



# Project C-STARS Newsletter



*Culture, Child, and Adolescent  
Developmental Lab  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County*

## Thank You for Your Participation!

Volume 2  
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The members of Project C-STARS sincerely thank all the parent and children participants. We appreciate the time and effort you have contributed to our project. Your participation makes this important project possible and your continued involvement is crucial in the coming year. We would also like to thank all the school teachers and daycare providers who have participated in the project, and all the organizations that have helped us recruit families.

We value your participation and think that it is important to share with you information and updates about our project. In this newsletter, you will find information on:

- The progress of the Project C-STARS
- The Importance of Focusing on Chinese Preschoolers
- How our children are developing
- The language Spoken at home
- Parents' Social Support

## Progress of Project C-STARS

Project C-STARS aims to understand how families change over time. This is why we visit each family 4 times within 2 years. So far, we have visited 85 families for the 1st time, 43 families for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 26 families for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. We are continuing to recruit new families and visit the already participating families for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> times. We will start to visit some families for the 4<sup>th</sup> time next year. Parents: Don't forget that we will give you a copy of the taping at the end of the study!

# The Importance of Focusing on Chinese Preschoolers

Social and emotional development during early childhood is crucial for success in school transition and long-term healthy development. Children who are socially skilled have better social lives, think and feel better about themselves, and do better academically. Educators, social workers, and researchers all encourage the social focus on children's social skills.

When preschool children start to go to school, they need to have good social skills and be able to get along well with their peers. This task might be more difficult for Chinese preschoolers because they may be interacting with children from all different backgrounds for the first time, and need to learn new social rules from their peers and teachers. Therefore, in order to succeed in school, Chinese

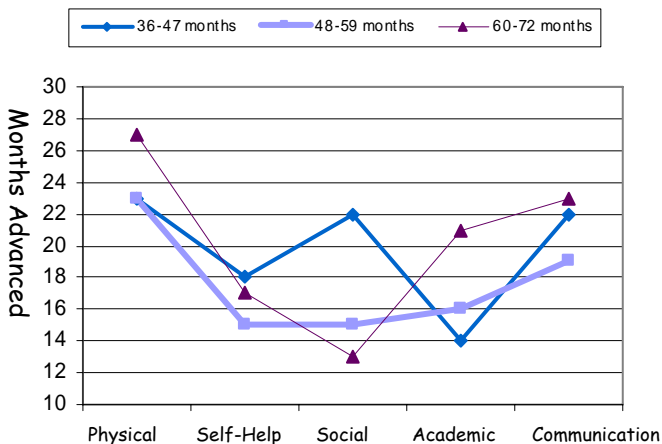
preschoolers need to develop competent social and emotional skills.

Thus, Project C-STARS aims to learn about the social and emotional development and adjustment of young Chinese children. Our ultimate goal is to apply the knowledge we gain in this project to enhance the social skills of Chinese children and promote their successful school entry and excellence.

## What Are Some Of The Things That We Have Learned So Far?

*How does the development of children in C-STARS compare to children across the U.S.?*

*Five Aspects of Children's Development*



In order to learn how our Chinese children are developing, we asked their parents how their children were doing in the areas of:

*Physical Development:* ability to perform tasks that require muscle coordination, strength, stamina, flexibility, and sequential motor skills;

*Self-Help Development:* ability to handle basic self-care tasks such as eating, dressing, and working;

*Social Development:* interpersonal relationship abilities;

*Academic Development:* intellectual abilities; and

*Communication Development:* ability to understand and communicate with others by using both verbal languages and gestures

### *Compared to children across the U.S.*

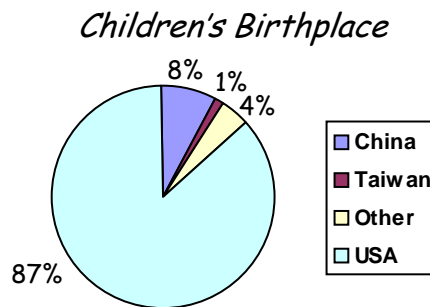
For children aged 36-47 months, C-STARS children are on average 24 months more advanced in *physical*, 20 months in *self-help*, 20 months in *social*, 14 months in *academic*, and 20 months in *communication* development.

For children aged 48-59 months, C-STARS children are on average 23 months advanced in *physical*, 14 months in *self-help*, 15 months in *social*, 18 months in *academic*, and 18 months in *communication* development.

For children aged 60-72 months, C-STARS children on average are 30 months advanced in *physical*, 16 months in *self-help*, 12 months in *social*, 22 months in *academic*, and 27 months in *communication* development.

## What languages are spoken in C-STARS families' homes?

As we shared with you in our previous Newsletter, most of our parents are originally from China (71%), about 20% are from Taiwan, 7% are from Hong Kong, and 2% are from other Asian countries. However, 87% of our children were born in the U.S., 8% in China, 4% in other countries, and 1% in Taiwan.

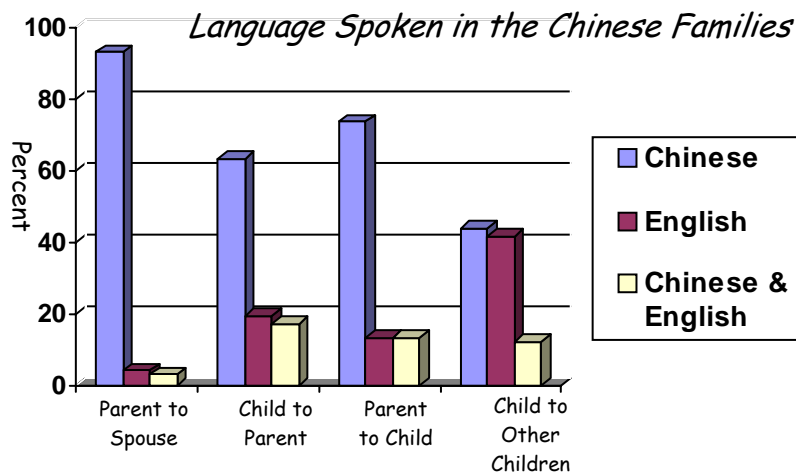


Since our families have such unique cultural backgrounds, we are interested in learning about the languages that are spoken at home. We found that:

- With their spouse, 93% of our parents speak mostly in Chinese, 4% in English, and 3% in both English and Chinese.
- With their parents, 63% of our children speak mostly in Chinese, 19% in English, and 17% in both.
- With their children, 74% of our parents speak in Chinese, 13% in English, and 13% in both.

With other children in their home, 44% of our children speak in Chinese, 42% in English, and 12% in both.

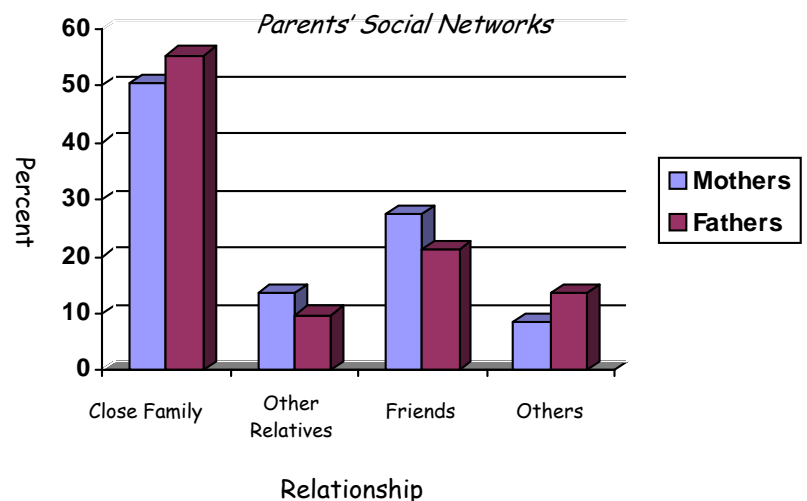
\*Chinese language refers to all Chinese dialects, including Mandarin, Cantonese, etc.



## Parents' Social Support

We also learned about where our C-STARS parents get social support from to help them be better parents. Our parents said that their spouses were the most supportive and helpful with being parents. Their children's grandparents were said to be the second most supportive people, and reading materials (e.g., books, parenting magazines) were the third most helpful source for parenting information.

We also asked parents who were important people in their lives. Our mothers said that 51% of the important people in their lives are close family members, 27% are friends, 14% are other relatives, and 8% are doctors, teachers, etc. Our fathers



reported that 55% of the important people in their lives are close family members, 21% are friends, 10% are other relatives, and 14% are doctors, teachers, etc.



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In the Culture, Child, and Adolescent Development (CCAD) Lab, we are interested in understanding and learning about families with young children from different cultures.

Members in the CCAD lab are interested in how individual, peer, family, culture, and their interaction contribute to the social emotional development and health of children. We aim to increase and contribute to scientific and applied knowledge in children and adolescents' social and emotional development.

PLEASE SEE OUR LABORATORY WEBSITE  
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ALL OUR  
PROJECTS ([www.umbc.edu/psych/ccadlab](http://www.umbc.edu/psych/ccadlab))

## Contact us!

**If you have any feedback, questions, suggestions, and/or ideas regarding our project, please contact us. We value your input.**

## Community Resource

The Cultural Connections Program at the Miller Branch of Howard County Library provides multicultural activities and resources, such as bilingual story times for preschoolers (in Chinese and Korean), and an English Conversation Club for adults whose first language is not English. The library also offers books and movies for all ages, as well as newspapers, magazines, etc., in multiple foreign languages. For further information, please visit [http://www.hclibrary.org/services/cultural\\_connections\\_eng.php](http://www.hclibrary.org/services/cultural_connections_eng.php)

## Members of Project C-STARS

### Principle Investigator

Dr. Charissa Cheah is an Assistant Professor in the Applied Developmental Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She has been awarded a fellowship by the Foundation for Child Development: Changing Faces of America's Children - Young Scholars Program (YSP) for Project C-STARS.

For more information on Dr. Charissa Cheah, please visit <http://www.umbc.edu/psyc/personal/cheah/cheahs.html>

### Graduate Research Assistants

Wei Yu (Andrew), Christy Leung (Yuet Yu), Madiha Tasheen, Sevgi Bayram-Ozdemir

### Research Assistants

#### *Mandarin-speaking team:*

Dan Tian, Kang Lee, Nancy Sun, Jodi Chen, Xiaonan Guo, Sally Wu, Jill Yu, Steven Zhang

#### *English-speaking team:*

Amina Bhatti, Rena Mehta, Tola Ayo-dele, Maria Costea, Aramide Adewole, Samantha Atchison, Hideto Saito, Shristi Joshi

#### *High School Intern:*

Hannah Bands joins us at the Project C-STARS as an intern from the Ingenuity Project at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute.

**We are all excited to be working with you!**

## Help us!

**The success of Project C-STARS depends on your help in recommending more Chinese families to join our project so that what we learn will be representative of the experiences of all Chinese families in MD. If you know other Chinese parents with young children aged 3 - 5 years old, please refer them to us. We appreciate any help you can provide us with!**