression is one of the most common mental health problems affecting women during the perinatal period, their child' and their co-parent's well-being. A multidisciplinary approach is needed to respond to the needs of these patients and their families, but treatment guidelines are still missing in Switzerland. To fill this gap, members of the Perinatal SIG, , have conducted a systematic search of international guidelines. They critically appraised these guidelines and extracted relevant recommendations to adopt or adapt them to the Swiss context, guided by the "Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation of Evidence to Decision frameworks for adopting, adapting, and de novo developing trustworthy recommendations" (GRADE-ADOLOPMENT) approach. More than 200 recommendations were identified and evaluated by experts, including healthcare providers and service users.

Workshop method: The workshop will feature a panel discussion where experts will address challenges encountered during the guideline development process. The session will include a practical demonstration of a critical appraisal using the AGREE II instrument. Additionally, participants will engage in a task focused on the selection of recommendations through the Delphi method, exemplified by discussing a recommendation lacking consensus.

Goal: The workshop serves the purpose of further training and the exchange of experience between experts and committee members involved in the development of guidelines. It will provide valuable insights into guideline development, benefiting other groups of experts in this and related fields.

Workshop III

"Eltern kleiner Kinder ansprechen und beraten"

Joachim Zahn
Msc Soziale Arbeit, Leiter von zischtig.ch

Es gibt viele verunsicherte Eltern, die überfordert sind, oder solche die schon eine klare Meinung zu digitalen Medien haben. Aber wie werden Eltern am besten bezüglich Mediennutzung angesprochen? Um so mehr, als in den ersten Lebensjahren eher die elterlichen Verhaltensweisen problematisiert werden müssten? Wie ist das mit der Screentime? Mit smarten Geräten? Was können Beratende tun? Wie gehen wir mit kognitiver Dissonanz um? Sind Verhaltensänderungen überhaupt möglich? Wie könnte eine entsprechende Praxis aussehen? Joachim Zahn von zischtig.ch wird mögliche Antworten auf diese und weitere Fragen präsentieren, sowie einen unterhaltsamen illustrierten Einblick in die medienpädagogische Arbeit und Praxis geben.