

news release

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University of Oregon Professor Tom Dishion has been notified by the National Institutes of Health that the Early Steps Project will be funded for an additional five years, beginning in May 2008. Early Steps is a collaborative program of research initiated in 2000 at three locations: Eugene, Oregon; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Charlottesville, Virginia. It has integrated developmental and intervention research in the design of a brief family-centered intervention to prevent problem behavior and early-onset substance abuse among high-risk families with toddlers. The 731 participating families enrolled in the program through the Women, Infants, and Children Nutritional Supplement Program (WIC). Results of the project include reduced problem behavior and emotional distress in children from ages 2 to 4 years and improved family management practices.

The expanded Early Steps Program will adapt the family intervention services to provide support for each child's transition into the public school system. Analyses from this study are expected to enhance understanding of the early emergence of school competence, early problem behavior, and emotional distress. The research team will assess the feasibility of transitioning the WIC-based intervention services to the public school environment to reduce risk for problem behavior, improve school competence, reduce children's mental health disorders, and reduce risk of drug use among school children.

For more information about this grant award or other research conducted at the Child and Family Center, contact CFC Codirector Dr. Tom Dishion at 346-4805.

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