

**USF CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT,
School Based Family Counseling**

Introduction

Welcome to the USF CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, School Based Family Counseling! Brian Gerrard, PhD, former Executive Director, and Emily Girault, PhD founded the Center in the late 1980's. A most unique approach and pioneering program to provide mental health services and family counseling was created in which students and families could receive no fee services on school sites.

It is currently staffed under the leadership of Dr. Judy Goodell, Executive Director and USF professor in Counseling Psychology, Toni Nemia, LMFT and LPCC Program and Clinical Director. Individual and group clinical supervisors are all licensed through the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) to supervise both marriage and family therapist and professional clinical counselor trainees/associates. These supervisors are current in the fulfillment of required BBS continuing education in supervision for program participants.

Mission Statement

The USF Center for Child and Family Development is committed to the academic, psychosocial, emotional, and spiritual development of students and families through teaching, training, research, and direct service programs. It recognizes that students can access educational curriculum more effectively when a variety of basic needs are met.

The USF Center honors families and caregivers as integral to this service and pays respect to the fundamental role they place in their child's life. Through outreach and engagement with them and inclusion of teachers and administrators, the Center works toward serving the whole child and providing a continuum of services via a systems wide approach.

The Center values the diversity—racial, ethnic, and gender, as well as sexual orientations, neurological styles and learning differences-- in the populations it serves. It strives to include a cohort of trainees and interns who share this belief. The Center emphasizes the concepts of cultural humility, competency, and sensitivity. These beliefs are integrated into our practice. It asserts that children are not miniature adults and should not be treated as such.

Similarly, the Center encourages a social justice perspective to its service both in theory and application. It holds dear that the psychotherapeutic process is designed to help students and families seek dignity, self-determination, wellness,

and safety through the reduction of oppressive stressors. It calls attention to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), toxic stress as a barrier to learning, and the significance of those factors in trauma informed and sensitive work.

No fees are charged to students and families for our service. Hosting school sites pay a stipend to the USF Center. All services are delivered on campus.

USF Child and Development Center as a Training Institute for Professional Development

Just as the Center focuses on best interests and well being of students and families, it also embodies a comparable view for supporting trainees and associates. The USF Center Training Institute strives to develop and deepen the psychotherapeutic and clinical skills of its participants through professional development. Individual and group supervision, required monthly trainings, volunteer salons—all are included in an array of learning opportunities.

At the time of its inception, the Center embodied some new and creative thinking with its emphasis on family systems theory as a psychological orientation. This model remains at the heart of our training, not only in what it means for students and families but also in what it affords a trainee or associate in becoming facile with systems work. Being able to navigate a family system in conjunction with utilizing opportunities of an educational system is a winning combination of skill sets in terms of clinical expertise and future marketability.

Added to the fundamental theory and practice of family systems, the Center also encourages the exploration of current and best practices for mental health service with children and families. It accepts trainees and associates at the phase of development where they are and supports their exploration of new content and skills. The Center does not hold a monolithic belief that there is one single modality which is effective for all clients. It does promise to make known new ways of thinking and values what the trainee or associate brings to his/her learning experience.

Talk therapy, play therapy, sand tray, drama and expressive arts therapies, somatic approaches, relational work, trauma informed services—these are just a few of the modalities which are welcomed and supported by our trainers and supervisors.

Monthly trainings include a didactic component, process oriented dialogue, and experiential exercises. The Center supports all types of learning and strives to provide a safe environment for a most profound professional development.