

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute

for Child & Family Development



WAYNE STATE
Division of Research

MISSION

Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute advances the development, health, and well-being of children and their families through research, education, and community engagement. MPSI honors the lived expertise of families and communities in Detroit and beyond in all its work. MPSI embraces its role in advocating for the preservation and restoration of the Freer House as a Wayne State University and Detroit historical landmark with international significance.



MPSI has been improving the welfare of children and their families for over 100 years. Founded in 1920 as the Merrill-Palmer Motherhood and Home Training School, it has served Detroit's children through research and formal academic programs in child development, a discipline then in its infancy. The Institute has trained generations of parents, teachers, students, and researchers across the nation and the world. The Institute remains at the cutting edge of research and training in child development.

mpsi.wayne.edu/about/history

RESEARCH

Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute (MPSI) faculty come from many departments across the university to contribute to an interdisciplinary approach to developmental science. They represent, for example, Psychology, Social Work, Behavioral Neurosciences, Education, and Public Health. Faculty conduct research along a developmental continuum from prenatal development through young adulthood, as well as the developmental phase encompassing child rearing and caregiving. Several thematic research areas are represented by faculty including:

Biological and Environmental Risks and Protective Factors



We explore factors that could place a child or family unit at risk for experiencing challenges in **more...**



MPSI EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (ECC) – MPSI operates an on-site, 5-star, high quality early childhood center for preschool-age children. The ECC has served thousands of children since 1922 and is nationally known for its research and work in child development. Our goal is to provide high quality preschool in an environment that is child-centered, accessible, interesting, and reflective of diversity. mpsi.wayne.edu/education/early-childhood

...research

health or development, as well as factors that can enhance positive outcomes and well-being.

Developmental Transitions

Our research examines particular developmental periods or phases of life that typically involve significant change, growth, and opportunity such as becoming a parent, early infancy, school entry, and the shift to adolescence.

Developmental Neuroscience

Our studies focus on the relationships between brain development over the lifespan beginning prenatally and throughout adulthood and neurobehavioral function, health, and well-being.

Interventions



Research in this area evaluates programs and interventions that aim to help children, youth, and families successfully respond to challenges and transitions across a variety of settings.

mpsi.wayne.edu/research



The Freer House at WSU is home to Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute faculty and staff. We are committed to promoting the rich cultural history of both the Institute and the Freer House as national treasures.



Students at Lifespan Alliance Research Day

Learn about our programming & subscribe to a list: [HERE](#). We do not share our lists.



TRAINING

MPSI provides educational opportunities to students across Wayne State's campus, as well as families in our community and the professionals who serve them. Our predoctoral training program offers graduate students an enhanced interdisciplinary environment to broaden exposure to different perspectives, theories, and methodologies. We host local and national research colloquia speakers. Our students also participate in additional professional development activities, such as writing groups, mentorship, and meetings with community partners.

We also operate the nation's oldest and largest graduate-level infant mental health training program to address the national need for specialized training in this field. Our students receive

additional coursework and supervised clinical placements in infant and early childhood mental health.

mpsi.wayne.edu/training

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

From the start, MPSI has provided services to the community and created long-standing partnerships to enhance engagement. Our Healthier Urban Families program connects researchers with community stakeholders, offers trainings, and supports early childhood professionals. In addition, we host two signature events each year: the **Giant Step Teen Conference**, which brings teenagers together from diverse backgrounds to discover important issues they have in common, and **Explorations in Development**, which offers continuing education for professionals working in the human service field.

mpsi.wayne.edu/outreach

Make a difference, make a gift!

Your gift changes the lives of children and their families, students, researchers, and community members.

