Research Centre on the Adjustment of Youth and Families at Risk (JEFAR)

JEFAR is a community of researchers brought together by a shared commitment to training future generations of competent, rigorous, community-oriented researchers.

Their spirit of solidarity and cooperation and passion for disseminating new knowledge are cornerstones of the centre’s success and longevity.

CENTRE DESCRIPTION

JEFAR was founded over 25 years ago as a joint initiative of Université Laval and the Fédération des CLSC du Québec. The centre’s activities include research, skills development, and knowledge transfer, all undertaken in a spirit of partnership with the organizations and stakeholders that work with at-risk youth and families.

The centre is home to some 30 researchers and maintains around twenty partnerships, mostly through its three main teams: the at-risk youth and families team (JEFAR), the Parental separation, Stepfamily living CURA, and the Partnership Chair on Child Maltreatment Prevention.

The centre operates under the Faculty of Social Sciences and has been accredited by the Office of the Vice Rector of Research and Innovation for over ten years.

MISSION

JEFAR’s mission is to advance and update fundamental and applied knowledge on the adjustment of at-risk youth and families. Research is conducted jointly with legal, community, and social services partners.

By shedding light on today’s complex family structures and developing concrete actions to support families, JEFAR has established itself as a leader in its field.

The JEFAR program includes 32 researchers, 11 research professionals, and 95 students as of June 1, 2013.
In the past two years the centre has been awarded three major infrastructure grants, no small feat in the current funding environment and a token of the scientific community’s recognition of JEFAR’s expertise in its field. The centre is an acknowledged leader at home and abroad on child maltreatment issues, youth-to-adult transitions, and family transitions (separation and stepfamily living). Centre researchers do notable work in such areas as trajectories of at-risk youth and families, socio-legal measures to support youth and families, and the evaluation of complex intervention tools such as Quebec’s Youth Protection Act and child maltreatment prevention program.

JEFAR is well-known for its successful long-term collaborations with social services, legal, government, and community group partners. In its 25 year history the centre has become a partner of choice for Quebec community organizations. JEFAR researchers have taken a leadership role in several expert groups specializing in social, legal, and scientific issues—an example of Université Laval’s ongoing commitment to community service. In keeping with its mission, the centre combines scientific research and its practical application, two key aspects of educating students, professionals, and the public at large. For JEFAR researchers, informing public debate is a fundamental part of their work, and another way they perform a valuable service to society.

JEFAR makes students a top priority, providing a stimulating environment, expert supervision, and excellent training. Every year the centre implements measures to enrich student training and provide new skills development opportunities, including travel grants for attending academic conferences and training workshops. Students also enjoy valuable opportunities to contribute to academic and general interest publications, work with expert researchers and research professionals, obtain priority for research assistant positions, and integrate their own work into existing JEFAR research projects.

JEFAR is home to three dynamic research teams dedicated to enhancing knowledge on topical issues related to at-risk youth and families: youth protection, youth and family adjustment, family separation and stepfamily living, child maltreatment prevention, and more. The centre offers students an inspiring atmosphere to pursue their studies and hone their scientific skills through frequent interaction with research fellows and professionals, other graduate students, and outside partners. The chance to attend academic events is another key advantage. Students also enjoy access to a wide range of resources. Depending on their supervisor’s team affiliation, these may include scholarships, post-doctoral fellowships, translation of papers, supplementary training, workspaces, special access to partner organizations, and more.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

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