



FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Department Newsletter

OCTOBER 2025

FSHD Trains and Celebrates Teachers

World Teachers' Day on October 5 recognizes teachers around the globe for their role in nurturing the development of children. The 2025 theme, *Inspiring the Next Generation of Learners*, highlights how teachers do more than pass on knowledge — they motivate students to think critically, explore new ideas, solve problems and pursue their dreams.

This celebration is an ideal time to emphasize how a degree in Family Science and Human Development (FSHD) creates an excellent foundation for a teaching career, especially for individuals who want to work in early childhood, elementary education, or special education.

FSHD provides strong preparation in areas directly relevant to teaching:

Understanding Child and Adolescent Development: FSHD courses cover child growth, cognitive development, and emotional well-being, which are crucial for effective teaching. Learning how students develop at different ages helps in lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement. For example, kindergarten teachers excel when they understand how 5-year-olds process emotions and follow instructions.

Focus on Family and Social Systems: Teachers don't just

work with students—they interact with families and communities. FSHD students understand how family dynamics affect learning and behavior, making them better equipped to communicate with parents and understand diverse family backgrounds.

**WORLD
TEACHERS' DAY**
OCTOBER 5, 2025

Emphasis on Inclusion: FSHD curriculum explores cultural competence, socio-economic diversity, and immigrant issues. This knowledge is crucial for creating a safe, inclusive classroom environment.

Behavioral and Emotional Support Skills: By learning about intervention strategies, conflict resolution, and emotional development, FSHD

grads are better prepared to manage behavioral challenges and support children with emotional or social difficulties.

Research and Evidence-Based Practice: FSHD teaches students how to interpret research and apply best practices in real-world settings, including schools. Having the ability to assess which teaching methods or classroom interventions are most effective creates stronger teachers.

In conjunction with the university's Teacher Education Program, FSHD students can graduate with a BA or a combined BA/MAT with certification in P-3, K-6, and/or students with disabilities. ■

Department Chair's Corner

Happy October! It's hard to believe that a month has passed since we started the fall 2025 semester, and now our semester is truly underway. As I write this Chair's message, the air is perfectly crisp and cool. The familiar sights of nature changing its colors and sweaters being pulled out of the closet, and smells of pumpkin spice, warm apple cider, and soup (!) fill the air like clockwork. Whether the season is your cup of tea (or not), it makes it a bit easier to see summer's end when things are as pleasant as they are during this time of the year.

Much like the seasons however, things can get unpredictable fast; things can get tenuous in a blink of an eye! Having spoken to many of our FSHD students and learning their thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, I know that



Dr. Lyndal Khaw

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DATES TO REMEMBER

October 8

- ◆ Student Appreciation Day
- ◆ FSHD Tips & Treats

October 15

Deadline to apply for January graduation

October 18-26

Fall Break

October 31

Spring '26 registration opens

Intimate Partner Violence, Social Justice, and the Power of the Pause

by Donna Meeker O'Rourke, MPH

Let's try this: Take one minute. Feel your feet on the ground. Soften your jaw.

Inhale slowly through your nose, exhale through your mouth. Repeat three times. Notice what shifts inside you.

College can be exciting, but it can also be overwhelming. Classes, jobs, family responsibilities, and the state of the world can leave us feeling stretched thin. Amid all of this, relationships shape our daily lives. But when a relationship includes control, manipulation, or harm — what we call intimate partner violence (IPV) — it can make everything feel heavier.

IPV is not always physical. It can show up as constant check-ins, isolating someone from friends, or pressuring them into choices they don't want to make. For students, these behaviors may be difficult to spot, and the effects can ripple into academics, health, and sense of belonging.

In my work in higher education for more than two decades, currently as a Program Coordinator in the Office for the Promotion of Wellbeing at Rutgers University, I have seen how these patterns unfold in the lives of students. For the past five years, my research has centered on intimate partner violence, and I have supported countless survivors navigating their college

experience. Presenting this work at both local and national conferences has only deepened what I witness on campus every day: IPV is both deeply personal and shaped by the larger systems that students are moving through.

At the same time, IPV does not occur in isolation. Larger systems such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and economic inequality shape who is most at risk and

who has access to support. Recognizing IPV as a social justice issue means acknowledging that individual experiences are connected to broader pressures and inequities.

This is where mindfulness can serve as both care and resistance. In a culture that tells us to “push through,” pausing is not weakness, it is an act of reclaiming agency in a world that benefits from our exhaustion. When we slow down, breathe, and listen to ourselves, we create space to notice harm, imagine alternatives, and connect to movements for justice that insist everyone deserves safety and respect.

If you are affected by IPV or sexual assault, you are not alone. Montclair State University offers confidential support, advocacy, medical care, and guidance through a variety of services:

- University Police: 973-655-5222
- Student Health Center: 973-655-4361
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 973-655-5211
- LGBTQ Center: 973-655-7916
- Dean of Students: 973-655-4118
- Residence Life: 973-655-4155
- Essex County Rape Care Center: 973-746-0800
- Passaic County Rape Crisis Services: 973-881-1450
- Rape Crisis Hotline: 877-733-2273

Students can find additional detailed information on the university's [Sexual Assault page](#) and [Survivor Resources](#). Services are confidential, never pressured, and tailored to the needs and preferences of each individual. Whether a student needs medical care, counseling, academic support, or legal guidance, help is available regardless of when or where an incident occurred.

You can also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or text “START” to 88788.

You are not alone. Choosing to pause, individually and collectively, is a step toward healing and justice. Before you move on with your day, return to where we began: feel your feet grounded to the floor, take a slow breath in, and release it gently. Even a small pause can create space for strength, safety, and connection. ■

Donna Meeker-O'Rourke is a doctoral candidate in the FSHD Ph.D. program and an adjunct professor for FSHD.



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

According to the NJ Division of Children and Families (NJDCF), domestic violence is recognized nationally as a public health issue and causes serious health-related consequences.

Identifying an Abusive Relationship

Domestic violence (DV) occurs when an individual commits acts intended to harm or instill fear in another when a special relationship is present. This special relationship can involve current/former intimate partners or household members. Victims and survivors may experience physical injuries like broken bones or head trauma, and endure long term effects due to chronic stress and anxiety. However, the abuse is not always physical; it can be verbal, and may include sexual assault, threats, financial control, and/or isolation.

Help is Available

Every New Jersey county offers services for DV victims and survivors. [Click here for a list of DCF services](#) that agencies are contracted to provide. Other resources include:

New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence (NJCEDV)

Toll Free Hotline: 1 (800) 572-SAFE (7233)

Phone: (609) 584-8107

Web: www.NJCEDV.org

NJCEDV is a statewide coalition of DV service programs and concerned individuals whose mission is to end domestic violence in New Jersey. The coalition performs its work through advocacy for survivors of DV; collaboration with state agencies and its member programs; education and training; and technical assistance for its members and the community.

New Jersey Domestic Violence Hotline

Toll Free: 1 (800) 572-SAFE (7233)

The New Jersey Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It serves DV victims and others seeking domestic violence information. The Hotline is a bilingual service and accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing.

State Office of Victim/Witness Advocacy

Phone: (609) 896-8855

Web: www.njvw.org/index.html

Crime victims and witnesses have certain rights in the criminal justice system, and advocacy services help make partici-

pating in the system less stressful and more informed. Services from the Office of Victim/Witness Advocacy are available in county prosecutors' offices.

New Jersey Address Confidentiality Program

Toll Free: (877) 218-9133

Web: <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/women/acp/>

The New Jersey Address Confidentiality Program provides eligible DV victims with a substitute mailing address that does not reveal their location. This service is important for victims forced to relocate for safety. First class mail is forwarded without charge.

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA)

Toll-Free Hotline: (800) 601-7200

Phone: (609) 631-4450

Web: www.njcasa.org

NJCASA is the statewide advocacy and capacity building organization that represents the 21 county-based rape crisis centers, and the Rutgers University Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance.

NJCASA elevates the voice of sexual violence survivors and service providers by advocating for survivor-centered legislation, training allied professionals, and supporting statewide prevention strategies that work to address and defy the socio-cultural norms that permit and promote rape culture.

New Jersey Adult Protective Services Providers

Web: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/home/adultpsp.html>

If you know an adult (age 18+) who is subject to abuse, neglect, or exploitation, contact your county Adult Protective Services (APS) office to initiate an APS investigation, a thorough assessment of a potential at-risk adult. Within 72 hours, a private face-to-face interview with the adult by a trained APS social worker is required. Every effort is made to determine the competence of the adult; other individuals or agencies that have knowledge of the situation might also be interviewed. Following the investigation, a report is submitted to the APS Supervisor who will then consult with the social worker and determine if the adult is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. All information generated by the investigation is confidential. ■

Source: <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/women>



Upcoming FSHD Events

Student Appreciation Day



4TH FLOOR MID-WEEK SNACK BREAK



Take a well-deserved break and give yourself time to recharge! Come visit the 4th floor suite in University Hall 4144 for some sweet grab-n-go treats and a refreshing drink!



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8TH
10 AM - 12 PM

UNIVERSITY HALL
ROOM 4144

HOSTED BY: FSHD & KINESIOLOGY

Department Chair's Corner

(continued from page 1)

this current moment is not easy for everyone. Being grateful for simple little things like the changing seasons can be a tall order for individuals and families facing seriously challenging losses for a number of reasons. I often think about the basics of family systems theory, whereby a change to one person creates change for the entire family unit. Many families in our communities are facing such devastating changes today and the effects are far-reaching and life-changing for thousands of people.

Although the news about people's lived experiences can be devastating, I still engage this semester with some cautious optimism because of who we are. As a department that focuses on supporting and strengthening all families, we remain committed to supporting our students, families, and communities through these moments of change—whether joyful or difficult. This semester, I continue to be super encouraged by the ways our students are engaging thoughtfully with each other - in the classroom or in their field work or internship sites.

I invite you to stay connected with us as we continue to expand opportunities for learning, engagement, and community. This month, for example, we are hosting our first "Tips & Treats" session, an invitation to gather in an informal way with themed learning chats over coffee and treats (see the announcement on this page). While intended to be a way we build community, it is an opportunity to hear from FSHD faculty, staff, and even our alumni who graduated from our program. I sincerely hope you will join us!

On that note, I hope you have a great rest of the semester and find time to relax and recharge during your upcoming Fall breaks. ■



Department of Family
Science and Human
Development Presents

TIPS AND TREATS

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8TH,
2:00pm to 3:00pm
UNIVERSITY HALL RM: 4116

Join us for a cozy mid-semester check-in! Take a break with baked goods, coffee, and great conversation!

Chat with FSHD alum and classmates about:

- 🍎 Tips to tackle midterms
- 🍎 Tips for class registration
- 🍎 Tips to stay organized



Scan QR code to RSVP



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025	2 - 3:30 PM
STUDENT CENTER QUAD RAIN LOCATION: STCT BALLROOMS, 3-4:30 PM	FREE

Student Spotlight

Oscaterin Bautista

Oscaterin Bautista is a senior with a double major in Family Science and Human Development (Family & Human Services concentration) and Child Advocacy and Policy. At 35, she juggles motherhood, a full-time job and college courses. She was the subject of a



[photo essay](#) that follows her journey and captures the determination fueling her pursuit of higher education.

Professionally, Oscaterin champions children's success and guides families toward self-reliance through her work at Montclair Child Development Center in Glen Ridge, NJ, where she carries a caseload of 113 families. She helps with self-assessments and services, even paperwork they're afraid to fill out. If possible, she helps them in her office rather than referring them to another location where a language barrier could impede their success.



Being part of a family's life for up to three years builds strong bonds that remain after they leave the program. "Creating an impact on the little ones is truly priceless,

even if they might not remember me when they grow up," she says.

Oscaterin and her four children (ages 8, 10, 13 and 15) work together to keep their home running smoothly. Each child has responsibilities which must be done before anyone picks up a phone or tablet, and the oldest cares for the younger kids when mom goes to class.

To carve out quiet time for her schoolwork, Oscaterin begins her day at 5:00 a.m. before the children wake up. The flexibility of online and hybrid classes enables her to balance ed-

Career & Internship Insights

Ready for Your Internship?

If you're an FSHD senior in the Family & Human Services concentration and planning to complete your Internship (FSHD 409) in Spring 2026, now is the time to meet with a career advisor to get the process started. Make an appointment on [Handshake](#) or email CCHLcareer@montclair.edu.

Fall 2025 Career & Internship Fair

Wednesday, October 8

1:00-4:00pm

University Hall Conference Center, 7th floor

This fair is for everyone looking to launch your career or gain experience through a full-time job or internship. Come and network with dozens of employers from a wide variety of industries! Dress professionally, and bring lots of resumes and your Montclair ID.

This event is open to all students, alumni, and the public. Registration is required through [Handshake](#).

Community Health Expo

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

2:00-4:00 pm

Student Center Ballrooms

The Health Expo is your chance to meet and network with employers in community health fields and explore the job opportunities available in those organizations. The Expo is open to all grade levels — it's never too early to gain interviewing skills and job search experience! Registration is required [through Handshake](#). ■

ucation, career and family in ways she didn't think possible. "At first, I was scared to go back to college," she says, "but I met others like me and I learned I wasn't alone." Feedback from the faculty also keeps her motivated. "The support from professors and the resources available have prepared me to grow stronger as a family advocate." She even advocates for her own family at times, such as when her school district tried to put her English-speaking children into ESL classes based solely on their last name.

After graduation, Oscaterin plans to pursue a master's degree in social work and create a nonprofit that ensures no family falls through the cracks. "I want to use my experiences to make things easier for other families. If I've struggled, so have others — and no one should face that journey alone." ■

From Trauma to Healing: Healing-Centered Approaches to Trauma in Families and Communities

This 10-week fully online and interactive course offers a comprehensive exploration of healing-centered approaches to addressing trauma. Moving beyond traditional trauma-informed care, the curriculum emphasizes a practice-shift towards recognizing and nurturing the inherent strength and resilience of individuals, families, and communities affected by trauma.

Course Term & Fee

October 13 – December 15, 2025 (10 Weeks)
\$550

Course Highlights:

- Gain a deep understanding of Positive and Adverse Childhood Experiences (PACEs) science; examine how early experiences shape brain development, and explore long-term outcomes of trauma across generations
- Learn about pioneering research on neurobiological responses to trauma with practical applications tailored for family and community contexts
- Be guided by a trauma-certified, licensed mental health professional and faculty in the department of Family Science & Human Development
- Develop culturally responsive skills to support healing within family systems and community structures
- Earn CEUs and a micro-credential certificate from the Department of Children and Families' Office of Resilience and Montclair State University



Registration link opens
October 6

Limited spots available!

**Click Here to
Register**

Contact Information:

Family Science &
Human Development
973-655-4171
fshd@montclair.edu

Our Achievements

Dr. Soyoung Lee was a guest speaker at the 9th International Summer Course hosted by the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Faculty of Human Ecology, at IPB University in Indonesia. Her presentation was titled *Family Resilience in Policy and Practice: Bridging Human Development Research and National Family Strategies*.

She has also been selected to receive the 2025 Dawn Cassidy Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) Special Recognition Award from the National Council on Family Relations. This award acknowledges exceptional effort in promoting, supporting, or improving the CFLE credential or program.

Dr. Robert Reid and **Dr. Pauline Garcia-Reid** secured a \$1.25 million Partnerships for Success grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to support their work in preventing youth substance use and expanding health services in Paterson, NJ, through Project C.O.P.E. (Communities Organizing for Prevention and Empowerment). They were also awarded three continuation applications totaling \$385,000 to extend programs supporting prevention of drug use, AIDS and underage drinking. ■

Red Hawks Athletics

Come out and cheer
for your Fall teams!



**Soccer
Football
Volleyball
Field Hockey
Cross Country
Swimming & Diving**

[Find the full calendar here](#)

Family Science and Human Development

University Hall 4144

(973) 655-4171

FSHD@montclair.edu

[FSHD Website](#)

Dr. Lyndal Khaw, Chair

Lisa Mills, Newsletter Editor



@FSHDmontclair



@ Family Science & Human
Development at Montclair
State University