Core Faculty

Susan Spieker, PhD
Director, Barnard Center for Infant Mental Health and Development; Professor, Family and Child Nursing
Dr. Spieker’s research focuses on the role of parent-infant relationships in children’s social emotional development and learning. She and her colleagues develop and test prevention and intervention programs related to infant and early childhood mental health. She is an investigator with the Bounce Early Learning Network for the Educare Early Learning Center in White Center, Seattle, examining the longitudinal impact of an enhanced early learning model on high poverty children 0-5 and their families.

Cathryn Booth-LaForce, PhD, FAPS, RYT
Professor, Family & Child Nursing; The Charles and Gerda Spence Endowed Professor in Nursing
Dr. Booth-LaForce’s primary research interest is the social-emotional development of children. In longitudinal projects that follow children from infancy to adolescence, she investigates early experiences in various contexts to examine how these experiences affect children’s development, as well as testing the impact of early interventions.

Colleen O. Dillon, PhD.
Clinical Associate Professor, Family and Child Nursing; Director of Training, Barnard Center for Infant Mental Health and Development
Dr. Dillon is a licensed clinical psychologist with expertise in infant and early childhood mental health. Her clinical work and research has focused on supporting families through vulnerable developmental transitions across the lifespan. Also committed to professional development in the early childhood field, Dr. Dillon is involved in training and reflective consultation with providers in pediatrics, education and mental health.

Miriam Hirschstein, PhD
Senior Research Scientist and Affiliate Associate Faculty, Family & Child Nursing
Dr. Hirschstein is principal investigator of a study with the Educare Early Learning Center in Seattle, examining the implementation and longitudinal impact of an enhanced early learning model on high poverty children 0-5 and their families. She also teaches in the Early Childhood and Family Studies program in the College of Education. Her research focuses on implementation of school-based prevention efforts and their impact on relationships, practice, and child outcomes over time.
Diane L. Magyary, ARNP, PhD
Professor, Psychsocial & Community Health and Kathryn E. Barnard Endowed Professorship for Infant Mental Health
Dr. Magyary’s clinical research, teaching and clinical practice focuses on the socio-emotional development of infants, children and adolescents, including the prevention and treatment of mental health disorders. Family-focused evidenced-based interventions for high-risk pediatric populations are emphasized. New models of care are evaluated such as the integration of mental health services within primary care clinics and within school systems including day-cares and preschools. In the past years, she has extended her scholarship to collaborate with African-based colleagues examining community resiliency and its impact on infant/child health and development.

Monica L. Oxford, MSW, PhD
Director, NCAST Programs; Research Professor, Family & Child Nursing
Dr. Oxford’s conducts intervention research with families of infants and toddlers in vulnerable populations. Her work how context, parenting, and child characteristics combine to inform particular patterns of child outcomes and how intervention services promote both parent and child wellbeing.

Faculty Associated with the Barnard Center

Gail Houck, PhD, RN, PMHNP
Professor and Chair, Family & Child Nursing
Dr. Houck has clinical and research expertise in toddler social emotional development and parent-child relationships.

Gail E. Joseph, PhD
Associate Professor, College of Education
Dr. Joseph is Principal Investigator and Director of the Childcare Quality and Early Learning Center for Research and Professional Development.

Maureen O. Marcenko, MSW, PhD
Professor, School of Social Work, Charles O. Cressey Endowed Professor
Dr. Marcenko’s work focuses on well-being of vulnerable children and families with an emphasis on the development and testing of interventions within public child welfare and other public service systems. She is a senior researcher at Partners for Our Children.

Betty Repacholi, PhD
Associate Professor of Psychology
Dr. Repacholi’s work focuses on social-cognitive and social-emotional development during infancy and early childhood.

Susan Sandall, PhD
Professor, College of Education
Dr. Sandall is PI for the National Center on Quality Teaching & Learning, and was co-PI for the Head Start Center for Inclusion, both funded by the Office of Head Start. She is the co-developer of Building Blocks, a framework for effective teaching practices for early childhood.
Holly Schindler, PhD  
Assistant Professor, College of Education  
Dr. Schindler examines how family relationships during early childhood contribute to child and parent mental health and behavior, with an emphasis on the roles of fathers.

Ilene S. Schwartz, PhD  
Professor, College of Education; Director, Norris and Dorothy Haring Center for Applied Research and Training in Education  
Dr. Schwartz is interested in developing, evaluating and disseminating school and community-based interventions for young children with autism.

Wendy Stone, PhD  
Professor of Psychology  
Dr. Stone’s research examines early identification and intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD); early developmental processes that contribute to variability in social and behavioral outcomes in infant siblings of children with ASD; and translation of research findings into community practice settings.

Karen A. Thomas, PhD  
Professor, Family & Child Nursing, The Ellery and Kirby Cramer Endowed Professor in Nursing  
Dr. Thomas’ research interests involve effects of NICU environment on infant outcomes, thermoregulation, development of infant sleep-wake pattern and circadian rhythm, and parent-infant sleep interaction.

Teresa Ward, PhD, RN  
Associate Professor, Family & Child Nursing  
Dr. Ward examines sleep patterns and sleep disturbances in typically developing preschool children and those with chronic health conditions. She is a volunteer at PEPS (Providing Early Parent Support).