

University of California, Berkeley



# The Kids and Family Project

## A Report for Parents and Educators

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### A Message from Professor Qing Zhou, Principal Investigator:

Dear KFP Parents and Teachers,

Hope you and your family are doing well!

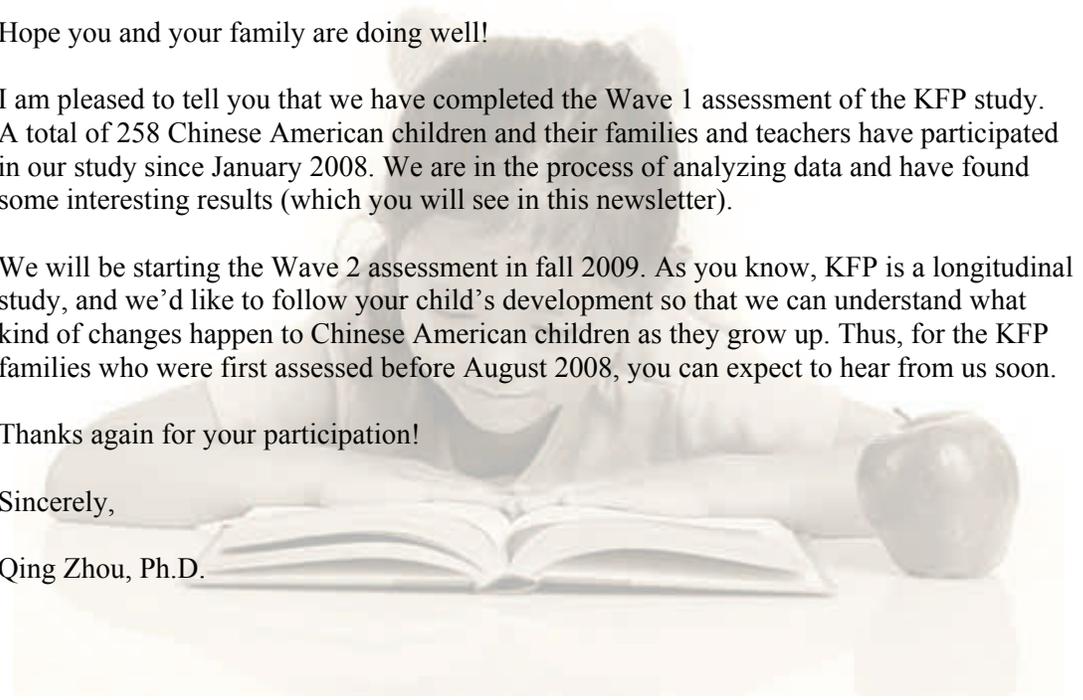
I am pleased to tell you that we have completed the Wave 1 assessment of the KFP study. A total of 258 Chinese American children and their families and teachers have participated in our study since January 2008. We are in the process of analyzing data and have found some interesting results (which you will see in this newsletter).

We will be starting the Wave 2 assessment in fall 2009. As you know, KFP is a longitudinal study, and we'd like to follow your child's development so that we can understand what kind of changes happen to Chinese American children as they grow up. Thus, for the KFP families who were first assessed before August 2008, you can expect to hear from us soon.

Thanks again for your participation!

Sincerely,

Qing Zhou, Ph.D.



The Kids & Family Project is a longitudinal study on Chinese American immigrant children's academic and behavioral development.

### To KFP Families:

**We'd like to keep in touch with you! Don't forget to contact us with your current address and phone number!**

## Updated KFP participant demographics

### Parent Characteristics:

- Most described themselves as Chinese and preferred to speak either Mandarin or Cantonese
- 65% of participating parents were born in mainland China
- 10% were born in Hong Kong, 10% in Vietnam, and 3% in Taiwan
- Had lived in the United States for 1/3 of their lives on average
- 68.4% of assessments were administered either partially or entirely in Mandarin or Cantonese—the language of choice
- Mean level of formal education is 13.7 years

### Child Characteristics:

- 52.4% were girls, 47.6% were boys
- 89.5% were from two-parent families
- Children's age ranged from 5.8 to 9.1 years old (mean age 7.4 years)
- Majority was born in the U.S. (81.4%)
- Most of the children preferred to speak in English. Only 7% of assessments were administered either partially or entirely in Mandarin or Cantonese



## Results from First Wave of Assessments:

### Culture and Child Impulse Control

Is there a relation between culture and children's ability to pay attention and control their impulses? We collected data using parent and teacher questionnaires as well as a puzzle task. Children rated by parents as "more Americanized" were rated by teachers as more impulsive. They also spent more time "cheating" on the puzzle task. Children rated by parents as "more Chinese" were rated by parents as better at controlling impulses. Thus, it seems like that "being Chinese" has at least some benefits on children's behaviors.



### Culture and Parents' Expression of Emotions at Home

In Chinese American families, parents differ in the degree to which they are oriented toward the "Chinese" and "American" cultures. We found that as Chinese American parents become more "Americanized" in their language, media use, and their social contacts, the way they express emotions in their family changes. In general, the more receptive parents are of the American culture, the more expressive they are at home. This seems to be the case for the expression of both negative emotions (e.g., criticizing someone for being late) and positive emotions (e.g., expressing gratitude for a gift). However, it is interesting that the relation between parents' expression of emotions and children's psychological adjustment does not change with parents' cultural orientation. Regardless of the parents' cultural orientation, the children whose parents express more positive emotions in the family tend to have better psychological adjustment than others. In contrast, the children whose parents frequently express hostile emotions (e.g., anger, blaming) tend to have poorer psychological adjustment than others.

### Child Attention Focusing and Math Achievement

Previous research with European American children found that children who can focus their attention when needed do better academically. We found the same result for Chinese American children. We also found that the ability to focus attention is especially important for children who tend to easily become angry or frustrated. Chinese American kids with a tendency to get easily angry or frustrated did significantly better on math problems *if* they were able to effectively focus their attention. So, when it comes to math performance, it looks like kids need the same skills in order to succeed!

KFP Recruiting Team



Everyone at the Kids and Family Project study would like to thank you for taking the time out of your busy lives to participate in our study.



**Please stay in touch with us! Contact us at (510) 643-5338 or by email KidsFamilyProject@gmail.com if your current address/phone number changes.**