

FAMILY TRANSITIONS PROJECT



Newsletter

2008

Institute for Social and Behavioral Research

Message from Rand Conger Project Director

This year we had the privilege of talking with close to 90% of Target participants from the Family Transitions Project. We are truly grateful and appreciate all those who have contributed to the project over the years. It is amazing that the study just finished its 19th year!! I never would have imagined back in 1989, when the Target youth first began participating, that we would still be going strong today. Thank you to all who have made this project a success.

I also want to extend our appreciation to all those who were involved in the genetics portion of the study during this past year. This is an exciting new area which allows us to understand the role that genes play in emotional and behavioral health. It will help us understand how certain genetic characteristics improve the quality of family relationships, emotional well-being, and individual accomplishments even during challenging life circumstances. This new area of biomedical sciences is a logical step for the Family Transitions Project to take as studying human well-being has been an overall aim of the project since it began in 1989. The knowledge gained will be extremely valuable in increasing understanding of how genes promote healthy family relationships, improve emotional and behavioral functioning, and reduce risk for problems in these areas.

Because of the important role that genes play in human development, we are currently planning to continue this work to include Parents and Siblings of the Target participants. Some of you have already been contacted to participate in this part of the study and we will be contacting others to request their participation during the next few years.

During the next two years, we hope to conduct brief telephone interviews with all Target participants, just as we have done in the past. We also plan to continue our work with young children by asking Targets with two year old children to participate in either an in-home visit or by completing questionnaires. Then, in 2010-2011, our hope is to collect information from all Targets, their romantic partners, and their children. By then, children in the study will range in age from 18 months to 18 years!

We are very proud that this project has been recognized by grant reviewers as a National Treasure. YOU ARE A NATIONAL TREASURE. The dedication of all participants over the past nineteen years is what has made this study successful. Together, we have made important contributions to understanding how families function and how children develop across multiple generations. Because this knowledge is provided to educators and to those in the helping professions, you have played a vital role in helping society as a whole. Thank you for your continued support!

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Message from Sarah Spilman, Assistant Scientist

Update on Project Web Site

Last fall we unveiled a new web site for study participants. We received valuable feedback from study members who told us they enjoyed learning more about the project and reminiscing about the project's early history. We are excited to announce that you will no longer need a password to use this site! We hope this new format will provide you the ability to access the site more easily and more often in order to learn about study findings and to communicate with us (for example, scheduling visits or updating your contact information).

Even though we've removed the password requirement, this site remains a confidential and private way for you to communicate with us. We do not store your name or contact information on the web server. When you use the Contact Information forms, the information is sent to the Project Manager in an encrypted email, and only the Project Manager can access this email information. As always, study findings are reported in summary form on the web site and in our publications, never in such a way that an individual or family could be identified.

The study web site is found at <http://tran.isbr.iastate.edu>. Information has been updated for the current wave of data collection, and we also present relevant information on study findings and publications. We hope you will find time to peruse the site to learn more about your study.

If you have suggestions for content you would like to see on the site, or if you have any questions about the site, please contact the Project Manager using the form on the web site, or by sending an email to transitions@iastate.edu.

Message from Debbie Bahr, Project Manager

As always, I extend my sincere appreciation for your past and future contributions to the Family Transitions Project. Just a quick note to let you know what we are doing this year. We will send all Parents, Siblings and Target households this Newsletter and a Notice of Change form. In addition, a small number of randomly selected Parents and Siblings will be asked to participate in a pilot of the Genetics Study for the purpose of testing our data collection methodology. I also want to introduce Karen Bittner as Project Manager. The project has grown so much that we need 2 managers!

As Rand noted in his message, we will ask to conduct a short telephone interview with all Targets. For those with children in our 2-year-old cohort, we will ask for permission to conduct an in-home visit or to send you questionnaires. The reimbursement amount for an in-home visit is \$200, and for completing mail questionnaires the amount is \$100.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with those serving in the military, or who have family and friends who are doing so. We are also keeping those of you in areas impacted by weather-related disasters in our thoughts and prayers.

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