

TUCC

EDUCATION

Tufts helps students build bridges to Africa.



TUFTS CENTER FOR CHILDREN

When commercial jetliners struck the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the Tufts University Center for Children quickly offered information to parents and communities to help children understand and cope with their fears. Fueled by the expertise of researchers in education, child development, and health sciences, the Center's website gave distraught parents, teachers, and other caregivers suggestions for dealing with the tragedy.

In the Ukraine, children with disabilities are becoming more mobile with the help of an occupational therapist, psychologist, developmental pediatrician, and teacher education specialist from Tufts. The team has helped determine the children's special equipment needs and developed special education programs and family advocacy services. As a result, these neglected children are leading fuller lives.



Economics major Ify Mora designed an educational forum on the foster care system, which was held at Tufts September 17, 2002. Participants included legislators, community organization representatives, teachers, and students from other universities. The forum created a collaborative dialogue among health professionals, policy makers, educator, and others confronting the challenges of the foster care system.



The Tufts University Center for Children

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

WHETHER STUDYING HOW COMPANION ANIMALS CAN CALM FRIGHTENED YOUNG DENTAL PATIENTS OR ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN, RESEARCHERS AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY ARE IMMERSSED IN CHILD-CENTERED ISSUES. TUFTS OFFERS BROAD, DEEP EXPERTISE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH, EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT; THE POWER OF THESE DIVERSE ARENAS CONVENES AT THE TUFTS UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR CHILDREN (TUCC). THROUGH TUCC, EACH OF TUFTS' EIGHT DISTINGUISHED SCHOOLS BRINGS ITS OWN VALUABLE PERSPECTIVE TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD.

Innovative Courses Span Disciplines

TUCC maintains its strong interdisciplinary focus in three arenas: coursework, research, and action. In classes throughout the university, students are discovering vast resources and ideas across disciplines, from engineering to international relations. For example, an innovative course called The Natural World: Applications for Therapy and Education joins a teaching team from the Schools of Veterinary Medicine and Occupational Therapy to examine how children who are disabled, isolated, or ill are singularly affected by the natural world. Students from many different fields learn how animals and the environment can heal and enrich the lives of troubled children.

And in Youth Violence in America—taught by faculty from child development, education, medicine, and urban and environmental policy, as well as community partners—students develop a holistic view of the interplay between adolescent development and violence. Across the university—from the study of child labor in the Department of Economics to the design of robotic LEGOS in the School of Engineering—students engage in emerging scholarship and develop multi-layered perspectives on complex children's issues.

Tufts is known internationally for its distinguished work on behalf of children and youth. The Tufts University Center for Children capitalizes on that expertise and on our shared belief that all children deserve opportunities for a safe, healthy, and productive future.

—Howard Spivak, MD, Director,
Tufts University Center for Children

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Creating Communities of Scholars

Through annual conferences, meetings, and virtual discussion groups, TUCC initiates and nurtures teams of faculty to conduct child-related research across disciplines. For example, faculty from many departments within the Tufts School of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering recently formed a Community of Scholars. This group of economists, child development experts, nutritionists, and psychologists—all of whom are working on child welfare issues—has convened to share their perspectives and collaborate on research. In sharing their discipline-specific approaches to research, these faculty members are gaining a global, holistic perspective on children's issues. Other innovative research collaboratives include, studying and implementing environmental approaches to the prevention of obesity in Somerville school children, and a beginning effort to study environmental and biological factors in the brains of infants and young children.

When scholars from different disciplines work together to research thorny issues, the results are richer, more innovative, and more powerful. TUCC serves as a focal point for these partnerships, encouraging the birth of innovative ideas and strategies through research.

From Research to Action

The challenge for many researchers is to translate their work into meaningful action. TUCC helps Tufts scholars disseminate research and advocate for public policies that support children. The Center has helped launch a multi-disciplinary curriculum at Tufts to support advocacy research. The program studies the intellectual underpinnings of advocacy and examines what it takes to influence policy. Seniors, graduate students, and faculty members from across the university are learning about global reform, studying the successes and failures of past child-centered policies, and going into communities to better understand child protection, welfare, and public health.

Through web sites, lectures, community partnerships, curricula, and many other avenues, TUCC fosters interactions that inspire change.

In the School of Engineering...where scholars were instrumental in making Massachusetts the first state to require engineering in its K-12 public school curriculum.

In the University College of Citizenship and Public Service (UCPS)...where students are working in Boston-area communities to help integrate Latino populations.

In all of the crevices between disciplines within Tufts...students and scholars share a vision for enhancing the emotional, social, and physical health of children. TUCC provides a core from which to bring that vision to life.

