



The Straus Center for Young Children & Families

The Straus Center for Young Children & Families at Bank Street College was founded in 2015 to advance research and practice supporting the development and learning of children prenatal to age eight. Through this work, the center aims to support the growth and development of all children while enhancing the prospects of the most vulnerable children affected by the challenges of poverty, trauma, and toxic stress.

Impacting Childhood Development

A convergence of research from several fields has confirmed what parents and teachers have long known—that young children’s brains are primed for learning, making the early years a time of immense opportunity for development. Grounded in the understanding that early experiences build a foundation for future cognitive, social, and emotional development, The Straus Center will produce and disseminate new research on child-centered learning to help inform early childhood practice and policy.

Building an Evidence Base

The Straus Center’s work will be rooted in an appreciation for and understanding of children’s intelligence and their ability to make sense of the world. Through the strategic testing of early childhood interventions, our research will build an evidence base of effective approaches to early care and education in the settings where young children and their families live and learn. The center will conduct research on strong early childhood models and policies from diverse perspectives to quickly surface what works and what doesn’t, allowing our researchers to identify what can be replicated at scale.

Our initiatives will identify and explore the most effective ways to further child-centered practice writ-large and address key challenges in the field to help realize the potential of every young child by:

- Deepening the focus of current research, advocacy, policy, and investment to impact the development of children across the early childhood age span;
- Increasing capacity in the field to respond quickly to new ideas and opportunities through innovative, cost-effective initiatives that hold promise for enhancing childhood development;
- Forging strategic partnerships with other research and policy institutions and expanding outreach to bring thought leaders together for conferences, lectures, and round table discussions;
- Building upon and extending past and present Bank Street initiatives in the policy realm as well as successful models from other institutions across the country; and
- Producing and disseminating new scholarship and research-based recommendations to help practitioners and policymakers implement effective change.

