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# ATTACH News

**After successful completion of our first three pilot studies, our ATTACH Phase II is successfully underway!**

If you are interested in finding out more information about the ATTACH Intervention, ATTACH manual and/or protocol, please email **Dr. Nicole Letourneau** @ [nicole.letourneau@ucalgary.ca](mailto:nicole.letourneau@ucalgary.ca) or **Dr. Martha Hart** @ [mhart@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mhart@ucalgary.ca).

Follow Principal Investigator **Dr. Nicole Letourneau** on Twitter @ **DrNLetourneau** or visit the [www.childstudies.ca](http://www.childstudies.ca) website for details on the ATTACH Pilot Studies and other exciting research. Feel free to share the newsletter with friends and colleagues!

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# ATTACH PHASE II: FRONTIERS OF INNOVATION PORTFOLIO PROJECT!

**We are excited to announce that the ATTACH project is now endorsed by the Harvard University!!**

- ATTACH is progressing very well. We have already completed data collection for three pilot studies at Calgary Urban Project (CUPS), and Sonshine Community Services. The preliminary results of the effect of ATTACH intervention are promising.
- For ATTACH phase II, the additional steps include evaluating the effect of the intervention on a larger sample size, on at-risk and normative sample, and training new staff on how to administer the ATTACH intervention at CUPS, Discovery House and YMCA in Calgary.
- We have already recruited 15 families for our first site (CUPS) and completed all pre-test data collection and now proceeding to regular intervention sessions with the families.
- We have already trained our first agency delegate to the ATTACH program. We have also begun planning for data collection and intervention program delivery at our second site, Discovery House.
- Key learnings have included splitting the data collection sessions to be more manageable for participants and staggering program data collection and delivery in order to launch the program efficiently at the agency site.

## **RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

To date, **45** parent/child pairs have been successfully recruited

## **DATA COLLECTION UPDATE**

Data obtained for **45** parent/child participants

## **TRAINING UPDATE**

Currently **CUPS staff** have been trained to deliver the ATTACH intervention

# ATTACH PHASE II: FRONTIERS OF INNOVATION PORTFOLIO PROJECT!

## AGENCY UPDATES



- 15 families have already been recruited for ATTACH phase 2
- All the data have been collected for analysis.
- ATTACH intervention is planned to be delivered to control group in September 2018 by newly trained CUPS staff



Discovery House  
*domestic violence ends here.*

- Data collection dates are being arranged for early September 2018
- Training sessions for participants will be scheduled soon



- Data collection will be completed on normative sample
- 4-5 ATATCH intervention sessions will be delivered instead of 10 session
- Looking into space and dates for data collection
- Have garnered significant interest from staff

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## **Attach Paper: Abstract**

### **Title: Effects of the Attachment & Child Health (ATTACH) Intervention on Parental Reflective Function and Attachment Security**

#### **Background**

Toxic stressors (e.g. parental violence, depression, addictions) place children at risk of developing insecure attachment and undermines healthy child mental/behavioral development. Parental reflective function, the parents' capacity to understand and thus regulate their own feelings/behavior toward their child has been linked to attachment security and can perhaps serve as a buffer of negative effects associated with toxic stress. We developed the Attachment and Child Health (ATTACH) intervention, which focuses on improving maternal reflective function and children's attachment security.

#### **Objectives**

Our primary objective was to test the effectiveness of ATTACH with at-risk mothers/children in 3 pilot studies.

#### **Methods**

The ATTACH pilot studies were conducted at two inner-city agencies serving low-income women with mental health/housing challenges, and a shelter agency for women affected by violence. We employed randomized controlled trial (n=20, n=10) and quasi-experimental (n=8) methods with 30 families and examined reflective function using Fonagy's scale via coded and transcribed Parent Development Interviews.<sup>14</sup> We also measured children's attachment patterns utilizing Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure.<sup>15</sup> As all hypotheses were directional predicting improvement in reflective function, one-tailed tests ( $\alpha=.05$ ) were conducted.

#### **Results**

Child, Maternal, and Overall reflective function scores were significantly different between the treatment and control groups over time, while controlling for the quality of adjustment in dyadic relationships. Pilot studies #1 and #3 showed differences in attachment security, with 42.9% of treatment infants secure versus only 18.2% of controls at post-assessment. With pilot study #2, Child, Maternal, and Overall reflective function significantly improved from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Moreover, attachment security improved by 14.3%.

#### **Conclusion**

Understanding the effectiveness of programs like ATTACH contributes to improved programs and services to promote healthy development of children affected by toxic stress.

*We are thankful to our community partner, CUPS Calgary for their continued support in accommodating us to do our ATTACH Phase II!*

*We wished all  
the ATTACH  
families  
Happy  
Mother's Day!*



*We distributed  
gifts to our  
ATTACH  
families on  
Mother's Day!*

**What would you like to see in future newsletters?**

If you have a **suggestion, question** or **comment**,  
please send them in.

We appreciate any and all feedback!

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