

Student Research Spotlight

Katy Swyden, R.D.

Program: Doctor of Philosophy in Allied Health Sciences

Mentor: Susan B. Sisson, PhD, RDN, CHES, FACSM

Department: Nutritional Sciences



My name is Katy Swyden and I will complete my Ph.D. in Nutritional Sciences in the summer of 2016. Prior to returning to school for my doctorate degree, I worked extensively with children, adolescents, and families as a registered dietitian. I got started in research so that I could continue to explore child, adolescent, and family health and believe my professional experiences have brought a real-world perspective, competence, and passion to my research.

Under the mentorship of **Dr. Susan Sisson** and as part of the Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Laboratory, I conducted a project focusing on the influence of parental perception and concern of preschool child's weight on obesogenic parenting practices for which a manuscript was published in *Advances in Pediatric Research*. I prepared a literature review that examined child-care arrangement and weight status among preschool children for which a manuscript is in progress for submission in early 2016. I also developed and conducted a project that examined the influence of maternal stress and work status upon child feeding practices and was awarded the CAH Tier IV Student Research and Creativity Grant. I presented findings at the 2015 CAH Research Day and at the 2015 International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland. I will submit my manuscript for publication in early 2016. I am grateful for the expert researchers, within and outside the field of nutrition that I collaborated with on each of these projects. My dissertation, which will build upon my previous research experiences, will focus on the interaction of family structure on attributes of the home environment and frequency of shared family meals.

I have been fortunate to be involved in nutritional research specific to children and families and believe that my research applies to Allied Health by contributing to the important area of health improvement. Upon completion of my Ph.D., I will continue to explore the nutritional environment of the home, parenting practices, and child and adolescent health outcomes through teaching, research, and nutritional counseling. I hope to help individuals, families, and communities learn about nutrition and health in the most effective and inspiring ways possible.

