

A brief administrative history of the Centre for Family Research, University of Cambridge

The research group which grew into the Centre for Family Research was established in 1966 by post doc fellows Martin Richards and Joanna Ryan, who, together with their research assistants, Judy Bernal (later Dunn) and Jenny Corrigan, moved into accommodation in the Unit for Research on Medical Applications of Psychology (URMAP) at the invitation of Oliver Zangwill, Professor of Experimental Psychology. The research group gradually expanded with the coming of other researchers, post docs, PhD students and overseas visitors to fill all the available accommodation and took the name URMAP for themselves, with Martin Richards as the de facto director. URMAP was jointly administered by the Department of Experimental Psychology and the (then) Post Graduate Medical School. Martin had initially obtained funding from the Nuffield Foundation for an observational follow up study of mother – infant relations and the development of children, while Joanna began work on language and sociality in subnormal children. With continuing support from Oliver Zangwill, a larger grant was subsequently obtained from the Nuffield Foundation for the expanding group of researchers all interested in aspects of child development, medical services and family life. The research group continued to grow so that by 1973 there were 20 members who occupied all the URMAP accommodation.

With the ending of the University's lease of the premises in Station Road in 1977, URMAP (by then shortened to the Medical Psychology Unit) moved to the Old Cavendish Building, in Free School Lane which was later shared with Social and Political Sciences. By this time the de facto director Martin Richards had become University Lecturer in Social Psychology, in the Social and Political Sciences Tripos. This move effectively ended the association with the Experimental Psychology Department. The group retained it

somewhat informal, but autonomous status but now with ties with Social and Political Sciences and The Department of Paediatrics. Now more multidisciplinary, became known as the Child Care and Development Group until it was renamed the Centre for Family Research a decade later. Its core staff were now funded by the University but most of the research staff were contract researchers funded through project grants. Over successive decades those funders included the Medical Research Council, The Economic and Social Science Research Council, the Wellcome Trust, the Health Education Council, the Health Promotion Research Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Department of Health and Social Security, the Home Office, the Lord Chancellor's Department, Nuffield Provincial Hospital Trust and the Cancer Research Campaign, indicating the breadth of the often public policy related research which was undertaken by the Centre.

In 1999 the Centre for Family Research was formally incorporated by the University and a University post of director established, together with a management committee. Martin Richards, by then University Professor of Family Research, formally also became Director of the Centre, while Helen Stratham continued as Deputy Director until her retirement in 2014. She was succeeded by Professor Claire Hughes. In 2005 Martin Richards retired from his University post and Professor Susan Golombok became Director in 2006. The two key support staff who served through much of the life of the Centre both retired in 2005. Jill Brown had served as administrative secretary from 1979 and Sally Roberts as data manager from 1980. Abby Scott is currently Administrator and PA to the Director.

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Martin Richards.