All Babies and Children Thrive (ABC Thrive)
Request for Proposals for Interdisciplinary Seed Grants

Letters of Intent (strongly encouraged): February 28, 2020
Proposal Deadline: March 30, 2020

Opportunity
ABC Thrive invites seed grant proposals to support the early work of interdisciplinary teams exploring innovations in early childhood development (prenatal to age five). Through this RFP, grants of $20,000 to $40,000 will be awarded to three to four teams for a period of 16 months. At the end of a successful pilot project, seed grantees will be eligible to compete for a larger award of up to $300,000 over two years.

Teams should include Duke faculty from different disciplines/areas of expertise who are working on a common problem related to the goals of ABC Thrive, as described below. Proposals involving international populations must also articulate the implications of the research for prenatal and child well-being in the U.S.

We strongly encourage proposals that include: 1) teams that have not previously collaborated or that are working in an area new to the team; 2) projects that traverse two of the three priority areas listed below; and 3) teams that include community partners.

Please contact us at any point during the application process if you are interested in ideas for potential faculty collaborators and/or community partners, or if you have questions about the scope of this call.

Program Description
Numerous factors affect a child’s growth and development, ranging from genes and biology to family, school, neighborhood and sociopolitical contexts. The purpose of ABC Thrive is to leverage the innovative research, education, clinical care and outreach capabilities of Duke University and Duke Health to promote optimal development in children from prenatal to age five. ABC Thrive will support interdisciplinary teams of experts who will identify, validate and disseminate best practices for use by parents, educators, healthcare providers and community stakeholders to ensure that every child has the best possible start in life.

We are especially interested in projects that address at least one of the following three goal areas:

1 – Prenatal and early childhood health and wellness
- Identify factors associated with positive prenatal and early childhood outcomes
- Develop and test new methods or interventions with the potential to: (a) improve prenatal outcomes; (b) improve infants’ and young children’s socioemotional, language, cognitive and/or physical development; and/or (c) promote positive parenting practices
- Apply validated methods for improving prenatal, early childhood and/or parenting practices and outcomes with new clinical or community populations
2 – Community outreach

- Leverage existing, or develop new, partnerships to design and test novel interventions
- Develop strategies to ensure the translation of new discoveries into policy and practice
- Conduct research that includes participants from a range of ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds and cultures
- Conduct research that includes participants from obstetric, neonatal or pediatric populations with risks for poor fetal, infant and/or child outcomes

3 – Applied technology to achieve scale

- Develop novel technological approaches to understanding and mitigating multifactorial risks for poor prenatal and early childhood outcomes
- Use technology to simultaneously disseminate best practices in early childhood development and investigate their impact
- Adapt established interventions in early childhood development to digital or other technological formats

ABC Thrive is affiliated with Bass Connections and housed in the Office of the Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies. ABC Thrive is codirected by Staci Bilbo, Haley Family Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, and Katie Rosanbalm, Senior Research Scientist, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy. For more information: https://bassconnections.duke.edu/content/all-babies-and-children-thrive.

Key Dates

- **Letter of intent (February 28, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. EST):** Interested parties are strongly encouraged to submit a brief letter of intent that includes: the problem to be addressed; basic approach to the project; and proposed faculty leaders and community partners. Letters of intent should be emailed to Laura Howes, Director of Bass Connections, at laura.howes@duke.edu and should be no longer than one page (single-spaced, one-inch margins, 11-point font). We will provide feedback on all letters of intent within one week. Letters will also be used to identify any unique expertise that needs to be included on the review panel.

- **Proposal submission deadline (March 30, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. EST):** Proposals must be submitted in a single, consolidated Word or PDF document to laura.howes@duke.edu. Responses must meet the character limits noted below – all character counts include spaces.

- **Final selection (April 30, 2020):** Please note that it’s possible that the selection committee will reach out to applicants if additional information is needed.

- **Funding period (July 1, 2020 – October 31, 2021):** The funding period is intended to allow for a project planning run-in period of a few months to process IRB applications, hire new research assistants, etc.

Proposal Requirements

1 – Project description: What problem will the project address and why does it have significant implications for child well-being? What are the anticipated short-term outcomes from this seed grant, and what are the possible long-term outcomes if you are successful? (3000 characters)
2 – Methodological approach: Describe how the team will operate and conduct the work. What methods will be used? Include information on sample, recruitment, data collection and data analysis. (5000 characters)

3 – Innovative nature of the proposed project: How will this project add something new to our understanding of child well-being and/or to changes in existing policies, programs, care delivery models, etc.? (1000 characters)

4 – Duke team members (at least 2, no more than 5):
- Please list the name, title, school, department for all PIs.
- Please list the name, title, school, department for all other Duke team members (faculty, staff, postdocs, graduate students, etc.).
- What role will each team member play in the project? Have the members of this team worked together in the past? If yes, how is the proposed work a new line of inquiry? What makes the team an interdisciplinary team? (1000 characters)

5 – Actual and Envisaged Community Connections: Describe the nature of external engagement involved in this project, addressing the following points: (1500 characters)
- Provide the name, title and organization of community partners (if any). Briefly describe the role of the community partner(s) in the research and explain whether any members of the team have prior experience working with the community partner, or whether this is a new collaboration.
- Whether or not your team already includes external partners, please describe your plans for translating research findings into practice and/or establishing future community partnerships.

6 – Timeline: Provide a timeline in table format for key activities and milestones. The anticipated funding period is July 1, 2020 to October 31, 2021. This period is intended to allow for a project planning run-in period of a few months to process IRB applications, hire new research assistants, etc.

7 – Prospects for external funding: What are potential plans for follow-on external funding in the long-term, including sources? Provide specific funding opportunities, if relevant. (1000 characters)

8 – Budget: Upload a detailed budget (maximum $40,000) including a justification of expenses, in a standard NIH/NSF format. Please also note any other sources of funding that would be applied to this project (e.g., Department or School match, external funds).

Funding may cover reasonable research costs such as graduate students and postdocs, participant payments, materials and supplies. Faculty salaries may only be included for faculty who are 100% externally funded and should not make up more than 25% of the total budget.

9 – PI CVs: Please include a two-page CV for each PI.

10 – Letters of support: If your team has community partners, please include a brief letter of support from those partners.
Submission instructions: Proposals must be submitted to laura.howes@duke.edu by March 30, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in a single, consolidated Word or PDF document. Responses must meet the character limits noted; character counts include spaces.

Selection Criteria
An interdisciplinary review committee will consider the following criteria when reviewing and scoring applications:

- Potential impact on early childhood outcomes (including anticipated short- and long-term outcomes)
- Potential secondary outcomes including opportunities for publications, external funding, impact on community partners and impact on the development of students and faculty
- Alignment with the goals of ABC Thrive
- Approach and feasibility
- Degree of interdisciplinarity

Expectations for Selected Teams
If your proposal is selected for funding, we will request to meet with your team, together with the other seed grantee teams, two to three times during the funding period in order to: 1) help identify and address common challenges across seed grantees; and 2) stay informed about your team’s progress.

In Fall 2021, we will release a call for proposals for the second phase of funding of up to $300,000 over two years. Selections for additional funding will be based on each team’s progress during the seed grant period; potential for the work to be sustained through external funding sources; and the original selection criteria listed above.

Contact Information
For questions about the proposal process or requirements, please contact Laura Howes at laura.howes@duke.edu. For questions about ABC Thrive or to discuss an idea for a proposal, please contact Staci Bilbo at staci.bilbo@duke.edu and/or Katie Rosanbalm at katie.rosanbalm@duke.edu.