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Inaugural conference focuses on how children learn language

From children learning English as a second language to the effects of electronics on the developing brain, the first annual Child Language Acquisition Research in Alberta (CLARA) Conference promises to be of interest to researchers, clinicians, teachers and parents alike.

“We are excited to be hosting this inaugural conference at the University of Lethbridge,” says Dr. Fangfang Li, a U of L psychology professor with expertise in child speech development. “This conference will bring together well-known researchers in the field of child language acquisition who are eager to share their knowledge with community members.”

The conference, which runs from Thursday to Saturday, has several sessions that are open to the public. Anyone interested is welcome to attend the keynote address Thursday evening (PE250, 7 p.m.) by Dr. Ellen Bialystok, a professor at York University. Her research examines the effect of experience, such as bilingualism, on cognitive processes across the lifespan.

The public may also be interested in the lightning talks of five minutes each on Friday evening (Andy’s Place, AH100, 6 to 8 p.m.). The schedule of topics includes how babies begin to learn words, how to improve children’s learning experiences in French Immersion, a new online resource for Blackfoot teachers, and whether younger is always better for language acquisition. A full conference schedule can be found [online](#).

The CLARA network of Alberta researchers in the field of child language acquisition was formed by Dr. Elena Nicoladis from the University of Alberta. The conference will enhance existing research in the field of child language acquisition in Alberta and promote research exchange and collaboration on a national and international scale. The conference is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the U of L, the Women Scholars Speaker Series and the Hotchkiss Speaker fund.

Li and other organizers and speakers at the conference are available for interviews on **Saturday at 9:30 a.m. in AH100.**

This news release can be found [online](#).

Contact:

Caroline Zentner, public affairs advisor
403-394-3975 or 403-795-5403 (cell)

caroline.zentner@uleth.ca