



University of
Zurich^{UZH}



JACOBS
CENTER

Annual Report

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

2023



www.jacobscenter.uzh.ch

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Smooth sailing to new horizons



Moritz Daum

Prof. Dr.

Director

Professor for Developmental Psychology
Jacobs Center Department of Psychology

Like a well-provisioned ship, we embarked on our research voyages with a clear course and a dedicated crew in 2023. Favorable winds propelled us forward, allowing us to make significant progress without encountering major storms. On this route, we furthered our mission to foster positive youth development through our collaborative and interdisciplinary research to answer the overarching question of “How do children reach their full potential?”

One of our key achievements was the inauguration of the “Research Days” initiative, which is intended to bring all Jacobs Center members together regularly to share their ongoing research projects. The initial sessions already fostered a vibrant exchange of ideas and expertise across disciplines.

We also celebrated a momentous milestone: the 20th anniversary of z-proso. This longitudinal study, a cornerstone of the Jacobs Center research, has tracked the development of nearly 1,400 individuals from childhood to young adulthood. The invaluable data collected through z-proso sheds light on the complex interplay of social and biological factors that influence youth development, informing evidence-based interventions and policy.

Looking ahead, we are excited to unveil a comprehensive new communication strategy. This strategic approach will enhance the visibility of our research findings and their impact on youth development. Through various accessible and engaging channels, we aim to translate our scientific discoveries into practical tools that empower parents, educators and policymakers to support young people in reaching their full potential.

This annual report offers a glimpse into three salient research areas the members of the Jacobs Center jointly address: the complex interplay between genes, environment and mental health; the importance of education to unlock the full potential of young minds; and how scientific insights can improve parents’ relationships with their children.

As the Director of the Jacobs Center, I am deeply grateful to our dedicated researchers and employees, our collaborators and our supporters – notably the Jacobs Foundation and the University of Zurich, who make all this work possible. In a joint effort, we are committed to advancing our understanding of child and youth development and translating the knowledge we acquire into positive change for young people.

I hope you enjoy reading the 2023 Annual Report of the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development!

A word from UZH and the Jacobs Foundation



Elisabeth Stark

Prof. Dr.
Vice-President Research of UZH
and Vice-President of the Jacobs
Center Steering Committee

As Vice President Research of the University of Zurich, I am proud to say that this annual report marks yet another significant milestone in our journey to improved understanding of child and youth development by seizing the opportunities of interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches at the intersection of sociology, psychology, neuroscience and economics are at the very heart of the Jacobs Center's mission as well as of our research strategy, and this report serves as a testament to the scientific and societal benefits of these approaches.

As we delve into the accomplishments of the past year, I would like to offer my congratulations to the 20th anniversary of the longitudinal z-proso study and its achievements. On this occasion, we celebrate not only the findings of this study but also the enduring spirit of collaboration and innovation. Thank you to all the researchers for their contributions and dedication to this great endeavour!

Celebrating the immense dedication to this project also gives me the opportunity to thank the Jacobs Foundation for its unwavering support of the Center's impressive efforts and to renew my commitment to support the Center, its members and their research efforts towards a brighter and more inclusive future for young people around the world.



Simon Sommer

Co-CEO of the Jacobs
Foundation and President
of the Jacobs Center
Steering Committee

The Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development is a result of a unique and trust-based collaboration between the University of Zurich and the Jacobs Foundation that has been in place for more twenty years: in 2023 it marked two decades of top-tier research since its inception.

This public-private partnership, initially endowed with only one professorship, has evolved significantly, today facilitating nine professorships and 50 staff across the fields of psychology, sociology and economics. This growth, jointly supported by UZH and the Jacobs Foundation, allows the Center to undertake world-class research that is both interdisciplinary and locally relevant exploring factors impacting youth development from family dynamics and education to cognitive processes.

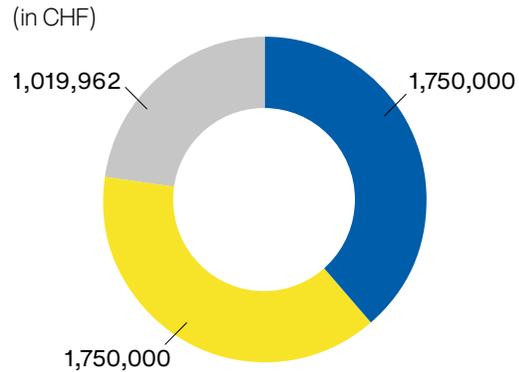
The Center's impressive achievements – visible in this annual report – underscore once again the vision of its founders, Hans Weder and Klaus J. Jacobs, in establishing a world-class hub for child and youth development research, exemplifying a lasting and fruitful partnership between academia and philanthropy.

On behalf of the Jacobs Foundation and its Board of Trustees, I thank the University of Zurich, the Jacobs Center and all its staff for another year of extraordinary collaboration.

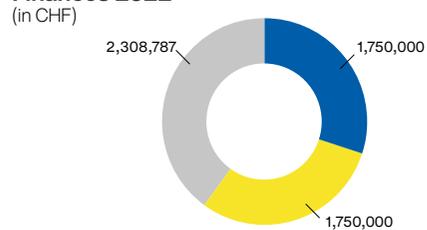
Key figures

The Jacobs Center is a joint venture between the University of Zurich and the Jacobs Foundation (JF). Total funding: CHF 70 million over 20 years, shared equally by UZH and JF. UZH and JF each contribute CHF 1.75 million annually. In 2023, the Jacobs Center acquired new third-party funding totaling CHF 1.01 million.

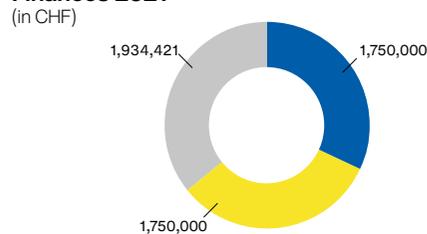
Finances 2023



Finances 2022

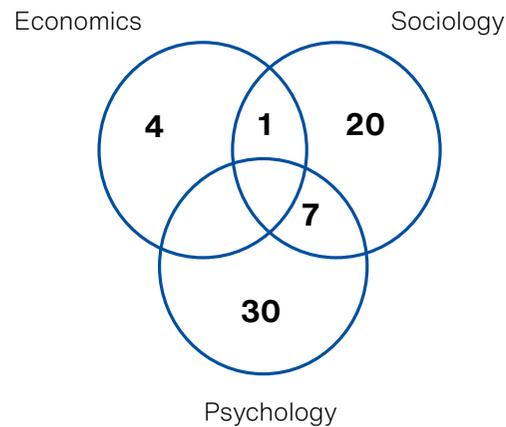


Finances 2021

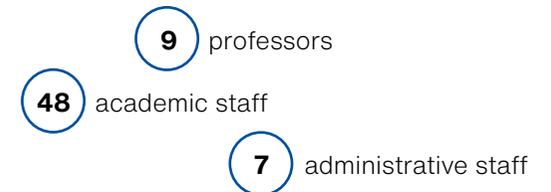
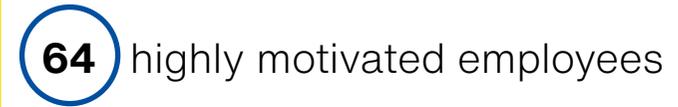


- University of Zurich
- Jacobs Foundation
- Third-party funds

Publications

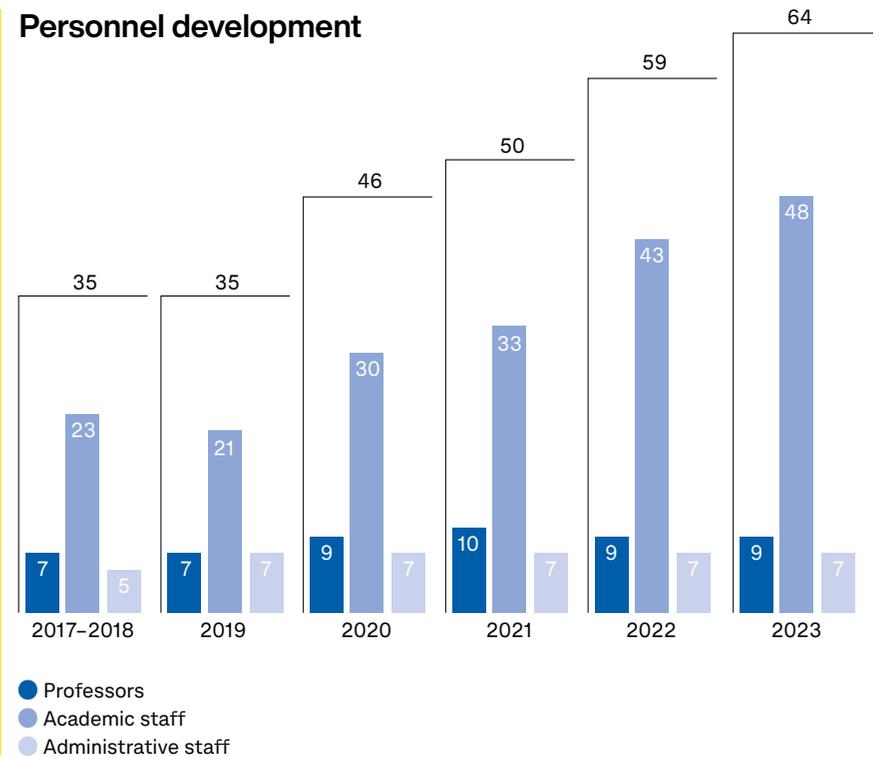


The Jacobs Center



We also work internationally and across disciplines with numerous professorships from different institutions.

Personnel development



The Jacobs Center team



- 01** Esmee Aalders
- 02** Elisa Alonso Herrero
- 03** Margit Averdijk
- 04** Till Baier
- 05** Ivan Barón
- 06** Laura Bechtiger
- 07** Sabrina Beck
- 08** Guillaume Blanc
- 09** Marco Bleiker
- 10** Julien Bodelet
- 11** Réka Borbás
- 12** Ana Bràs Monteiro
- 13** Marlis Buchmann
- 14** David Bürgin
- 15** Kaspar Burger
- 16** Lea Buzzi
- 17** Ana Costa-Ramón
- 18** Moritz Daum
- 19** Plamina Dimanova
- 20** Marta Dobrijevic
- 21** Manuel Eisner
- 22** Elena Federici
- 23** Ines Florin
- 24** Céline Gloor
- 25** Marta Golin
- 26** Sabine Gysi
- 27** Mirjam Habegger
- 28** Timo Haller
- 29** Doris Hanappi
- 30** Natascha Helbling
- 31** Jens Heumann
- 32** Mairena Hirschberg
- 33** Hira Imeri
- 34** Lydia Johnson-Ferguson
- 35** Stefan Kappeler
- 36** Stephanie Kernich
- 37** Martin Kindschi
- 38** Miriam Löffler
- 39** Michelle Loher
- 40** Mirella Manfredi
- 41** Francesca Mele
- 42** Mary Milanovic
- 43** Lea Mörsdorf
- 44** Thomas Poppenwimmer
- 45** Nina Raduner
- 46** Nora Raschle
- 47** Sudharshan Ravi
- 48** Denis Ribeaud
- 49** Joanna Rutkowska
- 50** Sebastian Sauppe
- 51** Sofia Scatolin
- 52** Kevin Schönholzer
- 53** Maria Schönholzer
- 54** Francesco Serra
- 55** Lilly Shanahan
- 56** Michael Shanahan
- 57** Maeike Slikkerveer
- 58** Michaela Slotwinski
- 59** Sandro Stutz
- 60** Albert Thieme
- 61** Valentina Vylobkova
- 62** Lisa Wagner
- 63** Stephanie Wermelinger
- 64** Ulf Zöltz

Unlocking the full potential of young minds: the key to a successful education

Education is not just about filling young minds with facts and figures; it's also about nurturing their well-being, sparking their curiosity and guiding them as they navigate the path to becoming their best selves. This is the conclusion reached by Jacobs Centre researchers Denis Ribeaud, Lilly Shanahan and Ulf Zölitz on the basis of their findings.



“It takes a village to raise a child” is a truism that has not lost its relevance, especially when it comes to the findings of Jacobs Center criminologist Denis Ribeaud, psychologist Lilly Shanahan and economist Ulf Zölitz. For this article, the team discussed their research findings on child development from different perspectives, starting with the most difficult question: What does it mean for a child to do well in school? “This is a crucial question regarding the well-being of children and adolescents in general. What aspect of it do we want to measure or influence?” says Ulf Zölitz, a professor of economics who specializes in child and youth development.

Zölitz believes that measuring a complex construct such as “well-being” with just one criterion is difficult, if not impossible. And indeed, it is far from obvious to pinpoint what should be considered a “success” when it comes to education: Good grades? Going to university? Something else entirely?

Staying out of trouble

In addition, assessing what boosts educational success is often difficult, as many variables influence a child’s development. “It’s important to note that we are still lacking a systematic understanding of what the exact causes are behind educational success and well-being,” says Denis Ribeaud. As a criminologist, he is particularly interested in the interaction of factors that can increase

or decrease a child's risk for delinquency: "There are many factors that play into this, from the situation in the family to a child's media consumption to discriminatory patterns at school. Our work at the Jacobs Center gives us the unique opportunity to not only zoom in on these factors individually, but to take a more systematic look at them."

Taking a systematic approach to childhood well-being can help unearth factors that are reliably linked with educational success. One such factor is the ability to exert self-control and to self-organize. "This is crucial when it comes to being successful in school and beyond," stresses Lilly Shanahan, who is a professor of psychology and researches the risk factors that influence the psychological development of children and adolescents. "Getting through school requires a high degree of self-regulation and self-regulation. Children need to learn to prioritize and keep track of what parts of tasks they have already fulfilled and what needs to be done next. They also need to learn quickly how to learn from failure and not be discouraged by it."

Meta-skills of this kind are crucial not only because they facilitate the acquisition of other broadly applicable skills – such as language skills or social skills – but also because they help kids stay out of trouble. So how do children acquire them?

The crucial role of parent involvement

"When it comes to education, a child should be able to exhaust their full potential, and parents play a crucial role in this regard," says Shanahan. "Parents who are involved in their children's life, who engage in open conversation with them, take an interest in what they have to say and have a healthy respect for their children's boundaries help them with developing those coping strategies that are crucial for well-being and educational success."

Shanahan continues: "An interesting z-proso finding, published last year, was that more supportive parent-child interactions at age 13 predicted more adaptive coping strategies almost a decade later at age 22.5 during the pandemic. This especially applied to socially-based coping strategies, such as seeking emotional support from others, maintaining contact with close others, helping others in the neighborhood and seeking professional support. We thought this was notable in part because it documents something scientifically that many parents hope for – that their supportive interactions with the child will prepare the child for challenges later in life, including those that simply cannot be anticipated."

Of course, every loving parent likes to hear that active involvement in their children's development can and does make a crucial difference for their well-being in general and for their educational success in particular. At the same time, Shanahan emphasizes that parents should have realistic expectations of their children, lest they ask too much of them: "We observe a clear increase



in chronic stress in schoolchildren, and part of this stress comes from the sometimes exaggerated demands of parents with regard to the educational paths of their children."

There has also been a distinct uptick in depression and other psychological emergencies in children and adolescents that can be linked to chronic stress. "We observe that in certain cases, too much self-regulation can have detrimental effects," says Shanahan. "If children almost exclusively focus on school at the cost of leisure and fun, it can hinder their educational success in the long term because the ensuing stress keeps them from exhausting their full potential."

Going beyond families and the classroom: society in focus

The researchers' work makes it clear that educational success encompasses much more than academic success. It requires an environment where children feel safe, supported and engaged and where their emotional and social needs are addressed alongside their intellectual growth. From this perspective, traditional criteria of success, which often reduce a child's educational success to achieving good grades or getting a university degree, must be complemented by more complex success criteria such as a child's resilience and the breadth of their skills and interests.

Importantly, educational success and well-being depend not only on having a supportive family and functional school structures, but are also influenced by the societal environment. For one, a firm grasp of a national language and familiarity with the specifics of the educational system are crucial for educational success. This poses certain challenges for Switzerland, where many parents immigrated from abroad. "In the longitudinal study we conduct at the Jacobs Center, over 60% of the parents were born outside Switzerland," says Shanahan. "We found that this can create certain problems, for example, when the lack of affordable day schools and traditional family structures cause mothers to stay at home with their children. This makes social integration and language acquisition more difficult for mothers and children alike." These difficulties can accumulate over time and jeopardize children's educational success. Another societal challenge lies in segregation by socio-economic factors. Scientific data shows that the educational path children take is tightly correlated with their parents' socio-economic background. Children of academics are much more likely to go to university than children with working-class parents, who are, in turn, much more likely to opt for vocational training. "In principle, this correlation is not problematic," says Zöllitz. "After all, educational success is to a certain degree determined by genetic and economic factors, both of which are, of course, tightly linked to the parents. Suppose one has intelligent parents willing to invest time and money in the well-being of their children.

These children will often have a comparably good educational journey ahead of them." Zöllitz points out that it would be strange to criticize this, as it would mean that we should discourage parents from trying to improve their children's educational success.

Yet these correlations can be problematic if they reflect the perpetuation of differences beyond what would be merited based on individual achievements. Notably, a fair educational system should allow children from lower socio-economic backgrounds to improve their status but also let the opposite be possible. "If we believe that raising one's socio-economic status should be possible, we must also accept the reverse: that children can be worse off than their parents in socio-economic terms. Understandably, many parents take issue with that possibility and try to force their children into a high school or university education," says Ribeaud. Maybe the solution lies in recognizing that many educational paths can lead to success. Or as Ulf Zöllitz points out: "Switzerland's education system is a system of giving second, third and fourth chances. There are many roads to success, and this diversity of educational paths is something to be cherished."



Tackling parental beliefs by providing information

Jacobs Center researchers Ana Costa-Ramón, Ulf Zölitz and Moritz Daum discuss how scientific insights can improve parents' relationships with their children – and conclude that a definition of “good parenting” might not exist in the first place.



“Today’s parents feel unsure about how to raise their children best and wonder whether they are doing the right things,” says Moritz Daum, professor of developmental psychology at the University of Zurich and the Jacobs Center. Caregivers nowadays raise their kids differently than previous generations in an attempt to “do better”, which gives rise to insecurities. But is there such a thing as perfect parenting?

Daum is the director of the Jacobs Center and specializes in the development and well-being of children and teenagers. In a conversation with assistant professor Ana Costa-Ramón and professor Ulf Zölitz, both of whom are Jacobs Center researchers who focus on the economics of child and youth development, he was asked what

children need to be happy. The environment in which a child grows up is to a large extent shaped by their caregivers, he stresses, which is especially the case in the early years. In this way, parents substantially influence their child’s development and well-being. However, scientifically investigating parenting is difficult, Zölitz adds – especially as caregivers’ influence changes over time. The older children become and the more they are exposed to different environments such as school and peer groups, the more they get to know other role models beyond their caregivers.

Investigating dynamic contexts of this kind has proven challenging. On top of these difficulties, understanding negative tendencies in parenting without problematizing them can be challenging. “If you know what is wrong, you know where to start investigating,” Costa-Ramón says. However, researching into parenting needs a comprehensive focus beyond pathologizing certain behaviors. “We need to keep collecting data very broadly, also at institutional levels, to understand children’s well-being,” she says.

“To counter the prevailing deficit-oriented research about parenting, we also want to look at the resources available,” Daum explains. Researchers should also be asking questions such as: How can you strengthen children’s resilience? How can you advance education further? What support do caregivers need?

How to enhance mothers’ financial awareness

Over the past year, Daum worked together with a multidisciplinary team on a book about childhood, which will be published in May 2024. [LINK ↗](#) They tackle questions such as “What are good parents?” or “Why should children attend school?” Additionally, together with Zölitz, Daum has been working on the second version of the “kleineWeltentdecker” app, [LINK ↗](#) which helps parents explore their children’s development and guides them through developmental changes.

“At the Jacobs Center, we want to establish facts that improve our understanding of childhood development,” Zölitz states. “We want to figure out how to improve children’s well-being.” By engaging with the app, caregivers might become more aware of the different stages in their children’s development. Although initially not intended as an educational tool, the scientists are now investigating to what extent the app enhances parents’ awareness of their children’s development – both the significant developmental milestones and the small steps in between. The project is supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). However, it is not only parents’ awareness of their children’s needs that the Jacobs Center investigates, but also the impact that children have on their parents. Costa-Ramón talks about a “feedback relationship” when she refers to parenting. For example, having children brings along financial implications, especially for mothers. To investigate this dynamic further, Costa-Ramón received funding from the SNSF to conduct her project “(Not) Thinking About the Future: Financial Awareness and Maternal Labour Force Participation.” She will study how much mothers are aware of the long-term financial consequences of a low-paid workload. In Switzerland, what is termed the “child penalty” is much higher than in other countries in Europe. Six years after the birth of a child, a mother’s net income is, on average, 75% lower than a father’s income. The data reveals that this gap is not primarily from mothers not working at all, but from the majority of mothers working part-time. In her current study, Costa-Ramón investigates



whether mothers consider the fact that they miss out on a large part of their career, earnings and pensions when considering part-time work. In doing so, she provides a tool for women to calculate the financial loss they incur over the years when working part time instead of full time. “We want to give women the opportunity to make well-informed decisions,” she says. “And we provide them a base for discussions with their partners.” In the future, she also wants to investigate how families adjust if women indeed consider pursuing more paid employment: Did they decide on daycare? Or have their partners reduced their paid workload?

Tackling parental beliefs

How families compensate for mothers working longer hours in paid employment is especially interesting, as many Swiss families base their decisions on the erroneous belief that childcare outside the family is not beneficial for children. How, then, do we tackle parental beliefs of this kind? This is one of the key interests of Zöllitz, who received tenure at the Jacobs Center in 2023. He completed data collection from the World Parenting Survey in 2023, which was conducted globally in 42 countries on a wide range of topics related to parenting. Recently, Zöllitz presented the first evidence on the prevalence of corporal punishment in families. In many countries, caregivers consider hitting and smacking children to be a part of a good upbringing. Challenging these beliefs is hard, although scientific evidence has shown the negative impacts of corporal punishment on many levels. According to Zöllitz, many interventions that target parenting have not produced meaningful results. Still, he seems undeterred: “It can be a productive approach to show evidence in an accessible and attractive way in order to change behaviors. We want to tackle parental beliefs by providing information.” Making factual information accessible is not only crucial for educating caregivers but also for informing policymakers. Zöllitz opted for this approach when publishing the results of a global study investigating same-sex role model effects in education. He investigated, for example, whether having a female teacher inspires girls to consider a career in science. On an interactive website, visitors can compare countries and easily understand that role model effects are especially pronounced

in industrialized countries such as Italy and Portugal but less visible in low-income countries such as Ghana or Botswana.

“With our website, we want to inspire informed policymaking,” Zöllitz says. Providing policymakers with complex figures might not be very useful, he says, but showing a map of effect sizes and providing a list of ten countries as benchmarks might prove substantially more impactful. So far, the website has already been picked up by the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia for a report. Daum further emphasizes the importance of science communication at the Jacobs Center: “In our everyday work, we do fundamental research. We investigate a tiny piece of the puzzle. However, we are also responsible for communicating how this relates to the big societal dynamics and why this is important.”

Diverse backgrounds but one common goal

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Jacobs Center in 2023, the center hosted an event that brought together people from many different fields including education, research and administration. Daum says that they also discussed their research questions with their guests: “It’s all about talking to each other, understanding each other and informing each other about needs and findings. We learn from each other’s perspectives.” At the Jacobs Center, exchanging knowledge involves external partners and is a fundamental principle within the team. “It is unique to have a group of researchers with such different backgrounds who all care very much about understanding child development,” says Costa-Ramón. For Zöllitz, the critical aspects of the Jacobs

Center are inspiration and freedom. Being surrounded by colleagues in sociology and psychology gives him new ideas and makes him understand different approaches. At the same time, Zöllitz is free to set his own focus and research questions.

When asked what he would like to investigate and understand in the future regarding the interaction of children and their parents, Daum has a clear answer. “How can we target parental attitudes and beliefs?” he asks, citing the recent PISA study as an example. The study states that 85 percent of Swiss children cope well with the educational system, while 15 percent lag behind. For Daum, part of the potential for improvement lies in parental education: if caregivers have a discouraging attitude towards schools and teachers, this can influence their children’s educational performance negatively. Tackling negative beliefs – for instance, that education is not beneficial for one’s life outcomes – might prove successful and encourage children’s engagement at school.

Here Daum – a psychologist by training – touches on a field of interest he shares with the two economists Ulf Zöllitz and Costa-Ramón. Whether it is corporal punishment, attitudes towards daycare or understanding of importance of education, caregivers’ convictions significantly impact children. The researchers at the Jacobs Center want to react to these parental beliefs based on scientific evidence, providing information and supporting informed decisions.

The complex interplay between genes, environment and mental health

Children and adolescents have different genetic predispositions that affect their behavior. At the same time, the environment plays a major role in the development of behavioral characteristics. Four researchers, Moritz Daum, Lilly Shanahan, Nora Raschle, Mike Shanahan, from the Jacobs Center explain what it takes to grow up happily.



Being resilient means being able to adapt to challenging life experiences through mental, behavioral and emotional flexibility. But how do our genes influence resilience? And how can we increase the well-being of children and teenagers? A discussion with Moritz Daum, professor of developmental psychology, Lilly Shanahan, professor of clinical developmental psychology, Nora Raschle, assistant professor of developmental neuroscience, and Mike Shanahan, professor of sociology, reveals the complex interplay between biology, brains and mental health. In this article, the four Jacobs Center researchers give insights into the complex interactions between genes, behavior and environment and how to make a positive impact on well-being.

Well-being: more than the absence of sickness

The definition of well-being as applied to an individual child or adolescent is multifaceted. “From a developmental psychology point of view, well-being includes different aspects such as social, cognitive and physical well-being,” says Moritz Daum. “And well-being is more than just the absence of disease and illness.” Well-being also involves the ability to cope with risk factors and use positive factors to support one’s resilience. Health is also multi-layered, and it is possible to investigate different systems. Single cells can affect behavior, and organs have an impact on the performance of our body, which has an influence on the environment. This is also true the other way around, meaning that the environment influences human beings down to single



cells. “Each of these systems manifests in a complex state of health,” says Nora Raschle.

Genes, for instance, are not only involved in the development of certain diseases but are also implicated in biologically rooted personality traits. “We can observe how genetic predisposition impacts one’s development,” says Daum. Some children might be more open to new experiences and therefore more courageous, while some are more anxious; some have more self-regulation and others less. “Problems with self-regulation, for example, can lead to decreased performance at school and beyond,” says Daum. However, there is not a single gene that promotes self-regulation; it is a polygenetic trait. In addition, the environment might be beneficial or disadvantageous for the development of self-regulation skills and can lead to different outcomes. For example, greater exposure to drugs combined with low self-regulation skills increases the risk of a drug addiction.

Hence, genes and the environment dynamically interact to influence behavior. Conversely, the behavior – in this case, exposing the body to drugs – might trigger changes in gene expression, which then enforce the behavior even more.

This multifaceted interplay between genes, environment and behavior also becomes evident in the development of the brain. “When we are born, various maturation processes are ready to be triggered. But how exactly the networks in the brain develop and grow heavily depends on the environment and our individual experiences,” says Raschle, whose research focuses on developmental neuroscience. “Experiences are the key factors determining how our skills, abilities and behavior develop.” Human brain formation is influenced by variables already accumulated across previous generations. Intergenerational transfer effects include the transmission of traits from parent to child. A study by Raschle’s research group shows mother-child similarity in the corticolimbic brain structure. This similarity is linked to mental well-being. “Our well-being develops in dependence on the family members around us. In this study, we showed how the corticolimbic brain structure is similar between mothers and children and how this might be linked to mental health and resilience,” she says. “I’m excited to learn more about how the mechanisms of intergenerational transfer are reflected in biology and behavior.”

Factors for resilience

But what factors increase the chances of a child becoming happy and resilient? “A protective factor that we often completely underestimate is physical activity,” stresses Lilly Shanahan. “Physical activity helps with many things, such as paying attention in school, regulating our mood and having better mental health.” The most well-known factors that increase the chance that a child is happy and resilient are supportive relationships. “Parents should be involved, create a warm environment and set reasonable expectations for the child,” says Lilly Shanahan. “A good relationship between children and parents can prepare the children for many different circumstances later in life and strategies for dealing with difficult situations.” This connection was shown in the z-proso study, which further revealed that children with good relationships with their parents had better coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to a child’s relationship with their parents, their relationship with their teachers is of great significance. Students who have a good relationship with a teacher are more successful during their school career, as shown in the z-proso study.

The research in Moritz Daum’s group at the Jacobs Center demonstrates that good language skills are also beneficial. “A good and large vocabulary helps to learn, express your feelings and understand tasks and the actions of other people,” he says. “Moreover, growing up as a bilingual or trilingual speaker has many benefits because it offers an improvement in both the number of means a multilingual person has available as well as a greater flexibility in the use of these means.

A multilingual person seems to have a communicative advantage that is rooted in their everyday experiences.” However, not everything perceived as unfavorable must harm well-being, as Raschle points out. “Some negative experiences might be a stepping stone to develop resilience and prepare for more challenging life circumstances in the future,” she says. The human brain has a considerable ability to overcome adversity. However, studies investigating the effects of childhood adversity show that if care, love and nurture by attachment figures early in life are missing, even when there is the best care later on, those people might not fully overcome the adverse effects. Children are often more resilient if the environment provides them with more fulfilling and secure circumstances. They are more likely to cope well with challenges when they have parents with high socioeconomic status, who are doing well and who use positive parenting strategies (e.g., not overreacting). A study from the group of Lilly Shanahan shows that children with a high number of risk factors in childhood might be resilient during their childhood but are more likely to develop a mental health problem later on in life. “It is important to consider the timeframe, as somebody might be immediately resilient to different circumstances but face long-term consequences,” says Shanahan. Raschle adds: “The context is also important.” A coping strategy that works in one case, she says, might not be beneficial in another. This means that just because a child is resilient in one scenario does not mean they will develop successful coping mechanisms in a different setting.

“Good enough” is sufficient

“The work at the Jacobs Center is of particular value because we can take a closer look at important questions from different perspectives and levels,” says Daum, the director of the Jacobs Center. “For example, as a sociologist, Mike Shanahan has a different perspective than me as a psychologist and Ana Costa-Ramón as an economist. Understanding these different perspectives and how they intersect provides great added value for the science of child and youth development.” The whole group agrees on this beneficial learning environment. Lilly Shanahan adds: “Working across disciplines is a huge benefit.” Ultimately, everyone at the Jacobs Center wants to understand how children develop and grow into adults. Because all members of the center focus on child development, the different research groups can enrich each other and open up different possibilities. Moreover, the Jacobs Center has grown in reputation over the last few years, which creates visibility and facilitates the communication of research results to a broad audience. And what should the public know about creating a supportive environment for children? “Parenting does not have to be perfect. Striving for perfection almost certainly leads to frustration, because parents cannot achieve perfection and should not aim for it,” stresses Daum. “Parenting needs to be ‘good enough’ to provide a warm and supportive environment for the child.”



This so-called “good enough parenting” approach, introduced by the American pediatrician Donald Winnicott, resonates with the research of Jacobs Center, as it helps the well-being of parents and children alike. Raschle adds: “Providing the best environment for a child does not mean that we take every obstacle away and remove every unpleasant experience.” Children should have the chance to grow into independent humans who can handle challenging things by learning how to fail and how things can go right. The “good enough” parenting approach relieves much of the pressure parents feel to do everything right. “Part of the reason why many children suffer from anxiety and depression from a very young age might be that there is a lot of pressure everywhere – in school and in their free time. This is not ideal if children and parents want to maximize their well-being, as it creates even more pressure,” concludes Shanahan.

New externally funded research projects

SNSF research grant

(Not) Thinking About the Future: Financial Awareness and Maternal Labor Force Participation

The aim of this project is to study whether raising mothers' awareness about the long-term financial consequences of a low workload can affect their financial planning and change their future workload choices and aspirations. The duration of the project is from 1.11.2023–31.10.2027.

PI: Ana Costa-Ramón | CHF 590,561

SNSF Agora research grant

Growing Brains

“Growing Brains” is a project that combines elements of science outreach, co-creation and dialogue to advance the public's knowledge about brain and behavioral development, pointing out the connections to highly relatable topics such as mental health, lifelong learning and the mysteries of the teenage brain. In addition, the researchers want to help their audience understand scientific principles and the scientific process – how does science actually work? The duration of the project is from 1.04.2023–30.09.2025.

PI: Nora Raschle | CHF 199,948

UZH Teaching Fund “focus_innovation”, University of Zurich

Strengthening Mental Health Together: Long-Term Skill Acquisition for Studying and Working

PI: Moritz Daum | CHF 98,739

Expansion and Evaluation of Learning in Small Study Groups at UZH

PI: Ulf Zöllitz | CHF 78,000

The Board of the Yrjö Jahnsson Foundation The Long-term Effects of Reducing Bullying: Evidence from Finland

PI: Ana Costa-Ramón | EUR 18,225

SNSF research project

Understanding Social Gradients in Education: A Psycho-Social-Ecological Framework

Mobility grant I

Awarded to doctoral student Francesca Mele, 01.12.2023–01.10.2024 at University College London. EUR 19,300

Mobility grant II

Awarded to doctoral student Kevin Schönholzer, 01.03.2024–31.08.2024 at the University of Toronto. CHF 15,189

Peer mentoring group: R

The R Group initiative aims to connect R users from different backgrounds and career levels. The group also organizes a career talk series, roundtable discussions and workshops.



Organizers

Laura Bechtiger

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Lydia Johnson-Ferguson

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Christine Dworschak

Psychopathology and Clinical Intervention,
Department of Psychology

Grant for Jacobs Center doctoral students for R peer mentoring group

The R Group is a peer mentoring group consisting of PhD students, postdocs and senior researchers from multiple faculties of UZH (mainly from the Department of Psychology, the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development, the University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich, and the Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Prevention Institute).

Goals of the peer mentoring group

The R group aims to connect R users with backgrounds in psychology and related empirical sciences. Bringing together R users from different labs and different academic career stages is at the heart of the R Group's mission. The group strives to create an engaging environment for members to mentor each other on career planning in general and on working with R in particular. Group members are committed to creating an

environment where peers who are passionate about developing their R skills can learn from each other, extend their knowledge and broaden their career goals and opportunities. The R Group seeks to achieve this main aim with two types of group activities: hands-on R workshops and career development opportunities. First, workshops are regularly organized with local and international experts in the field to expand members' analytic knowledge and to help them stay up-to-date with cutting-edge developments in advanced analytical methods with R. The main focus points are longitudinal analyses (e.g., multi-level analyses and structural equation modeling), data visualization and general workflows. Second, the group offers opportunities to its members to proactively learn about planning a career path. The doctoral and post doctoral training offered at the University of Zurich qualifies researchers for a variety of different career paths inside and outside academia. However, navigating these different options and possibilities isn't always easy and straightforward. To this end, the R Group organized a career talk series, roundtable discussions and other workshops in 2023:

- Clean coding with Anna Skrzydlo
- Network analysis with Jill de Ron (University of Amsterdam)
- Within-person longitudinal models with Dr. Lydia Speyer (University of Lancaster)
- Bayesian vs. frequentist approaches to statistical inference with Prof. Carolin Strobl and Prof. Klaus Oberauer (University of Zurich)

Peer mentoring group: Brainfood

Exchanging methods and knowledge for early-career human neuroimaging researchers The mission of the Brainfood peer mentoring group is to connect young UZH researchers who are investigating the human brain using various neuroimaging methods and to help them expand their knowledge.



Organizers

Plamina Dimanova

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Réka Borbás

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Nina Raduner

URPP Adaptive Brain Circuits in Development and Learning (AdaBD), University of Zurich

Sarah Di Pietro

URPP Adaptive Brain Circuits in Development and Learning (AdaBD), University of Zurich

Dennis Saikkonen

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Nico Ehrhardt

URPP Adaptive Brain Circuits in Development and Learning (AdaBD), University of Zurich

Based on Brainfood's vision for peer mentoring, the group offers the following:

Database

Creating and providing a database of expertise

Brainfood will create a database with the contact details and fields of expertise of young experts from the local neuroimaging community (PhD and postdoc researchers) who are interested in exchange and willing to support their peers.

Workshops

- Dynamic causal modeling workshop by Dr. David Willinger
- fMRI analysis for beginners
- Temporal response functions workshop by Dr. Enrico Varano and Dr. Marius Tröndle

“Food for thought” lunch seminars

Providing a platform for networking and peer feedback

Brainfood will provide opportunities for early-career researchers in the field of neuroimaging to meet their peers and strengthen local connections. Even though group members are working with similar data, they often do not know their peers from the local community, so they are not able to benefit from each other's knowledge and practical skills.

Held from 20.03. through 10.11.2023:

- Kickoff event
- Troubleshooting
- Lean on me: a soft-skills seminar
- Getting your paper ready for publishing
- Brainfood pizza night and supervision

Talks

- Talk by Prof. Dr. Andreas Keil: Individual differences, the human brain, and mental health: The role of a control area in addressing the reliability paradox
- Talk by Prof. Dr. Paul Sauseng: He who controls the medial prefrontal cortex controls cognition
- Talk by Dr. Lena Dorfschmidt: Insights from analyzing large, aggregated MRI datasets

Peer mentoring group: Cambridge-Zurich exchange (CAMZH)

**Workshop:
Advancing quantitative perspectives
in education science.**



Organizers

Francesca Mele

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development,
Department of Sociology, Zurich

Kevin Schönholzer

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development,
Department of Sociology, Zurich

Laura Bechtiger

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Laura Cashman

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Miriam Broeks

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Rubaiya Murshed

Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Education research lies at the intersection of different disciplines – such as sociology, psychology, and economics – and blends their multiple theoretical and methodological perspectives while proposing its own interdisciplinary angle. Indeed, quantitative educational scientists have been at the forefront of developing innovative statistical methods and techniques to deal with the methodological and substantial complexities of education research.

Despite this, interdisciplinary and international platforms that facilitate this kind theoretical and methodological development are scarce, particularly among early-career researchers. Bringing together junior researchers from multiple research groups and subfields at the University of Zurich and the University of Cambridge, this two-part workshop aimed to:

1. advance participants' knowledge and understanding of cutting-edge quantitative techniques and approaches in education research, and
2. promote and nurture academic interactions and collaborations among early-career researchers in education science and related fields both within and between the University of Zurich and the University of Cambridge.

Part I

In-presence workshop held in Zurich on 5 and 6 December 2022.

Part II

Online seminar series in Fall 2023:

An online seminar series consisting of three talks that covered a wide range of interdisciplinary methodological topics including missing data, data visualization and counterfactual analysis. You can find the full program [here](#).

[PDF ↗](#)

COCON highlights: visiting professorship at the University of Turku and William Thierry Preyer Award

Civil society engagement in adolescence over the past decade.



2023 was marked by a fortunate coincidence.

My two-year appointment as a Visiting Professor to the University of Turku, Finland, brought me often to this northern country and the storied city of Turku. As it happened, the bi-annual European Conference for Developmental Psychology was held in this city at the end of August 2023, where I was awarded the William Thierry Preyer Award for Excellence in Research on Human Development.

This prize is awarded by the European Association for Developmental Psychology (EADP) and is meant to honor scholars whose research significantly contributes to a better understanding of human development and its contexts. The laudation highlights that Marlis Buchmann has received this award in recognition of her life's work

and in particular “her many merits both in scientific contribution and societal impact, but also for being an inspiration and an outstanding role model for other female scientists.”

My strong interest in contextualizing human development and life course trajectories directly connects with the Visiting Professorship at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Turku. This faculty houses the large research program INVEST (Inequalities, Interventions and New Welfare State). A major aim of this Finnish Flagship Program is to improve well-being and skill development among Finnish children, adolescents and early adults by exploring obstacles to well-being and skill development at these different life stages.

The fit with my expertise in interdisciplinary life course research, exploring how the unfolding of the life course is intertwined with institutional contexts, social inequality, and individual agency, is therefore perfect.

As a Visiting Professor in the INVEST program, I share my knowledge and expertise with PhD students, postdocs and professors.

[LINK ↗](#)

In 2023, I delivered several keynote addresses, and in several workshops, PhD students and postdoc presented their work, and we discussed paper drafts, research ideas for national and international grant proposals and ideas about early career development. I offer individual meetings to further discuss these topics and engage in early career mentoring. Research collaboration and international collaborations are also integral parts of my engagement.

The much larger link to the fortunate coincidence in 2023 is undoubtedly the COCON study housed at the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development. The signature feature of this multi-cohort, multi-informant, longitudinal study – representative of the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland – is the exploration of child and adolescent development in context. Developmental processes in childhood and adolescence are understood as the dynamic interplay of unequal access to opportunities and unequal exposure to constraints in different life domains and individual agency.

The acronym of the study – COCON: Competence and CONtext – expresses this interdisciplinary approach in a nutshell. With the data of this truly longitudinal study, including fourteen years of surveying for the child cohort (age 6 to age 20), many high-ranking publications have been produced. Scores of students and researchers have used the data that is available free of charge as a scientific use file (SUF).



Communities that Care project (CTC)

Communities that Care (CTC) is a coalition-based prevention system, with the aim of promoting the healthy development of adolescents and reducing behavioral problems of youth on the community level.



Youth problems such as tobacco consumption, juvenile delinquency and mental health issues are a major problem in many societies. There is often a lack of coordinated, evidence-based prevention approaches at the community level to prevent this. The Communities that Care (CTC) approach was developed to close this gap. CTC is a coalition-based prevention system that promotes healthy adolescent development and reduces adolescent behavior problems at the community level. Originally developed in the United States, CTC has since been implemented in countries around the world and is currently listed as one of the “certified promising

programs” by the prestigious Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development. In Switzerland, the CTC approach is implemented by Radix.

In 2023, data was collected from 7th to 9th graders in 14 Swiss-German municipalities. All data was analyzed at the Jacobs Center and presented in reports that inform the municipalities about their specific risk and protective factor profiles so that prevention approaches can be delivered and tailored to their specific profile.

z-proso NextGen: Turning z-proso into a multiple-generation cohort study

For the past 20 years, z-proso has been documenting participants' individual development from childhood to young adulthood.



Team

Denis Ribeaud

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Lilly Shanahan

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Lea Buzzi

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Manuel Eisner

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

Laura Bechtiger

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development

As z-proso participants enter their mid- and late twenties, some start having children of their own – and the number of those who become parents is only expected to grow until participants are in their mid-thirties. In anticipation of this development, z-proso NextGen officially launched in March of 2023. The transition to parenthood is an exciting developmental period not only for participants, but also for developmental researchers, as new parents navigate the challenges and opportunities of parenthood. The aim of this add-on study to z-proso is to understand how z-proso participants feel and behave as parents and to get to know their children's early characteristics and behaviors, with the ultimate goal of turning z-proso into a multiple-cohort study.

This will allow for the rigorous examination of new research questions related to z-proso's main themes. For example, the team will be able to explore questions such as: How do experiences of interpersonal violence during childhood and adolescence predict z-proso participants' own parenting behaviors in adulthood? To what extent are z-proso participants and their children similar (or dissimilar) with regard to their anti-social and prosocial behavior, psychopathology and social relationships?

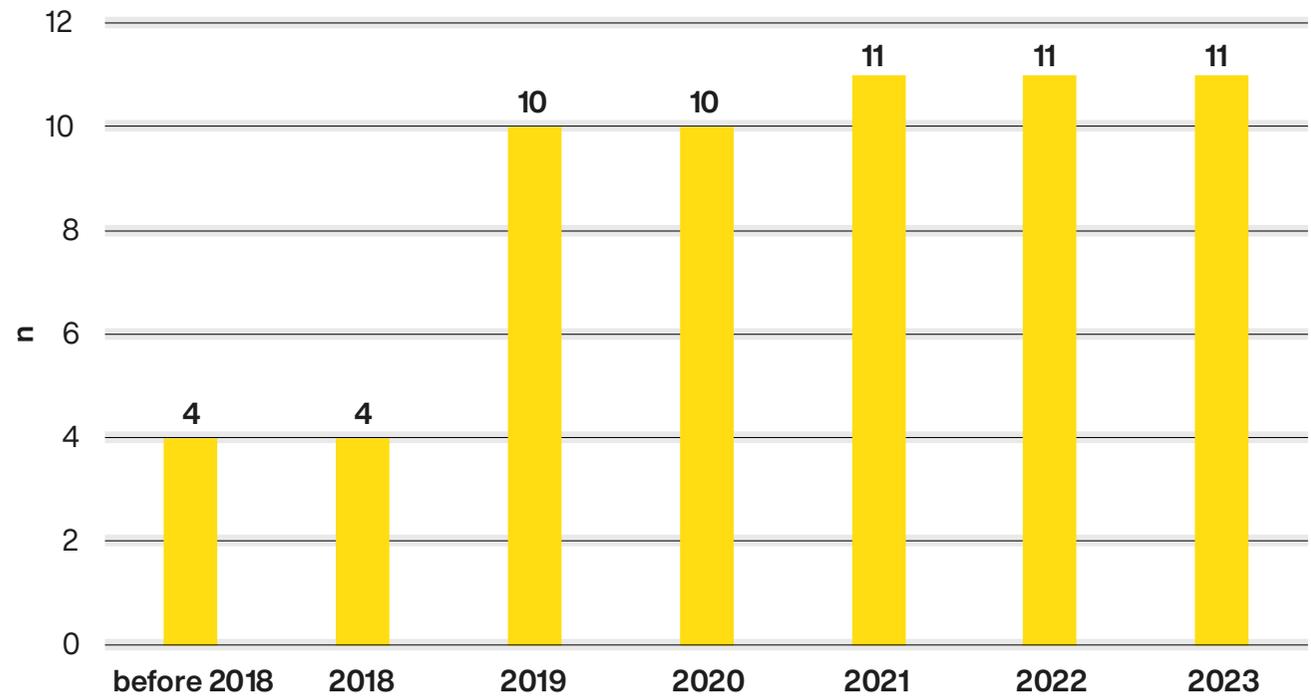
In z-proso NextGen, those z-proso participants who are parents can enroll in the study and then participate in four online surveys: one perinatal questionnaire after the birth of their child and three developmentally appropriate questionnaires when their children are 1.5, 4, and 7 years old.

With these questionnaires, the team aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of:

1. pregnancy, birth, child and maternal health,
2. parenting, stress and parental mental health, and
3. children's early social behavior and characteristics.

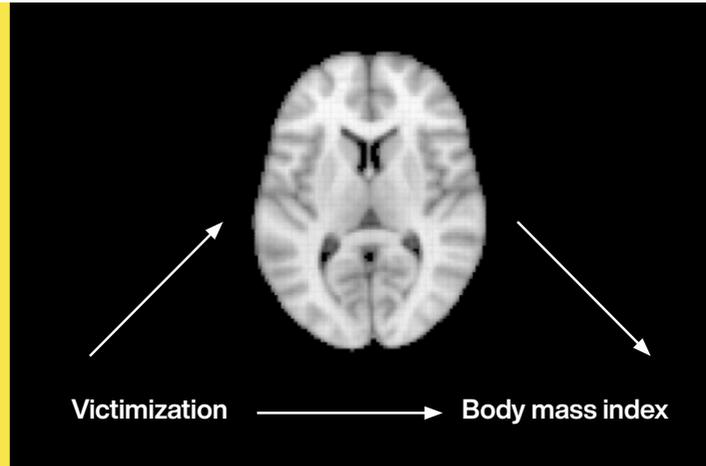
Where possible, the survey questionnaires are closely aligned with the original z-proso questionnaires to allow for intergenerational comparisons. z-proso participants also have the chance to sign up their partner or main co-parent for participation in z-proso NextGen. Since its launch, 64 children of z-proso participants have become part of z-proso NextGen, and the team is eagerly expecting many new participants over the next years.

Birth years of NextGen kids



How violence and victimization impact neurobiological development

“The impact of developmental trajectories of violence and victimization on the neurobiology of antisocial decision making” is a z-proso sub-project, that aims to explore the consequences of peer victimization during adolescence on brain development and its long-term effects on behavioral outcomes.



For the purposes of this study, participants were classified into different groups based on their experiences of relational (e.g., bullying, exclusion) and physical victimization by peers. Subsequently, the investigators examined the association between these experiences and changes in brain structure, focusing on specific prefrontal and subcortical brain areas involved in emotion recognition, social decision-making and reward processing. Initial evidence from previous neuroimaging studies suggested that these brain circuits may be altered by experiences of victimization during adolescence. This led to the hypothesis that the resulting alterations in the structure and function of these brain areas may influence long-term mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression and body mass index.

This study uses a relatively large subsample of the z-proso cohort and the rich data from this study on experiences during late childhood and early adolescence to investigate the mediating role of brain structure in the relationship between early victimization experiences and later life outcomes. So far, the results of brain structure analyses show that adolescent victims of physical or relational violence from peers had reduced gray matter (i.e., neural tissue) volume in prefrontal relative to subcortical brain regions at approximately 21 years of age. Furthermore, reductions in the prefrontal/subcortical gray matter ratio partially mediated the relationship between victimization experiences in early adolescence and greater body mass index in late adolescence/adulthood. This research contributes to understanding the neurobiological consequences of peer victimization and highlights the importance of addressing these issues early to mitigate long-term adverse effects on mental and physical health. The work in this project is ongoing, and the next aim is to address questions about the long-term influences of victimization on brain function.

2023

Events, media, and news

January

Jacobs Center Research Day 2023



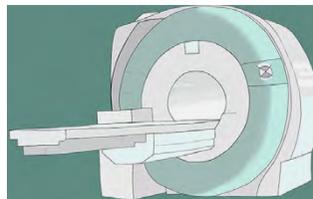
The first Jacobs Center Research Day was held on Friday, 20 January, where the scientific staff of the Jacobs Center had the opportunity to present their research and expertise. Our PhD students, postdocs and research assistants were also invited to give a seven-minute talk. The presentations were highly engaging and sparked lively discussions during the apéro that followed.

Marlis Buchmann appointed Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences



She will hold this post at the University of Turku in Finland for two years.

MRI Beginner's workshop



A beginner's workshop for analysis of fMRI data was organized by the Brainfood peer mentoring group, consisting of Jacobs Center doctoral students and supported by the Graduate Campus and the NMR Kids Lab (Prof. Nora Raschle). The workshop introduced participants to fMRI parameters, preprocessing and fundamental analysis steps with functional imaging data.

February

J.E.D.I. Symposium – Yvonne Kelly and Ronald Dahl

Prof. Dr. Yvonne Kelly and Prof. Dr. Ronald Dahl held a joint talk entitled “Understanding Mechanisms of Change across Child Development.” The discussion with the two panelists focused on different aspects that influence children's development – biological, developmental and social processes – and importantly, how these factors interact with one another. The way these interactive processes change across different developmental periods is among the most interesting phenomena to understand.

[FLYER ↗](#)

In the media

“Sucht Schweiz” kritisiert im Suchtpanorama 2023 die Politik

SRF Tagesschau, 7.2.2023

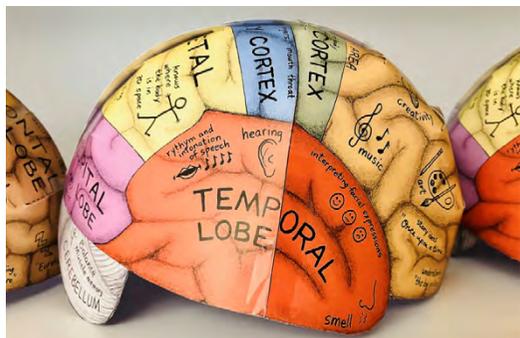
[LINK ↗](#)

New peer mentoring group “Brainfood”

Congratulations to Plamina Dimanova, Réka Borbas, Nina Raduner and Nico Ehrhardt, early-career researchers at the Jacobs Center, who received GRC funding to start “Brainfood,” a new peer mentoring group.

March

Science communications activities at the BrainFair



This year's BrainFair Zurich was organized in collaboration with the URPP AdaBD and focused on recent research about learning. Nora Raschle, Plamina Dimanova and others from the NMR Kids Lab, including Lea Mörsdorf, represented the Jacobs Center at this event.

International impact of the z-proso project



On 13 March, Manuel Eisner gave a seminar on z-proso at the University of Cordoba that attracted substantial media attention in local and national news outlets.

Michelle Loher presented a poster at the SNSF Corona research conference



Michelle Loher, PhD student in the Risk and Resilience area of the Jacobs Center (PI: Prof. Lilly Shanahan), presented a poster entitled “Young People’s Mental Health and Compliance with Public Health Measures during the COVID-19 Pandemic” at the SNSF Corona Research Conference in Thun.

In the media

“Cry it out!” – A plea for men’s tears

Zurich Youth Survey 2021 (ZYS 2021)

Audio / German, SRF Input, 15.3.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

Gefilmt statt geholfen: Jugendliche greifen eine 12-Jährige an

Tagesanzeiger, 23.3.2023

[PDF \(ARTICLE WITH LOGIN\) ↗](#)

“Molestie sessuali, segnalazioni in crescita”

RSI Telegiornale, 4.3.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

April

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Prof. Dr. Jonathan Jan Benjamin Mijs

Boston University,
Erasmus University Rotterdam



The social life of inequality: why unequal countries stay that way (recorded talk)

Why have historically high levels of inequality been met with limited public consternation? Understanding why more economically unequal societies are less worried about inequality requires studying the “social life of inequality”. Professor Mijs argues that decades of growing inequality have increased the distance between the affluent and disadvantaged, who increasingly live their lives in separate neighborhoods, schools and workplaces and befriend, date and marry people from within their own socio-economic circles. This disconnect means that neither rich nor poor can see the full extent of inequality in their everyday lives or appreciate the non-meritocratic causes of economic “success” and “failure”. In this talk, Mijs introduced his theoretical framework and research agenda for studying socially situated belief formation and belief change, presented preliminary findings and discussed methodological strategies.

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Dr. rer. nat. Tilman Reinelt

LRF Center for Neurodevelopment,
Growth and Nutrition of the
Newborn Department of Neonatology,
University Hospital Zurich,
University of Zurich



Self-regulation in early childhood

The concept of self-regulation has been investigated by different disciplines within psychology, including motivational psychology, health psychology, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, educational psychology and developmental psychology. However, despite similar definitions of self-regulation, these disciplines differ in their understanding of the concept with regard to the term “self”, state and trait aspects of self-regulation, the duration of underlying processes and possible intervention targets. Since the development of self-regulation starts during infancy, when infants adjust themselves to the new environment, Dr. Reinelt highlighted specific aspects of self-regulation from a developmental psychology perspective. Reinelt concluded by presenting opportunities to investigate the development of self-regulation in the Zurich birth cohort study LEARN (Long-term effects of early nutrition on child development). The LEARN study combines a classic panel study with a measurement burst design and continuous measures of child development. Currently, there are plans to assess child development during the first two years of life using the LEARN data set, which will open up several possibilities for collaboration.

Workshop at the children’s University of Zurich



In the spring semester, Moritz Daum, Mirella Manfredi and Lea Mörsdorf from the Jacobs Center hosted a children’s workshop about the brain entitled “EEG: How and what the brain tells us.”

In the media

Kriminologe: “Das sind äusserst seltene Extremfälle”

blue News, 5.4.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

May

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Dr. Marta Golin

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth
Development,
University of Zurich



Global evidence on how parents raise their children

Parenting practices and parental investment and engagement towards their children are all fundamental to the development of a child. However, there is limited global evidence on how parents raise their children and which

individual and cultural factors determine parenting styles. This project describes the World Parenting Survey, a unique data collection effort that will allow the study of variation in parenting styles and practices within and across 42 countries. First, Dr. Golin described the survey instruments and presented results on differences in parenting styles across countries. This was followed by a discussion of how cross-country differences in parenting practices relate to cultural factors and economic development. The talk concluded with a look at within-country individual level determinants of parenting styles.

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Marlene Staginnus

Department of Psychology,
University of Bath



Testing the ecophenotype model: brain structure in conduct disorder with and without childhood maltreatment

Existing evidence indicates that Conduct Disorder (CD) – a youth disorder marked by antisocial behaviors – is associated with structural alterations in brain regions implicated in social and emotional processing. However, although childhood maltreatment is a key risk factor for CD and is independently linked to neuroanatomical alterations, little is known regarding the influence of maltreatment on brain alterations in CD.

This talk explored the application of Teicher and Samson’s (2013) ecophenotype model to CD, which suggests that childhood maltreatment designates a clinically and neurobiologically distinct subgroup of patients.

Postgraduate researcher Marlene Staginnus discussed her recent study that explored cortical structure alterations in a mixed-sex sample of young people with CD, both with and without a history of childhood maltreatment, from the FemNAT-CD project. Staginnus and her co-researchers found that maltreated and non-maltreated CD subgroups showed distinct neurobiological differences compared to age-matched controls and also differed from each other.

June

Young adult risk and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic

What can we learn about adolescent and young adult risk and resilience from the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic? An article by Prof. Lilly Shanahan and the Risk & Resilience and z-proso teams of the Jacobs Center in the journal *Adversity and Resilience Science* examines this question.

The worst and the best: new insights into risk and resilience in young adults from the COVID-19 pandemic

Adversity and Resilience Science, Volume 4, Issue 2, June 2023

[LINK ↗](#)

Laura Bechtiger defends PhD dissertation



Congratulations to Laura Bechtiger from the Risk and Resilience team, who defended her dissertation entitled “Pathways from Maternal Depressive Symptoms to Adolescent Well-Being: A 15-year Longitudinal Examination.” Congratulations, Laura – the Jacobs Center team is so proud of you!

J.E.D.I. Symposium – Kenneth Dodge and Alexander Grob

Prof. Dr. Kenneth Dodge and Prof. Dr. Alexander Grob jointly discussed the topic “Emotion Regulatory Development in Health and Disease: Implications for Mental Health and the Social Environment”, focusing particularly on the importance of understanding how emotion regulation develops in children and adolescents, both in typical and atypical cases, and the impact this has on mental health and wider academic and social functions.

The panelists highlighted the role of the social environment and the potential for interventions to improve outcomes.

The discussion also touched on how knowledge from child development research may contribute to a better understanding of disparities in mental health outcomes and addressed the question of when such endeavors may fail and what is still needed to reach population impact and a reduction of disparities.

[LINK ↗](#)

July

In the media

“Mein Lehrer sagte mir, dass ich zu schüchtern sei und es zu nichts bringe”

20min, 5.7.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

August

10 questions for Nora Raschle by the LIFE Newsletter

In a summer edition of the LIFE Newsletter, Nora Raschle was asked to answer 10 questions about science, research and science communication.

The full interview

[PDF ↗](#)

The International Max Planck Research School on the Life Course (LIFE)

[LINK ↗](#)

In the media

“Die kindliche Entwicklung muss nicht der Norm entsprechen”

Fritz und Fränzi, 4.8.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

Xanax, Kokain, Opiode: Jugendliche mischen immer häufiger

NZZ, 9.8.2023

[LINK \(WITH LOGIN\) ↗](#)

Nora Raschle on “SRF Kids on the Radio”

On 12 August, Prof. Dr. Nora Raschle was a guest on the podcast “SRF Kids on the Radio” on an episode entitled “Anger, fear, nervousness – putting emotions under the microscope.”

SRF Kids, 12.8.2023 in German

[LINK ↗](#)

“Junge können trotz vieler Freunde einsam sein”

SRF news interviewed Moritz Daum about the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute's “In Good Company” study.

SRF news, 9.8.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

“In guter Gesellschaft”

Study, Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, 2023

[LINK ↗](#)

September

Presentation by Denis Ribeaud at the Netzwerk Kinderschutz meeting

At the meeting of the Netzwerk Kinderschutz in Basel, Denis Ribeaud gave a presentation on the Zurich Youth Survey 2021.

More information on the flyer

[PDF ↗](#)

Zurich Youth Survey 2021 (ZYS 2021)

[LINK ↗](#)

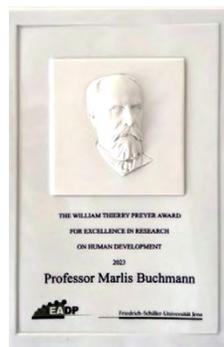
Nora Raschle elected 2023 FENS Scholar

The FENS Kavli Network of Excellence (Federation of the European Neuroscience Society) elected Nora Raschle as one of its 2023 FENS Scholars.

More information on fenskavlinetwork.org

[LINK ↗](#)

Marlis Buchmann honored for research excellence



Congratulations to Prof. Marlis Buchmann, who received the William Thierry Preyer Award for Excellence in Research on Human Development 2023. This award is given by the European Association for Developmental Psychology and was presented at the 2023 European Conference of Developmental Psychology held in Turku, Finland (28 August to 1 September).

The William Thierry Preyer Award

[LINK ↗](#)

COCON study

[LINK ↗](#)

Fifth z-proso International Research Network (zIREN) meeting

The z-proso International Research Network (zIREN) met this year at the Max Planck Institute (MPI) in Freiburg, Germany. Researchers from all over Europe and Brazil came together to share their latest research with data from the Zurich Project of Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood (z-proso). The event was also an opportunity to initiate future collaborations and strengthen connections among the research teams. There was a wide range of presentations on topics from conspiracy mentalities to crime and physical aggression to substance use.

A big thank you to Jean-Louis van Gelder's team, who organized an inspiring and socially enriching meeting at the MPI.

More information and photos

[LINK ↗](#)

In the media

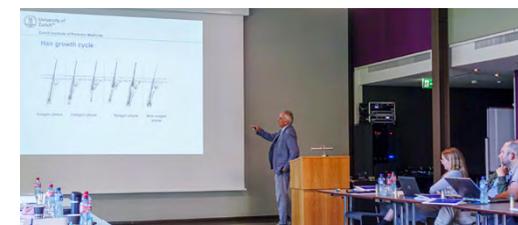
So knüpfen auch Menschen über 30 neue Freundschaften

SRF, 12.9.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

October

Hair analysis workshop at Klinik Lengg



The Risk and Resilience group from the Jacobs Center (PI: Prof. Lilly Shanahan) and the Experimental and Clinical Pharmacopsychology group from UZH Psychiatry (PI: Prof. Boris Quednow) co-hosted a workshop entitled “Hair data analysis: Psychology meets Toxicology” on 3 October. Experts from different disciplines came together to discuss their latest findings and methodologies in this area of research.

Photos of the event

[LINK ↗](#)

Online panel discussion on learning disabilities and difficulties



On 31 October, an online panel discussion was held in German on the topic of learning disabilities and difficulties, moderated by Moritz Daum.

More information about the event

[LINK ↗](#)

Prof. Lilly Shanahan gives keynote talk



Prof. Lilly Shanahan gave a keynote talk entitled “Cannabis use from early adolescence into adulthood: Prevalence and outcomes” at the annual meeting of Addiction Psychology Switzerland in Zurich.

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Prof. Dr. Jeylan Mortimer

Life Course Center,
University of Minnesota



Extending the status attainment paradigm: recent findings from the youth development study

The Wisconsin status attainment model has been the predominant paradigm for the study of intergenerational attainment processes for the past half century. While its central tenets – featuring the predictive power of parents’ socioeconomic status characteristics, parental encouragement of offspring educational achievement and adolescent aspirations and plans – continue to be empirically proven, this presentation considered other phenomena as potential contributors to the persistence of inequality across generations. Inspired by a life course perspective, recent analyses of data from the longitudinal three-generation Youth Development Study (YDS) indicate the value of extending the status attainment model to include grandparents’ orientations and attainments, parental self-direction at work and multiple offspring agentic psychological resources, which have been found to have distinct implications over generations.

[FLYER \(PDF\) ↗](#)

Online panel discussion on learning disabilities and difficulties

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More information about the event

[LINK ↗](#)

In the media

“Du kannst nichts richtig machen”

Study on the impact on verbal abuse in child rearing, featuring expert input from Nora Raschle
NZZ, 9.10.2023

[LINK \(REGISTRATION REQUIRED\) ↗](#)

November

Prof. Nora Raschle gave a talk as a part of the lecture series of the Volkshochschule Zürich



“The brain in the course of life – from birth to puberty (part I)” started on 25.10.23 and also included a lecture by Nora Raschle on 1.11.23 on the sub-topic “The spurt after birth.”

More information about the event (in German)

[LINK ↗](#)

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Prof. Dr. Christine Lötscher

ISEK – Popular Culture Studies,
University of Zurich



Teen angst and eco-passions: negotiating mental health on TV in times of climate crisis

Our climate is suffering, plants and animals are suffering, and children and young people are suffering – all while older generations continue to benefit, even in the face of the multiple crises of the present. This accusation, leveled by Greta Thunberg and other climate activists, has become a widespread narrative in recent years and has also shaped popular literature and media. TV series for young people on popular streaming platforms have in particular put mental health issues on the agenda.

In fictional narratives, young characters paradoxically appear as passive sufferers and as activists at the same time. Passions appear in a dual sense: suffering from the world and passion for the world merge into a figuration that can take on different forms. By representing mental health issues as a form of resistance and by entertaining their audience, TV dramas for young adults often shock – and thereby touch on complex ethical questions.

[FLYER \(PDF\) ↗](#)

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Dr. Benjamin Arold

Center for Law & Economics,
ETH Zurich



Evolution vs. creationism in the classroom: the lasting effects of science education

Anti-scientific attitudes can impose substantial costs on societies. Can schools be an important agent in mitigating the propagation of these attitudes? This paper investigates the effect of the content of science education on anti-scientific attitudes, knowledge and choices. The analysis exploits staggered reforms that reduce or expand the coverage of evolution theory in US state science education standards. I compare adjacent student cohorts in models with state and cohort fixed effects. There are three main results. First, expanded evolution coverage increases students' knowledge about evolution. Second, the reforms translate into greater evolution belief in adulthood but do not crowd out religiosity or affect political attitudes. Third, the reforms affect high-stakes life decisions, namely the probability of working in life sciences.

[FLYER \(PDF\) ↗](#)

Jacobs Foundation and Jacobs Center symposium

To mark the presentation of the 2023 Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize and in honor of the laureate, Janet Currie, the Jacobs Foundation and the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development held a symposium entitled "Insights on the manifold impacts of children's contexts on their development" on 17 November 2023.

More information and the program of the symposium

[LINK ↗](#)

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Prof. Dr. Moriah E. Thomason

Department of Child and Adolescent
Psychiatry,
New York University School of Medicine



How do neural networks of the fetal brain tell us about the past, present and future?

Processes beginning before birth set the stage for life-long health and development. New advances in fetal MRI have opened windows into the emergence of functional neural networks before birth that can be leveraged to better understand the developmental origins of disease. Dr. Thomason presented recent work that addresses stress, inflammation and chemical exposure in utero and the relation of these to offspring's neurobehavioral development. Overall, her data contributes to understanding the ways in which the perinatal environment may interact with the formation of neural networks in children, as well as insight into specific areas that may be targets for ameliorating perinatal risk.

[FLYER \(PDF\) ↗](#)

LIFE Fall Academy 2023



The LIFE Fall Academy took place in Zurich from 14 to 17 November, co-organized by the Zurich Fellow speakers Sabrina Beck and Michelle Loher and LIFE coordinator Ines Florin. About 70 fellows and faculty attended from the different participating universities. The event featured engaging scientific presentations, discussions and networking opportunities, as well as the Jacobs Foundation and Jacobs Center Symposium "Insights on the manifold impacts of children's contexts on their development", followed by the Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize ceremony. Several Zurich Fellows had their commencement during the academy, including Laura Bechtiger and Plamina Dimanova from the Jacobs Center. Congratulations to all graduates! The International Max Planck Research School on the Life Course (LIFE) is a joint international doctoral program of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, the Freie Universität Berlin, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the University of Michigan, the University of Virginia and UZH. LIFE Academy events are held biennially, alternating between the US and Europe.

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Prof. Dr. Ulf Zöhlitz

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development,
University of Zurich



Global prevalence and determinants of child corporal punishment

This talk presented global evidence on child maltreatment and documented that corporal punishment practices are widespread. Corporal punishment is more prevalent in the Global South and low- and medium income countries. At the family level, parental personality traits and stress are key predictors of child maltreatment. Financial stress is also a robust predictor of corporal punishment, especially in developing countries. The second part of the paper looked at causal determinants and investigated how banning corporal punishment in public institutions and private households affects corporal punishment of children and parenting practices in the next generation. Event study approaches were used to study the consequences of banning corporal punishment. Zöhlitz and his team found that banning corporal punishment in the public or private sphere has no immediate or delayed impact on child punishment. Banning corporal punishment also does not seem to break the intergenerational cycle of child maltreatment. Parents that experienced schooling without corporal punishment do not become less likely to physically discipline their children.

[FLYER \(PDF\)](#) ↗

December

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Dr. Dalila Figueiredo

Max Planck Institute for Research in Collective Goods



The effect of a conditional cash transfer on child marriage: evidence from Mexico

This cash transfer program provided monetary benefits to Mexican households, conditional on children's school attendance. Leveraging the staggered implementation of the program, it was found that exposure to the conditional cash transfer increased girls' probability of early marriage. After five years of exposure to the program, girls in beneficiary families were, on average, seven percent more likely to be married than the control group; no effect was found for boys. This novel and unanticipated result contrasts with the conventional wisdom, which would suggest that conditional cash transfers reduce child marriage through increases in education. However, Dr. Figueiredo presented a conceptual framework showing that the program can lead to a simultaneous increase in marriage and education if agents treat marriage as a normal good.

[FLYER \(PDF\)](#) ↗

Congratulations to Dr. Plamina Dimanova



Dr. Plamina Dimanova successfully defended her thesis entitled “The corticolimbic brain circuitry and its association to well-being: current perspectives and intergenerational evidence.”

Jacobs Center Symposium

20 years of z-proso – “Educational Trajectories and Educational Inequalities”



The Zurich Project on the Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood (z-proso) studies the social and educational development of around 1,400 young people who entered primary schools in the city of Zurich in 2004. To mark the 20th anniversary of this study, a symposium entitled “Educational Trajectories and Educational Inequalities” was held at the Jacobs Haus in Zurich's Seefeld. The symposium opened with welcome addresses from Simon Sommer (Co-CEO of the Jacobs Foundation), Dr. Silvia Steiner (Director of Education of the Canton of Zurich and

President of The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) and Prof. Moritz Daum (Director of the Jacobs Center at the University of Zurich).

The initiator and co-project leader of the study, Prof. Manuel Eisner, looked back at the beginnings and effects of the z-proso study. Co-director Dr. Denis Ribeaud presented the design, the surveys and the partner projects, and co-director Prof. Lilly Shanahan discussed selected results of z-proso in the field of education. Lea Buzzi analyzed the educational trajectories of the z-proso participants. Designated professionals, decision-makers and other stakeholders in the field of education exchanged ideas with researchers on ways to promote improved educational mobility.

Presentation slides and image gallery

[LINK ↗](#)

Jacobs Center christmas party in the UniTurm



Just as in 2022, the year 2023 was brought to a festive close with an atmospheric Christmas aperitif at the university's UniTurm restaurant.

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

Prof. Dr. Lauren Gaydosh

Center on Aging and Population Sciences,
University of Texas



Early life course exposure to family instability and adult health

Children live apart from their biological parents for a variety of reasons, ranging from parental death, incarceration, divorce and remarriage. A large body of literature demonstrates that family instability of this kind is associated with worse developmental outcomes for children relative to peers who live consistently in two-parent families. However, there is limited understanding of the adult physical health consequences of this childhood exposure. Dr. Gaydosh and her team investigated the relationship between childhood exposure to family instability and several biomarker measures of physical health in established adulthood using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health. Dr. Gaydosh also explored whether the association varies depending on the developmental timing of the exposure.

[FLYER \(PDF\) ↗](#)

In the media

“Du bist wertvoll für mich”

Interview with Moritz Daum in “Schweizer Familie”
Moritz Daum was interviewed in the December issue of “Schweizer Familie” on the subject of friendships.

[PDF ↗](#)

“Lasst die Kinder frei!”

Article in German with input from Moritz Daum,
Süddeutsche Zeitung, 16.12.2023

[LINK \(WITH LOGIN\) ↗](#)

[PDF ↗](#)

“Das Christkind kommt” – Weihnachtslügen der Eltern – zauberhaft oder problematisch?

Moritz Daum, SRF, 22.12.2023

[LINK ↗](#)

Organizational chart

Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development (JCPYD)



Steering Committee

UZH Elisabeth Stark (Vice President Research)
 Katharina Michaelowa (Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences)
 Harald Gall (Dean, Faculty of Business, Economics and Informatics)

Jacobs Foundation Simon Sommer (Co-CEO)
 Olaf von Maydell (Member, Board of Trustees)
 Gelgia Fetz Fernandes (Co-Lead, Learning Minds)

Scientific Advisory Board

Ronald Dahl
 Kenneth A. Dodge
 Alexander Grob
 Yvonne Kelly
 Jens O. Ludwig
 Ulrich Trautwein

Governing Board

Executive Director: Moritz Daum

Moritz Daum (Psychology) | Michael Shanahan (Sociology) | Ana Costa-Ramón (Economics)

Office
 Stephanie Kernich

Management Committee

Director = Chair of the Management Committee | all chairs of the three departments at JCPYD: sociology/psychology/economics | representation of passive members (advisory function)

Sociology

Psychology

Economics



Publishing information

Editorial team
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Jacobs Center
for Productive Youth Development
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CH-8050 Zurich

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Gena Olson

Layout
GYSIN [Konzept+Gestaltung]

Pictures

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and Thomas Poppenwimmer, Jacobs Center
Events, media, and news photos: Jacobs Center

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- p. 03 Shutterstock (side column)
Frank Brüderli (portrait of Elisabeth Stark) | Jacobs Foundation (portrait of Simon Sommer)
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- p. 06 mounssif, Adobe Stock
- p. 08 Gorodenkoff, Shutterstock
- p. 09 Evgeny Atamanenko, Shutterstock
- p. 10 fizkes, Shutterstock
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