University of Cambridge
Centre for Family Research

Annual Report 2013-2014
Centre for Family Research

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The end of the academic year brought the retirement of our much-loved Deputy Director, Helen Statham, who has worked at the Centre for Family Research for 25 years. Recently, Helen has dedicated herself to the smooth-running of the Centre - she has been the go-to person for everything from complicated questions about grant applications, to career guidance, to her special Helen-blend of sound advice and emotional support. But Helen has also spearheaded some truly ground-breaking research on pregnancy, prenatal screening and foetal abnormality. A little known fact about Helen is that she began her academic life as a biologist conducting laboratory research on frog muscles and it was not until after having children that she joined the CFR in 1989. In searching the Centre’s archives I found an immensely important body of work that gets to the heart of women’s lives - their feelings and experiences at a particularly vulnerable time, when they are pregnant and, in particular, when they receive a diagnosis in pregnancy that something may be, or was actually, wrong with their baby. The scale and the scope of her work is hugely impressive. True to her style, Helen never blows her own trumpet!

Helen’s approach to research was typified by a number of Helen-like qualities: (i) she asked big questions and produced important answers, (ii) she carried out research that matters to people - research that has the capacity to improve people’s lives, (iii) she conveyed the feelings of real people and what it is really like to have these experiences - enabling their voices to be heard, and (iv) she conducted research that influenced policy and practice by increasing understanding of what people are actually thinking and feeling. If there is one over-riding characteristic of Helen’s work
it is that she brought a sense of humanity to her research - it was not about furthering her career or notching up publications for the sake of it but instead the motivation to carry out research that could make a positive difference to people's lives shone out loud and clear.

To give just a few examples, together with Claire Snowdon Helen conducted the Cambridge Pre-Natal Screening Study, a study of the psychological and social impact of routine screening of women for foetal abnormality. She also carried out studies of parents whose unborn babies were found to have abnormalities, and more recently, with Maggie Ponder, she studied families who were involved in an investigation of genetic testing for learning disabilities. Questions that were of interest to Helen were, “How do women feel about screening?”, “What are their experiences?” and “What happens when testing confirms that the unborn baby has an abnormality?” She also tackled the broader questions of whether or not there should there be screening and, if so, how best to implement it. Importantly, she revealed that pregnant women generally did not know what they were being tested for and also that it is very common for pregnant women to worry that something might be wrong with their baby. It seemed that testing, in itself, made people anxious!

One of her most significant studies was of women who lost a baby because of foetal abnormality, the hard decisions they had to make about whether or not to terminate the pregnancy, and, if they did so, what happened afterwards. Helen showed that the way in which women are told that their unborn baby has an abnormality - including the words that are used - has a profound and long-lasting influence on parents.
Helen’s work has had a major impact on the care of those who receive a diagnosis of foetal abnormality. She also highlighted the importance of appropriate support as well as the importance of informed decisions about testing. Helen’s work has shed light on the experiences of parents at a particularly difficult and distressing time of their lives and has brought the perspectives of the people concerned to the fore; that is what is so special - and so quintessentially Helen - about this research.

Latterly in her career I had the pleasure of being involved in a study with Helen when Stonewall approached the CFR and commissioned a study of the school experiences of children with same-sex parents. This field of research had been dominated by quantitative researchers and Helen, working with Sarah Jennings, used a qualitative approach to address important questions about children’s experiences that could not be answered by quantitative methods alone. This was a ground-breaking study that illuminated the day-to-day difficulties faced by these children at school and highlighted - in children’s own voices - what schools could do to help. This piece of research was used to provide training for teachers in schools throughout the UK and has had a major positive impact on the way in which children with same-sex parents experience school.

In addition to her academic work Helen was a campaigner. In the archive I found several letters to the BMJ and The Lancet putting the record straight about prenatal screening and foetal abnormalities - providing nuggets of wisdom and telling it straight! She also founded the charity ARC (Antenatal Results and Choices) to help women with foetal abnormalities and their partners, and was an advisor to several government and medical committees including the British Association of Perinatal
Medicine and Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists. At the Centre, Helen has always supported women academics and administrators at all stages of their careers providing both professional and personal support.

In order to say farewell and celebrate her 25 years at the CFR we held a party at Madingley Hall and presented Helen with an album in which we had each written her a message. From these messages it was clear that Helen will be remembered for the following characteristics: **Wisdom** (words of wisdom, your many insights and your always sensible, practical advice; so good at seeing where the critical issues lay; your vast knowledge of everything from ethics to the latest films; your kindness and your wisdom; sound advice about everything), **Friendship** (advice and friendship; wonderful friendship; sustained friendship; your kindness, your sense of fun, your interest in other people; someone who understands and cares; you always have time to listen), **Fun and Feminism** (stories in the coffee room; my favourite feminist; fun, full of energy and a free spirit; feminism; wine drinking; cake eating and laughter), and, last but not least, **Food**! (marvellous Helen-rhubarb; your delicious rhubarb and eggs; rhubarb, strawberry plants, trout; marvellous Helen-rhubarb; the gorgeous garden produce; all the yummy fruit from your garden, your rhubarbs will be muchly missed). Working with Helen has been a complete delight. She has always had the best interests of the Centre and of the people in it at heart. We all wish her much happiness in her retirement and lots of exciting journeys ahead!
Once again we had an excellent group of seminar speakers including Dr Nanette Gartrell, Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law and Academy Award nominee and President of Woman Vision, Dr Dee Mosbacher, “Countering Homophobia Through Research and Film”; Professor Neil Humphrey, Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester “Social and emotional competence in children and adolescents: conceptualisation, assessment and utility”; Thomas Rieg, Otto Beisheim School of Management, Germany “Family structure, governance, and family firm performance: A configurational and set-theoretic approach”; Dr Susan Pawlby, Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College London “Mothers with severe mental illness: Keeping the baby in mind”; Dr Angelica Ronald, Birkbeck, University of London “What causes psychotic experiences in adolescence? New findings from a cohort study of 5000 16-year-old twin pairs”; Dr Alice Winstanley, University of Cambridge “Maternal cognitions and behaviours following preterm deliveries”; Mavis Maclean, University of Oxford “The Shared Parenting Debate: will the Children
Bill/Act 2103 benefit children in conflicted contact cases?”; Dr Laura King, University of Leeds “Men, Masculinity and Maternity: Fathers’ experiences of childbirth in Britain, from the 1950s to the present”; Dr Liberty Barnes, University of Cambridge “Turning Problems into Data: Methodological Reflections on an Ethnographic Study of Male Infertility”; Dr Daragh McDermott, Anglia Ruskin University “Provision of effective mental health services to sexual and gender minorities - Results from a systematic review of the literature (1980-2013)”; and Dr Stephanie Burnett Heyes, University of Oxford “Social Cognition in adolescent social networks”. In addition, Rory Devine ran an illuminating methodology workshop on meta-analysis, and Michal Kosinski from the Psychometrics Centre held a workshop for us on using the internet for research.

On a more social note, we continued our termly visits to the Snug for cocktails, Friday morning coffee, and our Christmas party at the Hotel du Vin. We also held a CFR film night, showing the film “Hora Chilena” which is based on the lives of Chileans who escaped from the Pinochet dictatorship to Cambridge. The Directors, Camila Iturra, Lautaro Vargas and Kip Loades, took part in a Q&A following the screening. In summer we had a party in Susan’s garden for our Spanish and South American visitors, and a party in Martin’s garden to celebrate the publication of “Relatedness in assisted reproduction: Families, origins, identities” edited by Tabitha Freeman, Susanna Graham, Fatemeh Ebethaj and Martin Richards.
In September, Team CFR (from left to right: Gail Ewing, Claire Hughes, Sarah Foley, Lucy Blake, Helen Statham and John Appleby) took part in the Chariots of Fire relay run in September, raising £900 for the Arthur Rank Hospice.

One new CFR baby was born this year - congratulations to Nao and Tom on the birth of their daughter Aika Maria Fujita Plant, born on 28th May 2014. Finally, with many thanks to Kathy Oswald, we launched our new CFR website beautifully illustrated by Karin Eklund - please do visit us at www.cfr.cam.ac.uk. Special thanks are due to Abby Scott for keeping us under control in this particularly busy year.

Susan Golombok, Director

10th November, 2014
The New Families Team
Professor Susan Golombok

The year kicked off with an exciting and action-packed visit to Chile by 10 members of the team. By coincidence, we received three separate invitations to present our research in Santiago in November 2013 so we felt we simply had to go! The main event was a two-day conference on social and ethical aspects of assisted reproduction hosted by Professor Fernando Zegers-Hochschild at Diego Portalis University at which members of both institutions presented papers and engaged in lively debate. The President of the University honoured the visit by giving a lunch for Susan Golombok, Fernando Zegers-Hochschild and the organisers of the conference. We also visited Fines Terre University, hosted by Dr Ana Maria Yevenes, where Susan Golombok gave a lecture on single-mother families and we all met with members of the Faculty of Education and of our namesake, the Fines Terre University Centre for Family Research. At the final event, Susan Golombok presented a paper on our UK study of adoptive gay, lesbian and heterosexual families at the 3rd International Conference on Adoption hosted by the Mi Casa Adoption Foundation. Susan was also interviewed for the first ever Chilean television documentary on lesbian and gay parents. In addition to these academic activities we experienced wonderful Chilean hospitality, the highlight of which was a magnificent bonfire-lit garden party at the home of Fernando and Sharon Zegers-Hochschild. We were also entertained at a stunning modernist restaurant and taken to the Santiago home of the poet Pablo Neruda by our hosts at Fines Terre University. The trip ended with a memorable visit to the old city of Valparaiso with our hosts from Diego Portalis University.
Another highlight of the year was the third and final workshop arising from our Wellcome Trust Bioethics Enhancement Award that we held in Cambridge jointly with Professor Rosamund Scott from King’s College London and Professor Stephen Wilkinson from the University of Lancaster. The topic of the workshop was regulating reproductive donation and the papers presented at the workshop will be published next year by Cambridge University Press in the final volume of our bioethics trilogy. The workshop was attended by psychologists, sociologists, social anthropologists, philosophers, bio ethicists, academic lawyers and practitioners from Europe, Australia, South America and the United States. It culminated in a splendid dinner at King’s College Cambridge.
Members of the team were also invited to participate in workshops on assisted reproduction and the family hosted by Professor Rene Frydman at the Collège d'études mondiales in Paris. Helen Statham, Susanna Graham and Sophie Zadeh attended the first workshop on lesbian mother families and single mothers by choice. The second workshop focused on the disclosure of donor insemination and designer babies and was attended by Martin Richards, Lucy Blake, Elena Ilioi and Sarah Evans.
Longitudinal study of assisted reproduction families

The 6th wave of the Longitudinal Study of Assisted Reproduction Families took off this year as the children reached 14 years old. The children, who were born at the millennium, and their parents previously took part in the study when the children were aged 1, 2, 3, 7 and 10. Vasanti Jadva, who has been involved in this study from the outset, Lucy Blake, who was involved in the age 7 and age 10 waves, and Susan Golombok were joined this year by Elena Ilioi who is working on the age 14 follow up for her PhD and Sarah Evans who was appointed as a Research Assistant in 2013. This is a particularly interesting phase of the study as the children are now teenagers and are able to reflect on their feelings and experiences of being born through egg donation, donor insemination or surrogacy.

Study of single mothers by choice

Data collection for the study of single mothers by choice, which compares the quality of parent-child relationships and the psychological adjustment of children in single-mother and two-parent families created by donor insemination and also examines the feelings and experiences of single mothers by choice, was completed this year. This study is being carried out by Tabitha Freeman and Sophie Zadeh. Sophie’s PhD is based on this study and focuses on social representations of single mothers by choice from the perspectives of the media and the mothers themselves. This study would not have been possible without the collaboration of Venessa Smith from the London Women’s Clinic who deserves a very big thank you for continuing to assist us while on maternity leave.
Gay fathers study

The gay fathers study, a study of gay couples with children born through surrogacy and egg donation in the US, made excellent progress this year. This study is being coordinated by Lucy Blake. In the first half of the year, the study was based at Columbia University in New York, and Jenna Slutsky and Elizabeth Raffanello assessed families in the tri-state area under the supervision of Professor Anke Ehrhardt, Head of the Division of Gender, Sexuality and Health. In July, Lucy Blake, Susan Imrie and Sophie Zadeh attended Family Week in Cape Cod, an annual event organised by the Family Equality Council at which more than 500 LGBT families come together for a fun and varied range of events including ice-cream socials, discos, family-friendly happy-hours and a beach campfire. During this week Lucy, Susan and Sophie assessed a further 17 families which was quite a feat given the in-depth nature of the assessments - although we didn’t feel too sorry for them when they sent back photos from all the parties they attended by the pool and on the beach! Recruitment for the study is continuing at a steady pace and we greatly appreciate the help given by the Center for Surrogate Parenting following Susan’s visit in September.

Study of intra-family egg donation

This study focuses on families with infants born through egg donation and has been designed to address the question of whether receiving eggs from friends or family members, as opposed to unknown donors, creates problems for families. The study is being conducted by Vasanti Jadva, Susan Imrie and Sarah Evans, and data from this
study will form the basis of Susan Imrie’s PhD. All of the families created through identity-release donors and all of the families in the comparison group of IVF families have now been seen and it is hoped that data collection from families with known donors will be completed by the end of the year. We would especially like to thank Bourn Hall Clinic and Care Fertility Centres for their help with this study.

Donor siblings study

Like the study of gay fathers, this investigation is being conducted in New York. The study is being coordinated by Tabitha Freeman and Vasanti Jadva, and data collection is being carried out by Jenna Slutsky and Sherina Persaud under the supervision of Professor Miriam Steele at the New School for Social Research. Interviews have now been conducted with 30 teenagers conceived by donor insemination, focusing on their feelings and experiences of being donor-conceived and the nature of their relationships with their donor siblings, i.e. genetically related half-siblings born from the same donor but growing up in different families. This study has been conducted in collaboration with the Donor Sibling Registry and we are about to embark on the data analysis phase of the research.

Study of surrogate mothers

Vasanti Jadva’s study of surrogate mothers’ feelings about being a surrogate 5-10 years later ended this year with the publication of several papers by Vasanti and Susan Imrie, not only on the thoughts and feelings of the surrogates but also of their partners and their own children. In spite of concerns to the contrary, these women did
not regret having given birth for another couple and their own children were proud of them. Interestingly, many of their own children viewed the surrogacy children as half-siblings, even in cases where they lacked a genetic link to them.

_Egg donors study_

In collaboration with the London Women’s Clinic, Susanna Graham, Tabitha Freeman and Vasanti Jadva conducted a study of the first UK cohort of women to donate eggs following the introduction of compensation, resulting from a change in policy by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. This in-depth qualitative study provided unexpected insights into the characteristics and motivations of compensated egg donors.

_Pride Angel study_

Tabitha Freeman and Vasanti Jadva were given the opportunity to collaborate with the website “Pride Angel” on the first ever study of the motivations and characteristics of people looking online for someone with whom to have a child in a co-parenting relationship, that is, to raise a child jointly but in different households and in the absence of an intimate relationship between the parents. Although lesbian women and gay men have engaged in co-parenting for some time, this phenomenon has grown as a result of the internet and is now beginning to occur among heterosexual as well as lesbian and gay men and women.
News from individual members

The team has had several successes this year. Susanna Graham was awarded a PhD followed by a prestigious Wellcome Trust Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Sophie Zadeh was appointed to a Junior Research Fellowship at Corpus Christi College, and John Appleby was awarded a PhD. Elena Ilioi passed her 1st year PhD viva and her literature review on the psychological adjustment of adolescents conceived by assisted reproduction was published by the journal Human Reproduction Update. Nishtha Lamba made two visits to India to collect data for her PhD research on the psychological wellbeing of surrogate mothers and also passed her 1st year PhD viva. In addition, she collected data for a study of Indian egg donors being conducted by Vasanti Jadva. In February, we were joined by Pamela Jiménez-Etcheverria from Chile who has begun a PhD on the psychological adjustment and cognitive development of adopted and institutionalized children in Chile.

Tabitha Freeman gave invited presentations on her work on donor conception at the European Society for Human Reproduction Annual Conference in Munich and at the Brocher Foundation in Geneva. She was also awarded a grant from the University’s Returning Carers scheme. Vasanti Jadva presented her work at two conferences in Spain, one in Pontevedra and the other in Barcelona, as well as at a conference in the Netherlands. Closer to home, she gave papers on gamete donation and surrogacy in Windsor and Manchester, respectively. This year she has been concentrating on writing up the findings of her longitudinal study of surrogate mothers. Vasanti was also awarded a grant from the Returning Carers scheme.

Lucy Blake gave a number of talks on her research including presentations at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, the Jacob’s Foundation Conference at Marbach Castle in Germany, and the Annual Meeting of the Nordic Fertility Society in Haugesund. In Cambridge, she spoke at Churchill College and at CRASSH. Lucy was also involved in two public engagement events this year. In collaboration with Kate Ellis-Davis from the Department of Psychology, she organised an event during Cambridge Science Week entitled “What makes a family?” The public, and parents and children in particular, were invited to a series of brief, accessible presentations. There were also numerous activities aimed at children, including a drawing session with the illustrator, Karin Eklund.
Lucy also ran a Sutton Trust Summer School for the Psychology Department, a week-long residential programme intended to give A-Level students from state schools an insight into the life of an undergraduate at Cambridge. Places on the course were highly competitive, with 160 students applying for 20 places. Priority was given to students who would be from the first generation in their family to attend university, who attended schools or colleges with low A-Level scores, who came from neighbourhoods with low progression rates to higher education, and who are (or have been) looked after, accommodated or in care. Other public engagement activities were carried out by members of the Centre including a series of online articles by Sophie Zadeh including, “As far as the ‘Magaluf girl’ video is concerned, it’s the media that has plumbed the depths”, “What’s love got to do with it? Or thinking about the (fe)(male) contraceptive pill”, “Women can abuse women too” and “Let the hammer see the nail” or “I’m not a moron, take me out of here”. Susanna Graham was interviewed on BBC R4 Woman’s Hour about single women seeking IVF.
Susan Golombok was on sabbatical this year and completed a book entitled “Modern Families: Parents and children in new family forms” to be published by Cambridge University Press in March 2015. She gave invited presentations to the Jacobs Foundation Conference on Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Fatherhood at Marbach Castle in Germany, a keynote lecture on rainbow families in Malta, and a lecture on surrogacy families hosted by the Center for Surrogate Parenting in Los Angeles. She also joined the Editorial Board of Fertility & Sterility and the Wellcome Trust Research Resources Committee.

We were delighted to host two Visiting Scholars this year; Thomas Reig from the Otto Beisheim School of Management in Germany, who is studying family businesses, and Bruna Álvarez Mora from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, who is studying the social construction of motherhood in Spain.

Celebratory Viva Cakes!

Susanna Graham     John Appleby
New research team members

First of all, I would like to offer a warm welcome to the “new” members of my research team: Dr Leire Salazar, from the University of Madrid, who is joining us until the end of January 2015 as a visiting scholar, Mr Dominic Kelly and Ms Naomi White, who have each joined the Ready Steady Go team, and three new posts associated with the New Fathers and Mothers Study (see below): Dr Anja Lindberg and Ms Wendy Browne, who have each taken up new Research Assistant posts and Ms Sarah Foley, who has just started an ESRC-funded PhD. In the past, our new arrivals have been mostly international, but this year the theme is ‘local talent’. Dominic and Sarah are both recent graduates from Cambridge University. Dominic was awarded his degree just this summer. Sarah completed her degree in June 2012 and has been working since then as a Research Assistant in the Centre for Family Research and so is not really new at all, but we are delighted to be able to keep her at the CFR for the next few years as she completes her PhD. Likewise, Naomi is a familiar face to members of the CFR as she has just completed the fourth and final year of her PhD and we are very pleased that she will be staying on for an extra year as a Research Assistant. Similarly, Wendy obtained an MPhil from Cambridge University in 2011 and has since been working on a PhD with Professor Melissa Hines, such that many people in the CFR already know her. Finally, Anja completed her PhD at Anglia Ruskin University and so has not had to move home to start her new post. Indeed, even our only international team member, Dr Leire Salazar completed her PhD in Oxford and is visiting the CFR for 5 months (taking the post-doc slot recently vacated by Dr Christy Moses-Passini, who has returned to
Geneva - we wish Christy and her family every success in the future). Leire’s background is in sociology, but she shares an interest in the impact of social disadvantage on children’s educational achievements and so is hoping to learn about some of the psychological methods we use to investigate both family relationship quality and children’s early cognitive development; in return, we hope to learn from her expertise in quantitative sociology.

*The New Fathers and Mothers Study*

Probably the most exciting news for the year was that our application to the ESRC Open Research Area scheme was successful - especially as this is a very competitive international research call (with just 15 of the 186 eligible applications being funded). The New Fathers and Mothers Study will involve 400 families across 3 sites: 200 families in the UK (primarily around Cambridge), 100 in New York (who will be seen by a team led by Prof Clancy Blair from NYU) and 100 families living in the Netherlands (who will be seen by a team led by Prof Judi Mesman, from the University of Leiden). The Cambridge investigators on this team are Professor Claire Hughes, Dr Rory Devine and Dr Rosie Ensor. Thus this funding will enable Rory to remain in the CFR for another three years, and will provide funding for Rosie to return to the CFR (part-time) following her period of maternity leave.

The study team is interested in the unique contribution of fathers and mothers to early infant development. More specifically the team want to learn about the development of self-control in early childhood. In the early years, self-control is particularly susceptible to environmental influences and can have a far-reaching influence on
later development. Self-control in early childhood is known to predict diverse but key long-term outcomes including adult health, wealth and involvement in crime (Moffitt et al., 2011). Importantly, recent findings indicate that early self-control is influenced by variation in the quality of mother-infant interactions (Bernier, Carlson & Whipple, 2010). The NEWFAMS team will combine several different methods (including behavioural observations, psychological tests and questionnaires and saliva samples) to learn about the ways parents support the development of their child’s self-control in the first two years of life.

The Toddlers Up study - a final wave?

This month, Amanda Aldercotte and Nik Darshane will complete the latest (and perhaps final) wave of the (ESRC-funded) longitudinal “Toddlers Up” study - the children we recruited as toddlers or pre-schoolers are now all in Year 8 of secondary school! Following hot on the heels of the home visits completed by Sarah Foley last year, Amanda and Nik have been conducting phone-based interviews and cognitive assessments. These phone interviews hope to capture how the children are adjusting to life in secondary school in a number of areas, including how they are getting along with their peers, what their growing independence means for their home lives, and whether this transition has had an impact on their cognitive and academic skills.

Having finished the age-12 home visits in December, we have now also completed coding the 120 mothers’ five-minute speech samples for warmth, criticism and mind-mindedness. This coding indicates that having a “mind-minded” mother acts as a buffer for children at risk of developing conduct problems. That is, children are less likely to
exhibit signs of disruptive behaviour if their mothers have a tendency to describe them as individuals with their own unique thoughts, feelings and desires rather than focusing on their behaviours. Impressively, this relationship is independent of children’s prior adjustment problems, general verbal ability, gender, family background and concurrent well-being. With coding of the mother-child observations almost complete, we are excited to see whether mind-mindedness is linked to different conflict-resolution strategies in the “hot topics” (a ten minute discussion of an area of disagreement), maternal sensitivity during a problem-solving task and more harmonious and positive discussions when planning a fictional family holiday. Extending the focus on mental-state talk in previous waves of the study, these observations have also been coded for mental-state talk and we look forward to looking at both the stability and predictive validity of mother and child mental-state term use.

‘In Mind’ - a follow up

Thanks to funding from the Isaac Newton Trust, we were able to extend both Dr Devine’s post-doctoral post and the developmental scope of our work by adding a 12-month follow-up of the UK sample who took part in an earlier, ESRC-funded study (‘In Mind’). The ‘In Mind’ study provided us with a rich and complex data set about children’s social and cognitive development in the UK and Hong Kong. The ‘In Mind’ project has proven to be a fruitful source of data. Dr Zhenlin Wang from the Hong Kong Institute of Education visited the Centre between January and May 2014 to collaborate on data analysis and drafting manuscripts. The ‘In Mind’ follow-up study took place between May and October 2014. The primary aim of this study was to examine the interplay between parental mental-state talk, executive function and
children’s theory of mind. New features of these follow-up visits include: (i) assessments of parents’ skills in executive function and theory of mind (this will be the first study to include intergenerational parallel assessments of these constructs); and (ii) direct measures of early literacy and numeracy, coupled with teachers’ questionnaire ratings on the newly developed Brief Early Skills and Support Index (BESSI - see Ready Steady Go, below), enabling an examination (again, for the first time) of the interplay between parent-child interaction quality, theory of mind and executive function as predictors of children’s school readiness. These follow-up visits were all conducted by Dr Rory Devine, assisted by Kitty Jones (Queens’ College) who received a Grindley Grant from the Department of Psychology to work on the project for 6 weeks and Anna Hildigunnur Hall (University of Iceland, Reykjavik) who was awarded an AMGEN scholarship to work on the ‘In Mind’ project for 8 weeks.

‘Ready Steady Go’ - a follow up

Building on the success of the ‘Ready Steady Go’ study, funded by the Westminster Foundation, we received funding from the Foundation Years Trust to extend our work by developing a brief questionnaire for teachers to identify children likely to benefit from additional support in making the transition to school. Originally dubbed the “Starting School Survey” (or ‘Triple S’), this extension work has shown that in fact the questionnaire is suitable for use with nursery teachers working with children as young as 2.5 years - as a result, we have renamed it the Brief Early Skills and Support Index (BESSI). In this follow-up grant we have not only extended the size and age-range of children included, but also added in two longitudinal studies: an assessment of test-retest reliability over a one month period (for ratings of 250+ children) and an
assessment of stability of individual differences / developmental change over a 6-month period (for ratings of 650+ children). The findings from our initial (cross-sectional, but multi-level) analyses of the BESSI data emphasise the importance of family support as a predictor of positive child outcomes. In particular, across this enlarged sample of almost 1,500 children aged 2.5 to 5.5, we were able to confirm our previous finding that ‘talks about fun activities at home’ is as important a predictor as ‘reads regularly at home’. This is reassuring, as the substantial differences between the conversational abilities of 2-year-olds and 5-year-olds suggests that this finding cannot simply be dismissed as reflecting successful adjustment among children who are talking to their teacher. We are building on this finding in two ways. First, by extending the ‘In Mind’ sample to include 2-year-olds we plan to assess whether teachers’ ratings on this ‘talks about fun activities at home’ item from the BESSI are related to researchers’ ratings of playful interactions during filmed parent-child interactions. This is, of course, a very stringent test, as all the children will be filmed in the same activities (play-doh and jigsaw) - but we know that there are striking individual differences in the quality of parent-child interactions, even when the activity itself is kept constant.

Second, we have launched another study to develop a related instrument, to be used by parents of very young children (aged 12-35 months) in order to report on key factors that contribute to child outcomes (e.g., family demographics, quality of family relationships, neighbourhoods, social support etc). As for the BESSI, this work began with focus groups and postal surveys to gather the views of diverse stake-holders (including nursery teachers, health visitors, parents and HomeStart volunteers). A key point of consensus among these groups was the need to avoid lengthy or complex questions. The instrument we are developing, the Index of Toddler Life Chance (I-TLC)
is therefore designed to minimise the verbal demands upon parents. In addition, building on the finding from analyses of BESSI data, the I-TLC is focused on the diverse ways in which family support is important for very young children - including, for example ‘having fun’.

*Three PhD submissions (and one to follow very soon)*

The next main piece of news is that Adelle Pushparatnam, Naomi White and Keri Wong all submitted their PhD theses this summer. While reading three different theses over the summer holidays certainly kept me busy, in some ways this shared deadline meant that Adelle, Naomi and Keri were able to offer each other companionship and support as they burned the midnight oil together to complete their chapters on time. Although the topics covered by these three PhDs are very different, they all involve a cross-cultural dimension. Adelle’s thesis included a comparison of the socio-cognitive development of typically developing children and children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in the UK and in Malaysia, as well as a single-subject design parent-led intervention for ASD in these two countries. Naomi’s thesis encompassed two studies - focusing on sibling relationships in children taking part in the ongoing Toddlers Up longitudinal study and in a new cross-cultural study of children’s views on their sibling relationships that involved ethnically diverse samples of children in the UK and in New Zealand. Keri’s thesis, focused on children’s mistrust and symptoms of paranoia, while not explicitly addressing issues of cultural similarities and contrasts, did include two large samples recruited from very different places: East Anglia and Hong Kong. These three PhDs will soon be joined by a fourth: Jenny Landt has completed data-collection for her study of theory of mind and pro-sociality in children from the UK and
Mexico and will be submitting her thesis in the next few months. Together, these four PhDs represent a very broad and ambitious set of studies and we look forward to some fascinating publications in the coming year.

*New directions for the Silent Film paradigm*

This year Dr Devine completed the first round of new data collection on the ‘Silent Film Task’. As part of a study of the test-retest reliability of the task, we collected data from 160 children aged 8 to 11 on two occasions. We plan to collect further data from children aged 7 and 8 and children aged 11 to 13. This study will provide much-needed evidence about the psychometric properties of the task. The ‘Silent Film Task’ is now being used by research groups at the University of Oxford, King’s College London, the University of Sydney and the University of California, Davis. These studies will test the value of the task as a measure of mind-reading skills in adolescents with typically development, with hearing impairments and with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

*Dissemination*

In March, Naomi, Sarah and I visited our colleagues at the Birkenhead Foundation Years Trust, based in the Wirral, and conducted focus-groups with different groups of child-care professionals. As part of this knowledge exchange, I gave a presentation on the potential benefits child-care professionals could gain from using the five-minute-speech sample, a method my team has been using in a number of studies with parents of children of different ages which though short provides a wealth of interesting results.
In May, my research team attended the main meeting of the British Psychological Society in Birmingham, at which I received a prize (in the academic monographs category), for my book *Social Understanding, Social Lives*. Naomi and I also presented papers in a symposium about the contribution of family relationships to children’s problem behaviour, with colleagues from the Universities of Bath and Liverpool. In addition, Keri, Adelle, Jenny, and Naomi presented some of their PhD work in a cross-cultural symposium examining links between family interactions and social adjustment in five countries. In August, following another set of focus groups (this time with volunteers working in the Tower Hamlets branch of HomeStart) I visited One plus One at their headquarters in Farringdon, to give a talk about social influences on executive function. This was a very useful visit and should set the stage for a variety of collaborative endeavours in the future.

In September, my team also attended the Developmental Section meeting of the British Psychological Society in Amsterdam, where we took part in two separate symposia. The first symposium, chaired by Amanda Aldercotte, drew together colleagues from the University of Manchester, the University of Sussex, and the University of Pavia. With the common thread of social-emotional learning and social understanding in mind, the papers in this symposium depicted snapshots of the stages associated with transforming academic research into educational policy. My team was involved in three of the four papers presented; the first paper, presented by Amanda as part of her PhD, concerned the long-term impact of children’s early social-emotional skills at age 3 on their social and academic success in middle childhood. The second paper was related to the development of the BESSI (described above) and not only verified the subscale
structure of this questionnaire, but also highlighted children's gender, social disadvantage, and experience of fun in the home as important predictors of their school readiness. Finally, as part of a collaborative project with the University of Pavia, the third paper presented positive findings from a recent training program designed to enhance children's social understanding. The second symposium, involved colleagues I have been working in collaboration with from the Faculty of Education and the University of Leiden. The theme of this symposium was the impact of parent sensitivity on child outcomes. My team was involved in three of the four papers presented and due to the unforeseen commitments of two of my collaborators, there was an element of musical chairs as I presented two of these papers! Both of these were based on data drawn from the UK samples who are involved in cross-cultural studies with colleagues in Hong-Kong. Similarly these papers focused on the role of maternal autonomy support on child executive function but within two distinct developmental periods, the first in preschool years, and the second, in early adolescence. The third paper, presented in my stead by Sarah, drew on maternal speech-sample data gathered during the latest home visits to the Toddlers Up sample and explored the potential buffering role of maternal mind-mindedness in pre-adolescents at risk of displaying disruptive behaviour.

*Contributing to projects within the Department of Psychology.*

During Susan Golombok’s sabbatical, I stepped in as Chair of the Athena SWAN Committee - a role that entailed taking responsibility for collating all the information needed to submit an application for a Silver Award. Although we did not achieve this, we did receive a Bronze Award, together with very positive feedback and strong encouragement to apply again this Autumn. This year Dr Devine worked alongside Dr
Nicole Horst (BCNI) to establish the first Post-doctoral Researcher Committee in the Department of Psychology and to organize the first ‘Researcher Away Day’ in July 2014. After months of planning and organisation, the day was a resounding success and was very well attended. Dr Devine will continue to work on the post-doctoral committee into the next academic year and is hoping to establish a series of regular training and networking events for research staff across the Department of Psychology.

Claire and her team - summer 2014
It is with great sadness that I compile my last contribution to the Centre for Family Research Annual Report as a researcher and as coordinator of the Families and Health Grouping within the Centre.

The active research from the group this year has again been that of Gail Ewing in the field of palliative care. Working alongside colleagues nationally and internationally, Gail's long program of work has focussed on the role of family carers and their support needs when someone is dying. At the centre of this is the CSNAT - the Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool. The development of this innovative tool and the implementation of the tool in practice has been documented in previous reports but it is worth reiterating some of the important elements of this research program which exemplify much of the research that has been carried out in the Centre over many years. First, the importance of assessing Carer Support Needs derived from the emergence of policies that recognised the importance of supporting dying people's preferences for place of death and ensuring that appropriate care was available where the preference was for death at home. Family carers were key to this. Secondly, the needs of family carers were explored directly with those who were recently bereaved. This was sensitive, and ethically challenging, qualitative research with potentially vulnerable study participants that required close collaboration with professionals and organisations providing palliative care in the community. Thirdly, the Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool (CSNAT) which can identify and quantify carer support needs by enabling conversations between family carers and palliative
care professionals, was developed and rigorously trialled to ensure that it was valid in assessing the needs of carers as well as easy for practitioners to use. And finally, research has continued around how best to implement the use of the CSNAT to the benefit of family carers. This has meant working with practitioners themselves to explore the facilitators and barriers to implementation and to develop training in the use of the CSNAT; liaising with professional organisations such as the National Association for Hospice at Home in the UK; and engaging with those responsible for developing policies and practices around end-of-life care. Full details of publications and presentations can be found on pages 41-44 (including those relating to implementation studies carried out internationally in both Canada and Australia) but specific important achievements in the last year include:


- Ongoing work on 2 Dimbleby Cancer Care funded studies ‘Factors associated with successful implementation of a Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool (CSNAT) in Hospice Home Care’ (with G Grande, S Varvel, H Richardson, G Harvey, K Greene, L Austin, M Pilling) and ‘Cascading knowledge about end of life care at home: the development and piloting of a training programme for those who help carers and a carer resource pack’ with J Seymour, G Grande, S Kennedy, J Tabreham, E Richardson.

The situation currently is that CSNAT is a copyrighted tool, available free to use for non-commercial organisations, with registration and provision of a licence. There was a high level of enquiries about the CSNAT in the last year, both nationally and
internationally. Through the research the need for training and support around the use of the CSNAT as a practice tool has become clear and such a CSNAT training and support toolkit has been developed to support the sustainable rollout of the CSNAT as a practice tool.

CSNAT has had important national impacts:

- many palliative care organisations in England have been in contact about the CSNAT and were able to enrol in the current Implementation project;
- since the Implementation project closed to recruitment requests from services to implement the CSNAT have continued;
- different charity organisations have been in touch with requests to view the CSNAT and discuss how the CSNAT might be used for family carers including The Carers’ Trust, Crossroads Care, Marie Curie Cancer Care, National Council for Palliative Care, Action for Family Carers, Carer Network Westminster;
- professional organisations have also been in contact including the Royal College of General Practitioners, Queen’s Nursing Institute who have incorporated the CSNAT work in their e-learning programme on palliative care for district nurses;
- other research groups are using the CSNAT including The Living with Breathlessness Study in Cambridge, The Palliative Care in Primary Care research team in Edinburgh and the Supportive Care, Early Diagnosis and Advanced Disease (SEDA) Research at the University of Hull.
In addition to work on the CSNAT, Gail has worked in two other important areas. A study with Nothando Ngwenya (who has now moved to University College London to work on a study of palliative care for young adults) was completed that was funded by Dimbleby Cancer Care ‘Sharing bad news: development of an intervention to support patients with cancer share the news of their diagnosis with significant others’ with M Farquhar, S Bailey, J Benson, D Gilligan, J Seymour. Other work is ongoing with Morag Farquhar that focusses on breathlessness in the context of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, lung and breast cancer.

Others in the Centre whose interest is families and health are no longer involved with active research in the area. Martin Richards has been Vice-Chair of the UK Biobank Ethics and Governance Council for eight years until June 2014 and remains as Chair of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Working Party on Biological and Health Data: Ethical Issues. He continues to write on the social history of reproduction and genetic technologies.

I have focussed more on research administration in my final year at the Centre and this has given me even more opportunity to get to know more about the people and research studies in the other groupings. It is still a source of great pride however to receive queries about research that took place in the Centre many years earlier. Twenty five years ago I joined what was then the Child Care and Development Group where I was fortunate to work with Jo Green, Martin and Claire Snowdon on a study of pregnant women’s experiences of prenatal testing in routine antenatal care. At the end of September 2014 I received an email in the Centre for Family Research asking for information about a scale that was developed during that study, the Cambridge
Worry Scale. The centre has been behind much important and innovative research in the field of families and health. We have explored issues around family support and the implications for families of developments in new genetic technologies across a range of disorders including Muscular Dystrophy, Cystic Fibrosis, familial breast and ovarian cancer, Neurofibromatosis, intellectual disabilities, Huntingdon’s disease and others. Early work on pregnancy and the organisation of maternity services during prenatal diagnosis and termination of pregnancy after diagnosis of fetal abnormality informed policy and practice in these sensitive areas ensuring that the needs of women and their families were central to the provision of care.

It has been a privilege to work in the Centre for Family Research with two inspirational and supportive directors, Martin Richards and Susan Golombok, and with researcher colleagues who work hard to undertake the best possible research and who maintain an important Centre ethos that participants in research are first and foremost people deserving respect and gratitude. They have also made going to work fun - thank you all!

Team CFR!
PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Amanda Aldercotte

Poster Presentation


Dr Lucy Blake

Publications


Presentations

July 2014. Non-traditional families: are the kids alright? Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

May 2014. Men as fathers. Interdisciplinary perspectives on fatherhood in the context of the family. Jacob’s Foundation Conference, Marbach Castle, Germany.


November 2013. Family functioning and children’s perspectives in families created by assisted reproduction. Bioética,Reproducción, Asistida y Familia” Symposio conjuncto y workshop internacional. Santiago, Chile.

Nikhil Darshane

Poster Presentation


Dr Rory Devine

Publications


**Presentations**


**Dr Gail Ewing**

**Publications**


Sharing bad news of a lung cancer diagnosis: qualitative findings within the framework of Communication Privacy Management. Ngwenya N, Farquhar M, Ewing G. Submitted to Psycho-oncology.


Conference presentations (published abstracts)


European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC). Abstract number P116 Vol 28, No 6 p657.


Other invited presentations /meetings


Dr Tabitha Freeman

Publications


Freeman, T., Bourne, K., Jadva, V. and Smith, V. (2014) ‘Making connections: contact between sperm donor relations’, in Freeman, T., Graham, S., Ebtehaj, F. and


**Presentations**


Freeman, T. (June 2013) Invited panel speaker at ‘Donor conception: a private family matter?’, The Times Cheltenham Science Festival.

Freeman, T. (February 2013) Invited panel speaker at ‘Being: the donor conceived perspective’, Progress Educational Trust, University College London.
Professor Susan Golombok

Publications


Presentations

“Parenting after assisted reproduction”. Invited presentation to 5th International IVI Conference, Seville, Spain. April, 2013.

“New family forms: Should we be worried?” Invited presentation to Clinical Ethics Symposium “Making Tomorrow’s People”, Great Ormond Street Hospital, London, April, 2013.


“Single parents by choice”, Invited presentation to Parenting Show, Cardiff, June, 2013.


“Gay and lesbian adoptive families: Parenting, child development and day-to-day experiences”. Keynote presentation at Fourth International Conference on Adoption Research, Bilbao, July, 2013.

“Three parent babies: Children born through mitochondrial DNA transfer” Invited presentation at British Science Festival, Newcastle, September 2013.

“Single-mother families: Mother-child relationships and the psychological development of the child”. Invited lecture at Fines Terre University, Santiago, Chile, November 2013.


“Outcomes for parents and children in new family forms”. Invited lecture to 3rd International Conference on Adoption, Santiago, Chile, November 2013.

“Lesbian and gay families created by assisted reproductive technologies”. Invited lecture at Bourn Hall, Cambridge, March, 2014.

“Men as fathers: Impact on child development”. Invited presentation to Jacobs Foundation Conference on Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Fatherhood in the Context of the Family, Marbach Castle, Germany, May, 2014.

“Are the kids alright?” Keynote lecture to conference on “Perspectives of rainbow families in Malta”, July, 2014.

“Surrogacy families”. Invited lecture at seminar hosted by Center for Surrogate Parenting, Los Angeles, September, 2014.


**Dr Susanna Graham**

**Publications**


**Presentations**

November 2013. 'Choosing single motherhood? The decision-making and experiences of single women embarking upon motherhood through sperm donation'. *International Workshop: Medically Assisted Reproduction - A challenge to family structure?* Diego Portalis University, Santiago, Chile.

May 2014. 'Choosing to become a single mother? The concerns and realities of solo motherhood'. *Families created by assisted reproductive technologies for social rather than medical reasons*, College of Global Studies, Paris.

**Public Engagement**

April 2014. ‘Single women seeking IVF’, *Woman’s Hour, BBC Radio 4*. 

**48**
Professor Claire Hughes

Publications


**Presentations**


Susan Imrie

Publications


Online contributions


Presentations


Dr Vasanti Jadva

Publications


Presentations


Jadva, V. (2013) Intra-family egg donation: Contact with the donor and telling the child about their origins. Symposio conjuncto y workshop internacional. 8th Nov, Santiago, Chile.


**Jennifer Landt**

**Presentations**


**Adelle Pushparatnam**

**Presentations**


**Professor Martin Richards**

**Publications**

Editor, and contributor of a chapter on Assisted Reproduction, Genetic and Genomic Technologies and Family Life.


Presentations

Desafíos eticos de las nuevas tecnologías reproductivas. Simposia Conjunto Internacional. 7th Nov. 2013. Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile.

**Helen Statham**

Publications


Presentations


November 2013. ‘Are the kids alright?’ Reproducción Médicamente Asistida: Un Desafío a la Estructura de la Familia, Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile.
Naomi White

Publications


Presentations


Keri Wong

Publications


Presentation


Poster Presentation

Association for Psychological Science 26th. San Francisco CA, USA. Home Mistrust Negatively Associated with Children's Wellbeing. May 2014.
Sophie Zadeh

Publications


Online contributions

Zadeh, S. (2014, July). As far as the ‘Magaluf girl’ video is concerned, it’s the media that has plumbed the depths. http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/as-far-as-the-magaluf-girl-video-is-concerned-its-the-media-that-has-plumbed-the-depths-9585257.html


Presentations


Sophie Zadeh

(presentations - continued)

ACTIVE CFR GRANTS 2013/2014

**XJAG/67**
Grant holder: Professor Claire Hughes  
Investigator: Professor Claire Hughes  
Title: ORA Risky Beginnings  
Sponsor: ESRC  
Period: 1st October 2014 –30th September 2017  
Amount: £584,669

**XJAG/66**
Grant holder: Dr Gail Ewing  
Investigator: Dr Gail Ewing  
Title: NIHR Flexibility and Sustainability funding  
Sponsor: Cambridge University Hospitals  
Amount: £1776

**XJAG/65**
Grant holder: Dr Gail Ewing  
Investigator: Dr Gail Ewing  
Title: Developing a relevant and acceptable educational intervention for carers of patients with breathlessness in advanced disease  
Sponsor: Dimbleby Cancer Care  
Amount: £12,586

**XJAG/63**
Grant holder: Professor Claire Hughes  
Investigator: Professor Claire Hughes  
Title: School readiness  
Sponsor: The Foundation Years Trust  
Amount: £100,000

**XJAG/62**
Grant holder: Dr Gail Ewing  
Investigator: Dr Gail Ewing  
Title: Peer Education Project for Carers  
Sponsor: Nottingham University  
Period: 1st December 2012 – 30th November 2014  
Amount: £7,355
Grant holder: Dr Gail Ewing  
Investigator: Dr Gail Ewing  
Title: DCC Implementation Study  
Sponsor: Dimbleby Marie Curie Cancer Care  
Period: 1st May 2013 – 30th November 2014  
Amount: £9,894

Grant holder: Professor Claire Hughes  
Investigator: Professor Claire Hughes  
Title: Measuring children’s Implicit and explicit theory of mind: Antecedents, developmental relations and sequelae  
Sponsor: Isaac Newton Trust  
Period: 1st Dec 2013 – 30th November 2014  
Amount: £69,000

Grant holder: Professor Susan Golombok  
Investigator: Professor Susan Golombok  
Title: The motivations, experiences and future expectations of egg donors  
Sponsor: The London Women’s Clinic Foundation  
Period: 1st October 2013 – 30th September 2014  
Amount: £40,000

Grant holder: Professor Claire Hughes  
Investigator: Professor Claire Hughes  
Title: Bilateral Call (Hong Kong) – Theory of Mind: Acquisition and Use Across Cultures  
Sponsor: ESRC  
Period: October 2012 – June 2014  
Amount: £80,223

Grant holder: Professor Susan Golombok  
Investigator: Professor Susan Golombok  
Title: Future Families: The social and psychological outcomes of emerging assisted reproductive technologies for individuals, families and society.  
Sponsor: Wellcome Trust  
Period: January 2013 – December 2017  
Amount: £1,037,142

ESRC Grant held by Psychology Dept  
Grant holder: Professor Michael Lamb (PI) Professor Susan Golombok (CI)  
Investigator: Professor Michael Lamb  
Title: Gay Father Families  
Sponsor: ESRC ORA  
Period: January 2012 – December 2015  
Amount: £503,868
XJAG/54
Grant holder: Claire Hughes
Investigator: Professor Claire Hughes
Title: Pets and Positive Relationships: a longitudinal study from toddlerhood to pre-adolescence
Sponsor: Waltham Foundation
Period: January 2012 – June 2014
Amount: £12,338.51

XJAG/52
Grant holder: Dr Claire Hughes
Investigator: Dr Claire Hughes
Title: Conduct Problems from ages 2 to 10
Sponsor: ESRC
Period: May 2012 – March 2014
Amount: £79,506

XJAG/044
Grant holder: Dr Vasanti Jadva
Investigator: Susan Imrie
Title: A follow up study of the experiences and psychological health of surrogate mothers and their families
Sponsor: ESRC
Period: November 2010 – October 2013
Amount: £200,303

XJAG/037
Grant holder: Prof. Susan Golombok (PI), Dr Tabitha Freeman, Dr Vasanti Jadva, Dr Shirlene Badger, Helen Statham & Professor Martin Richards
Investigator: To be appointed
Title: Redefining families: Bioethics, assisted reproduction and emerging family forms.
Sponsor: Wellcome Trust
Period: 1st April 2009 – 31st March 2015
Amount: £368,000