Stories from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

The 2014–2015 Fiscal Year in Review

UNC
FRANK PORTER GRAHAM
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

From the Director

FPG is moving at a rapid pace, even as it approaches its 50th year. We remain one of the most productive university-based, research and development institutes in the world that focuses on early care and education, special education, professional development, technical assistance, and implementation science. While a substantial portion of our work occurs in North Carolina, we have a national and international focus. So, as we approach middle-age (by human years), we are still running like a teenager.

2014–15 was a year of significant events, and by noting a few, I will ask forgiveness for the sin of omission.

- We continue our research with three new projects from the Institute of Education Sciences that focus on child care quality, children's behavioral health, and autism spectrum disorders.

- The Family Life Project received funding to continue its decade-long research on poverty and children.

- As well as playing significant roles in organizing and co-chairing the international Global Implementation Conference in Dublin, FPG's implementation scientists continue to guide innovative FPG programs across a range of human services.

- The National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute again drew a national audience and had the largest attendance in its history.

- Not only did the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center assist in identifying Recommended Practices for the field of early childhood special education, the Center also developed its groundbreaking *System Framework for Building High-Quality Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Programs.*

- FPG again assisted the state of North Carolina in evaluating its pre-K program and also coordinated the national evaluation of the Educare programs.

In addition to our external work, we examined ourselves as an organization, assessing organizational climate and beginning a discussion of how to shape FPG to meet the needs of our investigators and staff. Much of this work occurred while I was on research leave in the Winter and Spring, and I personally want to thank FPG fellow Barbara Wasik for serving in the role of acting director.

As we move into our 50th year, we are preparing for a celebration that will bring people from across the country together to reflect on FPG's past, but also to examine directions for the future.

I invite you to read through the pages that follow to learn more about the variety of FPG projects currently underway, our scholarly contributions, and our plans for the future.

Samuel L. Odom, Ph.D.
Director

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FPG at a Glance

Advancing knowledge. Enhancing lives.

The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is one of the nation's oldest multidisciplinary centers devoted to the study of children and families. FPG's research, technical assistance, implementation science, professional development, outreach, and public service shape how the world educates and cares for children.

People

224 Staff

57 Investigators

24 Fellows

19 Executive Leadership Board Members

9 Postdoctoral Research Associates and Graduate Assistants

Affiliated Disciplines

Anthropology, Audiology, Biostatistics, Education, Linguistics, Maternal and Child Health, Nursing, Occupational Science, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Psychology, Public Health, Public Policy, Social Work, Speech and Hearing Sciences

Major Areas of Emphasis

Developmental Disabilities; Early Care and Education; Physical and Social Health; Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Implementation Science; Public Policy and Evaluation; the International Initiative; Racial, Ethnic, Linguistic, Cultural, and Socioeconomic Diversity

Funding Sources

Federal grants, private grants, state grants, fees, sales, royalties, state appropriations, and others sources
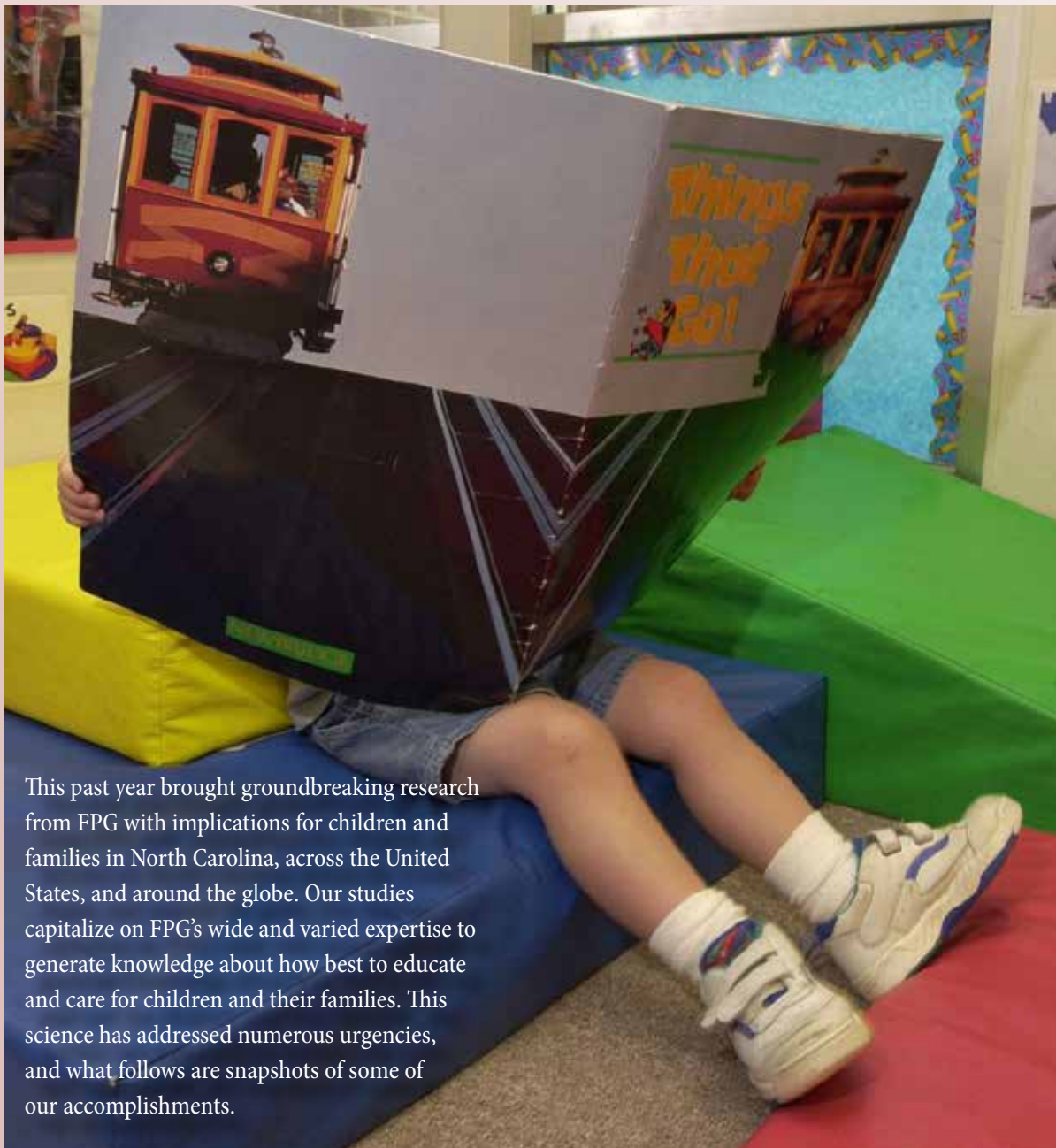
Sources of Federal Funding

U.S. Department of Education, National Institutes of Health, Administration for Children & Families, and other sources

Stories from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
The 2014-2015 Fiscal Year in Review

The Latest Science

New Findings and Newly Launched Studies
Benefit Children of All Ages—and Their Teachers

This past year brought groundbreaking research from FPG with implications for children and families in North Carolina, across the United States, and around the globe. Our studies capitalize on FPG's wide and varied expertise to generate knowledge about how best to educate and care for children and their families. This science has addressed numerous urgencies, and what follows are snapshots of some of our accomplishments.

Early Education Narrows the Achievement Gap with Younger Starts and Longer Stays

New research from FPG reveals high-quality early education is especially advantageous for children when they start younger and continue longer. Not only does more high-quality early education significantly boost the language skills of children from low-income families, children whose first language is not English benefit even more.

"These findings show that more high-quality early education and care can narrow the achievement gap before children reach kindergarten," said Noreen M. Yazejian, principal investigator of FPG's Educare Learning Network Implementation Study. "Children from low-income families can improve their standing relative to their middle class peers."

Yazejian said previous research has shown language skills are most malleable for children before age 4, which in large part explains high-quality early education's powerful effects. Her study examined children's receptive language skills—the ability to hear and understand words—because these particular skills are an excellent predictor of later academic success.

According to Yazejian, Educare classrooms offered the chance to study children enrolled in high-quality early education and care from the earliest ages. Educare is an enhanced Early Head Start and Head Start program for low-income, high-needs children from 6 weeks old until entry into kindergarten. The model has been replicated in 20 schools nationwide over the last 15 years.

Yazejian said the Educare program provides full-day, full-year center-based education and care in classrooms that meet the highest professional standards for teacher education, group size, and child-teacher ratios.

"Teachers model the use of language," she added. "And overall instructional quality is high."

Findings from the FPG study add to a growing body of research revealing better outcomes for children from low-income families who start high-quality education earlier and stay in it longer.

"Entering Educare as an infant appears to prevent the early decline in language scores often associated with poverty," said Yazejian. "In addition, the children who enter Educare schools as infants and remain through their preschool years demonstrate the highest English language scores at age 5, performing very close to the national average."

Yazejian said she suspected that Educare's model of integrating data-use systems, professional development, and high-quality instruction are key ingredients of its success.

During a budget hearing for the Early Education Panel earlier this year, a subcommittee for the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations listened to expert testimony citing the FPG study. Walter S. Gilliam, director of Yale's Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy, provided an overview of the research on child development and the impact of early education before specifically addressing the question of how best to target federal investments.

"Early care and learning programs should be integral components of our nation's educational strategy," Gilliam argued. "Both educational and economic research confirm common wisdom—supporting and intervening early is far more effective and cost-beneficial than waiting for problems to become more intractable and costly."

abstract and full article

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/high-quality-early-education-age-entry-and-time-care-differences-student-outcomes-english-

Unstable Child Care Can Affect Children by Age 4

A new study from FPG reveals that disruptions in child care negatively affect children's social development as early as age 4. However, the study also shows that the effects of child care instability are not unduly large—and some types of instability appear to have no negative impact on children.

"Our findings showed that when young children moved between child care settings, these transitions negatively affected their social adjustment," said FPG investigator Mary Bratsch-Hines. "But when children had a history of changing caregivers within the same setting, we found no significant effects."

Bratsch-Hines explained many experts believe forming stable and secure early relationships with parents and caregivers serves as a working model for children as they form social connections later.

"It follows that higher levels of instability and disruption in establishing strong relationships with caregivers during children's earliest years could lead to difficulties forming trusting relationships down the road," said Bratsch-Hines. "However, we have to recognize that changing child care settings and providers may be inevitable for a majority of families."

Bratsch-Hines said that ups and downs in income, availability of transportation, secure employment, and other factors can result in children moving into and out of different child care settings. But understanding the effects of such transitions on children has remained elusive.

As a result, Bratsch-Hines and her team decided to take a comprehensive look at the impact of child care instability by capitalizing on FPG's long-running Family Life Project. She and her colleagues examined the experiences of nearly 1,300 young children living in high-poverty rural areas, focusing on changes in child care both within and across settings—an approach few prior studies had attempted.

By rigorously accounting for numerous child, family, and child care characteristics, the FPG team determined that a history of changes in child care across settings negatively impacted children's lives.

"Not unexpectedly, children who experienced more changes in child care settings received lower ratings from their pre-kindergarten teachers on social adjustment," said Bratsch-Hines. "This may be because changing child care locations meant children had to adjust to new physical environments in terms of the buildings, playgrounds, and toys—as well as new routines—in addition to disruptions in relationships with peers, primary caregivers, and other adults."

According to Bratsch-Hines, her team found no evidence that infants and toddlers who only experienced changes in providers within settings later had difficulty with social adjustment in pre-kindergarten. "This could be good news for parents who worry about high teacher turnover and other changes in staff at their chosen child care setting," she said.

abstract and full article

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/child-care-instability-6-36-months-and-social-adjustment-children-prekindergarten

NC Pre-K Children Outpace Normal Expectations

Students who were enrolled in the NC Pre-K Program are making significant gains across all areas of learning through the end of kindergarten, according to a new report from scientists at FPG.

"Students made progress on most skills through kindergarten at an even greater rate than would be expected for normal developmental growth," said Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, director of FPG's National Pre-K and Early Learning Evaluation Center. Peisner-Feinberg pointed to significant gains throughout this period in students' language and literacy skills, math skills, general knowledge, and behavior.

"Although children made gains over the entire period from the beginning of pre-k through the end of kindergarten, there were differences in the amount of gains each year," she said. "In pre-k, for instance, there was a relatively greater rate of growth on some measures of language and literacy skills, as well as on basic self-knowledge and social skills."

Peisner-Feinberg leads the FPG team that has studied the NC Pre-K Program and provided it with recommendations for more than a dozen years. Since the statewide program's inception as "More at Four" in 2001, it has served over 292,000 at-risk 4-year-olds, helping to prepare them for kindergarten.

Throughout this time, FPG researchers have provided annual evaluation studies of NC Pre-K's outcomes. Peisner-Feinberg's new end-of-kindergarten findings dovetail with her prior research in North Carolina, which also suggests that children enrolled in the state's pre-k program continue to make gains even after leaving it.

"Earlier studies have shown that at the end of third grade, children from low-income families who had attended pre-k had higher reading and math scores on the North Carolina end-of-grade tests than similar children who had not attended the state's program," she said. The vast majority of the program's students are from low-income families.

Prior evaluations of NC Pre-K also revealed that children with lower levels of English proficiency made greater gains than their peers while in the program. Peisner-Feinberg's new findings show that this continues to hold true through their first year of elementary school.

"In most areas of language and literacy skills, math skills, and general knowledge, children with lower levels of English proficiency make the greatest gains through kindergarten," she said.

Peisner-Feinberg said FPG's history of bringing researched-based recommendations to NC Pre-K has helped the program maintain its quality as it has grown.

"The state has examined the evaluation findings to ensure that all children are benefitting from NC Pre-K and to consider areas where they might improve practices," she said. "It's been very positive from our perspective to see the program make such good use of our research."

The NC Department of Health and Human Services houses the Division of Child Development and Early

Education (DCDEE) and reports the results of FPG's evaluations to the state legislature each year.

"It is certainly affirming that this research validates that our investments in NC Pre-K continue to result in significant positive educational outcomes and are making a difference for North Carolina's young children," said DCDEE director Rob Kindsvatter.

executive summary

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/childrens-kindergarten-out-comes-and-program-quality-north-carolina-pre-kindergarten-prog-O

full report

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/childrens-kindergarten-out-comes-and-program-quality-north-carolina-pre-kindergarten-progra

Professional Development Programs Improve Pre-K Teacher-Child Interactions

Two professional development programs for pre-kindergarten teachers have improved their interactions with children, according to a new report for Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Scientists from FPG and Child Trends found benefits from both approaches in increased emotional support that children received from their teachers.

FPG scientist Diane Early, lead author of the report, explained that high-quality teacher-child interactions are essential for beneficial child outcomes.

"We already know from a 2014 evaluation by FPG that the school readiness skills of children who attend Georgia's Pre-K significantly improve across a wide range of language, literacy, math, and other measures," Early said. "Improved teacher-child interactions could further increase those benefits."

The research team wanted to determine the effectiveness of two professional development models for Georgia's Pre-K teachers: Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI) and MyTeachingPartner

(MTP). Each was designed to improve teacher-child interactions in classrooms. MMCI is a face-to-face group training model that requires fewer staff members and less time than MTP, which primarily uses one-to-one remote coaching.

Previous research had indicated that both of these professional development approaches can improve teacher-child interactions. The research team and DECAL wanted to learn how they would work when tested under real-world conditions.

Early's team found that the MMCI face-to-face training and the MTP remote coaching models each resulted in improvements in the emotional support pre-k teachers provided children in their interactions. Additionally, MMCI resulted in improved instructional support, one of the strongest predictors of children's learning.

"More work is needed, but this project is an important step because it demonstrates a way to improve teacher-child interactions, which are critical to maximizing children's learning," Early said.

full report

http://decal.ga.gov/BftS/EvaluationGAPreKProfdev.aspx

Teachers Play Key Role in Program to Fight Childhood Obesity

An innovative physical activities guide developed at FPG is helping North Carolina fight childhood obesity. New research shows that when teachers direct physical activities from the guide, young children become more active and less sedentary.

"In the past twenty years, childhood obesity rates have skyrocketed," said FPG investigator Allison De Marco. "And for the first time in over a century, children's life expectancies are declining because of increased numbers of overweight kids."

De Marco said these statistics are especially alarming because research has long shown that being overweight during childhood is associated with health issues later in life. Obesity, coupled with a lack of physical activity, can lead to coronary heart disease, hypertension, Type II diabetes, and other chronic diseases.

"About one-third of overweight preschoolers and one-half of overweight school-age children remain overweight as adults," she explained.

She also noted that studies have shown how physical activities can reduce the chances of developing obesity and chronic diseases, while positively influencing other areas of development. Childhood physical activity is related to better health, higher test scores, and fewer behavioral problems.

"But preschoolers engage in mostly sedentary activities," said De Marco. "Surprisingly, children don't just run outside and play, and even at recess, preschoolers actually are fairly inactive."

De Marco, FPG investigator Susan A. Zeisel, and FPG director Samuel L. Odom—with support from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation—developed a guide for the foundation's Be Active Kids program. The guide contains dozens of age-appropriate activities, such as catching bubbles and pretending to be storks, complete with teacher instructions, and teachers can incorporate other aspects of learning into the activities.

After training lead child care teachers and their assistants, the FPG team provided materials—including balls, chalk, scarves, beanbags, and hula hoops—and asked teachers to incorporate activities like "Jump for the Sky" and "Inchworm Wiggle" into their lesson plans. De Marco, Zeisel, and Odom then conducted a study of the program's effectiveness in both indoor and outdoor environments for children from six NC classrooms.

De Marco said the Be Active Kids guide works to increase activity and to decrease sedentary behaviors, and results are most striking when teachers head the activities.

"When teachers directed the activities, activity levels increased in all six classrooms," she said. "And moderate to vigorous activity increased in five of six."

Be Active Kids made the physical activity guide available at no cost to child care teachers around North Carolina.

about Be Active Kids
http://www.beactivekids.org/

Mindfulness Helps Teachers Overcome Childhood Adversity

With significant implications for early childhood education, new research reveals that a mindful disposition is associated with alleviating lasting physical and emotional effects of childhood adversity. A team of scientists from Temple University, FPG, Child Trends, and the Rockefeller University conducted the groundbreaking study—the first to examine relationships between childhood adversity, mindfulness, and adult health.

Robert Whitaker, professor of public health and pediatrics at Temple University, said the findings are especially important because adults who were abused or neglected as children typically experience poorer health.

"Previous research has shown that childhood traumas worsen adult health through changes in how the body responds to stress," said Whitaker, who led the new study. He added that some people might adopt poor health behaviors, like smoking, to cope with stress.

As a visiting scholar at FPG, Whitaker collaborated with FPG scientist Kathleen Gallagher on the study, which surveyed 2,160 adults working for Head Start, the nation's largest federally-funded early childhood education program. According to Gallagher, one of the study's most striking features is its focus on Head Start teachers and staff, who are responsible for teaching and caring for some of America's most vulnerable children.

"It's essential for adults working with young children to be well—physically and emotionally," said Gallagher. "Better health enables better relationships with children, and research has long demonstrated that good relationships are crucial for children's learning and social-emotional development."

According to Whitaker, studies have shown the health benefits of learning to be more mindful—focusing on and accepting your reactions to the present moment. Nobody, however, had explored whether mindfulness in adulthood could offset the effects of adverse childhood experiences.

Whitaker's team surveyed 66 Head Start programs, asking staff if they experienced emotional, physical, or sexual abuse as children or if they were exposed to other adversities such as household violence, substance abuse, or mental illness. He also asked about their current health, as well as their mindfulness—their tendency in daily life to notice what happens as it happens and to be aware and accepting of their thoughts and feelings.

"Nearly one-fourth of our Head Start respondents reported three or more types of adverse childhood experiences," said Whitaker, adding that almost 30

percent reported having three or more stress-related health conditions, such as depression, headache, or back pain.

However, the risk of having multiple health conditions was nearly 50 percent lower among respondents with the highest level of mindfulness compared to those with the lowest levels, even for those with multiple types of childhood adversity. In addition, regardless of the amount of childhood adversity, Head Start workers who were more mindful also reported significantly better health behaviors, like getting enough sleep, and better functioning, including fewer days when they felt unwell mentally or physically.

The findings compelled Whitaker and Gallagher to begin developing Be Well to Teach Well, an online professional development program designed to help Head Start teachers improve their well-being and classroom interactions.

"In-person training on mindfulness practices is difficult to implement on a large scale and very costly," Gallagher said. "But by providing online training and ongoing coaching, we plan to help many more teachers to be well—and to develop the healthy relationships that are so important for positive child outcomes."

abstract and full article

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/
adverse-childhood-experi-
ences-dispositional-mindful-
ness-and-adult-health

## FPG Launches Study of Preschool Quality Ratings and Child Outcomes

FPG is undertaking a large-scale study of a widely used observational tool that assesses the quality of preschool classrooms. Se-

nior scientist Diane Early and her research team will analyze and refine the scoring system for the recently published third edition of the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (ECERS-3).

Practitioners and researchers around the world have used versions of the ECERS for decades to assess the quality of early childhood programs and examine associations between quality and children's school readiness skills. Early's study will investigate how the ECERS-3 functions and how the factors it measures relate to children's social and academic growth.

"It is important that we understand how this latest version of the tool operates," Early said. "Research and programmatic efforts to improve early childhood outcomes would benefit from a way to measure early childhood environment that is more strongly linked to children's outcomes."

Early's project comes at a time when several state and national initiatives have been developed to increase overall quality in preschool programs and improve access to high-quality programs for young children. She explained that classroom quality is associated with young children's pre-academic and social-behavioral skills in preschool and with later school achievement, but the links are often small.
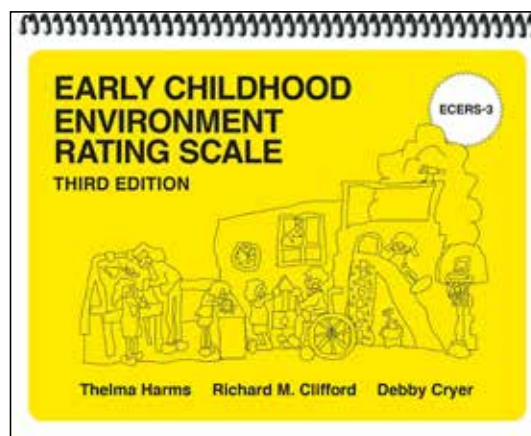
"Improving and refining how classroom quality is measured may increase our ability to see those linkages," Early said.

Since its creation at FPG in 1980, the original ECERS and its subsequent versions have become highly popular measures of early childhood environments. Major research projects, as well as almost all state efforts to evaluate and improve early childhood classroom quality, use the ECERS tools.

Early, along with co-principal investigators John Sideris and Jennifer Neitzel, will analyze data from preschool programs in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Washington. These programs will include state-funded pre-k, child care, and Head Start. Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, the study will involve 900 teachers and 600 preschoolers.

full story

http://fpg.unc.edu/news/fpg-launches-large-scale-study-preschool-quality-ratings-and-child-outcomes

Storytelling Skills Support Kindergarten Literacy for African American Children

Early narrative skills are tied to kindergarten literacy among young African American children, accord-

ing to new research from FPG. The study is the first to demonstrate the connection between African American preschoolers' storytelling abilities and the development of their early reading skills.

"Previous research found an association between oral narratives and literacy at later stages of development," said FPG researcher Nicole Gardner-Neblett, who led the study. "But our findings suggest how important storytelling is for African American children at the earliest stages."

Gardner-Neblett explained that oral narrative skills emerge as early as age 2 and continue to develop as children engage in interactions with parents and others, who provide guidance and feedback. Although experts have suggested the importance of oral language skills for literacy during the pre-

school years, much of the research until now has focused on associations between early language and later reading outcomes in elementary school, leaving many unanswered questions.

Gardner-Neblett and Iheoma Iruka, director of research and evaluation at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute, looked at these unsolved early developmental questions by focusing on preschoolers' skills with oral narratives and on the same children's emergent literacy at kindergarten. Their study's sample included 6,150 students nationwide.

Somewhat surprisingly, the study did not find a link between oral narrative skills and emergent literacy for the overall sample. However, when Gardner-Neblett and Iruka broke down the findings demographically, one group was different.

"We found that preschool oral narrative skills were a significant predictor of emergent literacy for poor and non-poor African American kindergartners," Gardner-Neblett said. "But only for the African American children."

"Oral story telling has been an important part of the histories of many peoples—and an especially rich aspect of the black culture across the African diaspora," said Iruka, whose own life included preschool care in Nigeria between trans-Atlantic moves.

According to Gardner-Neblett, previous research suggests that African American children are skilled in telling complex narratives of many different types, which may provide clues to the new study's findings.

"Having a repertoire of different styles suggests that African American children are flexible in their narratives, varying the narratives according to context," she said. "This flexibility may benefit African American children as they transition from using oral language to the decoding and comprehension of written text."

"Building on children's oral narrative skills is a strategy for schools looking to connect with children," said Iruka. "Especially as schools support children of color who come from a culture that has cherished these skills."

Gardner-Neblett added there still was much to learn about early literacy. "Better understanding the relationships between early narrative skills and literacy will help inform strategies to improve reading skills among all children," she said.

abstract and full article
http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/oral-narrative-skills-explaining-language-emergent-literacy-link-raceethnicity-and-ses

Family Life Project Reveals Talkative Fathers Help Kindergarten Reading Skills

FPG fellows Claire E. Baker and Lynn Vernon-Feagans have released a new study highlighting the unique, positive contributions of fathers to their children's early academic skills. The *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* published the study, which utilized data from FPG's long-running Family Life Project (FLP).

Shortly before the children entered kindergarten, Baker and Vernon-Feagans looked at the parents' "language input"—the number of words and "length of utterance"—during in-home interactions with their children throughout a wordless picture book activity. At the end of kindergarten, the FPG researchers then examined the same children's letter-word identification, picture vocabulary, and applied problems scores.

The study, one of the first to zero in on father-child verbal interactions, included mostly low-income families who reside in rural areas. Baker and Vernon-Feagans accounted for numerous demographic variables in their analysis and determined that mothers' mean length of utterance during the picture book activity was linked to their children's applied problems scores.

Even more significantly, however, when the researchers isolated the impact of the fathers, findings showed that the fathers' mean length of utterance predicted their children's vocabulary and applied problems scores beyond the effects of the mothers' language.

The Family Life Project (FLP) is a multi-university program of research, which the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has funded continuously since 2001. The project seeks to understand the development of critical skills in young children growing up in rural areas characterized by high poverty.

At its inception, the FLP recruited a representative sample of every baby born to a mother who lived in one of six poor rural counties (3 in Pennsylvania and 3 in North Carolina), oversampling for poverty in both regions. An interdisciplinary team of investigators with expertise in a variety of important domains has been following these 1,292 children ever since, yielding a treasure trove of findings.

abstract and full article

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/fathers-language-input-during-shared-book-activities-links-childrens-kindergarten-achievem

more on the Family Life Project

http://flp.fpg.unc.edu

First Grade Reading Suffers in Segregated Schools

A groundbreaking study from FPG has found that African American students in first grade experience smaller gains in reading when they attend segregated schools—but the students' backgrounds likely are not the cause of the differences.

According to the Center for Civil Rights, although the United States is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, segregation is still on the rise. To better understand segregation's impact on student performance, FPG scientists looked at nearly 4,000 first graders in public schools nationwide.

Photograph courtesy of "rutger2" under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

"When the minority composition of schools was 75% or more, the growth in African American first graders' reading skills lagged behind their African American peers in more integrated schools," said Kirsten Kainz, FPG's director of statistics. "This alone wasn't news. Numerous studies have shown how the performance of African American students suffers in segregated schools."

Kainz said that researchers have long faced a difficult problem when investigating the reasons behind differences in reading development or other learning outcomes in segregated settings.

"The economic, social, and academic backgrounds of the students who attend segregated schools could be the cause of differences in achievement—and not aspects of the segregated settings themselves," said Kainz. The challenge, she explained, is in disentangling one group of potential causes from the other.

"When similar groups of first graders do better in one type of school than another, then it must be some

aspect of the school that accounts for the difference," Kainz said. "This study goes further than any other in being able to say, 'It's not the kids.'"

Kainz said focusing on the precise opportunities to promote better and more even reading development for African-American students in segregated settings remains challenging.

"It may be that segregated schools affect African-American students in particular because these schools have fewer resources to devote to high-quality instruction, experience more teacher turnover, and are more likely to employ novice teachers," Kainz explained. "In addition, the communities surrounding segregated schools may not have as many supports for reading development outside of the school day and year."

"Researchers and educators, in partnership, must identify the ways and means to promote adequate learning for all students," added Kainz. She published her results in *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* with FPG's Yi Pan.

abstract and full article

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/segregated-school-effects-first-grade-reading-gains-using-propensity-score-matching-disent

Better Academic Support in High School Crucial for Low Performers with ADHD

New research reveals that high school students with attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are using an unexpectedly high rate of services for their age group, yet many low achievers with ADHD are not getting the appropriate academic supports.

Desiree W. Murray, FPG's associate director for research, said previous studies have demonstrated that children with ADHD often have difficulty completing work and performing at the level of their actual academic ability.

"Prior research has shown that students with ADHD score 10–30 points lower than their peers on achievement tests, and 30 percent repeat a grade," explained Murray, the new study's lead author. "High school students with ADHD take lower level classes and fail more courses than their peers."

Murray's study found that teachers rated high school students with ADHD as more aggressive and less academically successful, and these students' test scores and grade point averages were lower than their peers'. Her team also determined that slightly more than half of the high school students with a history of ADHD received some type of formal school services, six times as much as students without ADHD in the study sample.

"Although school procedures for identifying academic impairment in this population appear to be working for the most part, our results also suggest that 20 to 30 percent of students with academic impairment and ADHD have fallen through the cracks," Murray said. "There is a need for greater or more effective academic supports for a substantial minority of the students in our sample."

Murray, who also is spearheading a new FPG study on self-regulation (see p. 13), explained that only about

one-fourth of the interventions reported in the school survey have evidence behind them. "One of the most common supports we found, for instance, was allowing students to have extended time on tests—but there's no clear evidence this helps improve performance among students with ADHD."

The new findings enabled Murray's team to make recommendations for high school support staff serving students with ADHD. "Using more evidence-based strategies could help reduce the performance gap between students with and without ADHD," she said.

"Providing effective services may contribute to increased graduation rates and successful transitions to adult life."

abstract and full article

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/preva-lence-and-characteristics-school-servic-es-high-school-students-attention-deficithyper

Desiree W. Murray,
FPG's associate director
for research

N.C. Elementary Students Participate in Program Teaching Self-Regulation

FPG is launching a new study funded by the Institute of Education Sciences to determine the effectiveness of a small-group intervention to help young children with social-emotional and behavioral difficulties. Desiree W. Murray, FPG's associate director for research, will lead a team that will test The Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur Program to determine if it can improve outcomes for K–2 students with self-regulation challenges.

"Many children with these challenges need more intensive supports than are often available through schools," said Murray, who also administers training through FPG's Professional Development Center on The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Program.

"Early intervention is important because these children are at risk for frequent discipline referrals, academic underachievement, and conflict with peers and teachers that interferes with learning for themselves and other students."

Earlier this year, Murray was lead author on *Self-Regulation and Toxic Stress: Foundations for Understanding Self-Regulation from an Applied Developmental Perspective,* a report for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

According to the report, "Self-regulation is the act of managing cognition and emotion to enable goal-directed actions, such as organizing behavior, controlling impulses, and solving problems constructively." The present study will build on the report by examining a specific intervention delivered in North Carolina schools to strengthen self-regulation.

Murray explained that self-regulation is critical for children's success in early elementary school and serves as the foundation for lifelong wellbeing from emotional and mental health to academic achievement, physical health, and socioeconomic success.

The Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur Program teaches self-regulation, emotional awareness, social skills, and problem solving to groups of four to six. In a novel delivery approach, a study clinician will co-lead the groups with a school counselor twice a week for 45 minutes.

"The students view brief videos of children in different situations where social-emotional skills and self-regulation are modeled," Murray said. "Students also participate in discussions facilitated by life-sized puppets, and engage in role-play practices and small group activities."

Her research team will use data from teacher reports, classroom observations, direct child assessments, and school records to assess how effectively the program achieves its intended outcomes.

"Self-regulation responds to intervention," Murray said. "That makes it a powerful target for change."

Murray's report on self-regula-tion and toxic stress

http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/
self-regulation-and-tox-
ic-stress-foundations-understand-
ing-self-regulation-applied-develop

FPG Brings Proven Practices to N.C. Elementary Students with Autism

Six hundred elementary students in 60 schools across North Carolina will participate in a new study to test the effectiveness of a program to improve outcomes for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

"In the last 10 years, the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder has increased 200 percent," said FPG director Samuel L. Odom. "This study responds to a national need to help teachers to prepare effective, research-based educational programs for children with ASD."

Odom said principals, special education directors, and superintendents across the country report that their schools are teaching increasing numbers of students with ASD. "We've found that educators want to provide a good and effective educational experience, but they may not be sure where to start or what to do."

FPG scientist Ann W. Cox will serve as project director for the new study, which will document the effectiveness of school-based training developed at the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC). Agencies from 12 states and hundreds of teachers worldwide already have used the NPDC's model, which promotes program quality and teachers' use of evidence-based practices.

Last year, the NPDC released its much-anticipated update of evidence-based practices for children and youth with autism. FPG scientists spearheaded the project, screening 29,000 articles about autism spectrum disorder to locate the soundest research on interventions.

Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, FPG's new study will include North Carolina teachers, service providers, administrators, and other school staff. Odom explained the study will measure the students' social, communication, and academic skills, as well as how the NPDC's program affects challenging behavior.

He said FPG's research team also will look at how effectively teachers use evidence-based practices. "The challenge is to implement evidence-based practices widely. In the absence of implementation, even the most effective intervention will not yield better outcomes."

evidence-based practices for children and youth with autism

http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-poli-
cy-briefs/2014-EBP-Report.pdf

Kathleen Gallagher and the TED Talk They Keep Talking About

Before a sold-out TEDxUNC conference crowd earlier this year, FPG scientist Kathleen (Kate) Gallagher told the amazing story of the children who were part of the most famous study in early childhood—FPG's Abecedarian Project—and she explained the transformative power of high-quality early care and education. Gallagher extended the theme of this year's TED Talks at UNC, "Assembly Required," to what she called "the single most important feat of construction that our society undertakes...the assembly required to build physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially healthy children."

Her talk quickly became UNC's most popular of the year and one of the most watched TED Talks in the university's history. Organizers of a new TED event in Memphis soon invited her to deliver the sequel, which she did in late August, and the Academy of Education Arts and Sciences made her one of five finalists for its Education Policy/Researchers award. She also was invited to be part of Duke University's prestigious Sulzberger Distinguished Lecturer series.

Gallagher opened her TED Talk at UNC by recounting her early trepidations about entering the field: "As a senior in college studying early childhood education, I wondered if I should get licensed to teach elementary grades, to increase my employment prospects. My advisor reassured me, 'Any day now there will be public early childhood programs everywhere.' Thirty years later, only a fraction of children who most need it have access to high-quality early childhood programs."

She then turned to FPG's seminal Abecedarian Project: "This story begins with the amazing journey of 100 North Carolina babies born into poverty, whose life trajectories were altered with a single intervention: high-quality educational child care. They remain part of one of the world's most famous long-running studies of child development—the Abecedarian Project—and it started right here, in this town, at this university, at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG)."

Gallagher, who herself used the curriculum developed by the project when she was in her first years of teaching, explained that no one expected the effects that the researchers behind the Abecedarian Project have been able to document over the years for the children in the study who received high-quality early care.

"Individuals who experienced Abecedarian childcare outperformed their peers on intellectual measures and reading and math assessments through high school and into adulthood. Abecedarian childcare participants were less likely to be teen parents," she said. "By 21 years of age, only 40% of the non-participants were attending 4-year college or employed in skilled labor—compared to almost 70% of the Abecedarian children. This is 16 years AFTER their participation in high-quality childcare."

Gallagher said that as adults, the Abecedarian participants were less likely to experience depression, and that by age 30, they were more likely to hold a bachelor's degree and be employed."

Gallagher also recounted the study's extraordinary latest findings.

"By their mid-30s, Abecedarian participants had significantly better physical health than their peers. For example, among the males who had not received Abecedarian childcare, a quarter developed metabolic syndrome—a serious medical condition characterized by high blood pressure and obesity," she said. "None of the men who had received high-quality child care had developed this serious health problem."

But why—and how—does high quality early care and education have such a powerful and lasting impact? Gallagher explored what had made a difference for the Abecedarian children. She noted that research has revealed the importance of learning environments, language interactions, and trusting teacher-child relationships, and she recounted FPG's work on these fronts.

She then spoke about how early education benefits far more people than those who receive it.

"Evidence from the Abecedarian Project and other studies demonstrates that there is a financial return on investment as well," she said. "According to the Nobel prize-winning economist James Heckman, people who received the Abecedarian early childhood program saved societal support programs as much as $7 for every dollar spent on it. And economist Timothy Bartik provides compelling evidence that investment in high-quality early childhood programs will not just benefit participating children and families, but entire communities, and could be THE intervention that breaks the intergenerational cycle of poverty."

Gallagher concluded her TED Talk by looking at the state of early education.

"These days, my office is next door to that of Frances Campbell, one of the original researchers in the Abecedarian Project," she said. "But 30 years after my college advisor reassured me, the majority of our young children who live in poverty still don't receive high-quality early education."

Full text, images, and video of Kate Gallagher's TED Talk

http://fpg.unc.edu/news/ted-talk-they-keep-talking-about-power-high-quality-early-ed

Shaping Dialogue and Guiding Practice
Bringing Research to Real-World Solutions

Beyond conducting research, FPG actively contributes knowledge and expertise to enhance the lives of children and their families at home and abroad. Because scientific study drives positive outcomes for children and families only when evidence-based practices see successful implementation, support, and maintenance, many scientists at FPG also have dedicated much of their service to traversing that well-known valley between research and practical application. The following stories sample some of the many initiatives from FPG designed to heighten awareness and marry evidence-based practices with real-world solutions for children and families.

Federal officials at FPG's 2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute

FPG's Free Guide for Igniting Children's Communication Skills Reaches Its 50,000TH Reader

After completing a review of the latest science that revealed how early childhood educators can ignite the growth of language and communication skills in infants and toddlers, FPG's Nicole Gardner-Neblett and Kathleen Gallagher published their research-based recommendations online—and now their free guide has found its 50,000TH user.

"Early language and communication skills are crucial for children's success in school and beyond," said Gardner-Neblett when the guide was first published. "Children who develop strong language and communication skills are more likely to arrive at school ready to learn and are more likely to have higher levels of achievement."

According to Gardner-Neblett, principal investigator for the study, during the first years of life, children's brains are developing rapidly, laying the foundation for learning. The interactions children have with adults influence early brain growth and learning, giving early childhood educators a crucial opportunity to support language and communication.

With a grant from the PNC Foundation, Gardner-Neblett and Gallagher reviewed the current science and then streamlined their findings into ten recommended practices. *More Than Baby Talk: 10 Ways to Promote the Language and Communication Skills of Infants and Toddlers* recommends one-on-one and small-group interactions that are tried and tested to support the development of language and communication in infants and toddlers from a variety of backgrounds.

Each practice includes the science that supports it and examples of how to use it. The "Get Chatty" recommendation, for instance, suggests commenting on routines like hand-washing, as they occur: "We are washing our hands. We are making lots of big bubbles."

Educators also can use longer sentences, draw connections between children's lives and books, and use songs to tell stories. But while educators certainly can play key roles, they are not the only group that can make a marked difference for infants and toddlers.

"We think parents could use these same practices with their young children," said Gardner-Neblett. "By using these strategies at home, parents can provide children with the rich language exposure and opportunities they need to enhance their language and communication, helping them to achieve in preschool and beyond."

More Than Baby Talk
http://mtbt.fpg.unc.edu

FPG Director Joins Committee Supporting the Parents of Young Children

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences has appointed FPG director Samuel L. Odom to the Committee on Supporting the Parents of Young Children. According to the IOM, the committee will conduct research to "inform a national framework for strengthening the capacity of parents of young children birth to age 8."

The initial meeting of the committee was held in January at the National Academy of Sciences Building in Washington, D.C. During an open session on the first day, the committee discussed its charge and heard public comment.

As a member of the committee, Odom will continue to help pinpoint parenting knowledge, attitudes, and practices ("KAPs") that correlate with positive interactions between children and their parents—and with positive child outcomes. A key piece of the committee's mission will be to identify the evidence-based strategies that promote KAPs for a diverse array of populations.

The IOM says the committee's service will enable "a set of concrete policy recommendations, across the private and public sectors within the health, human services, and education systems." The committee will also note gaps in the research and, accordingly, recommend priorities for researchers moving forward.

Odom has written or co-written over 100 publications, and he has edited or co-edited ten books on early childhood intervention and developmental disabilities. Over the years, he explored topics related to early childhood inclusion and preschool readiness, before later focusing on autism spectrum disorder, the epicenter of his current projects.

He heads the pioneering Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, which is developing a comprehensive treatment model for high school students—the first of its kind. He also has served as principal investigator for the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder (NPDC).

According to the IOM, the Committee on Supporting the Parents of Young Children, with the help of Odom and its other members, will provide the country with a "roadmap for the future of parenting and family support policies, practices, and research."

The Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu

The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder
http://fpg.unc.edu/projects/national-professional-development-center-autism-spectrum-disorders

Building High-Quality Systems: The ECTA Center's New System Framework

They started with a fundamental goal: to identify what a state system needs to assemble to support evidence-based practices for young children with disabilities and their families. After 18 months of development, they created a comprehensive tool—the *System Framework*—designed to support states in building and sustaining high-quality early intervention and preschool special education systems.

"Essentially, we wanted to put together the content for states to be able to evaluate their systems and then use that data to plan for improvement," said Christina Kasprzak, co-director of FPG's Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA Center), which spearheaded the development of the framework. "We wanted to design a tool to help each state fully consider what it means to have a high-quality system."

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs funded the development of the *System Framework*. Katy McCullough, a technical assistance specialist at the ECTA Center, said that from the initial stages of building the framework,

the Center kept its eye on the end game: positive outcomes for children with disabilities and families receiving services under Part C and Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

"We started by asking *what actually has to be in place for that to happen?"* she said. "The answer: implementation of effective practices. Then, how do we ensure that those will be in place? Well, that's where the framework comes in."

According to Kasprzak, development of the framework included state coordinators from six partner states and dozens of additional experts and authorities, including core staff at the ECTA Center, other crucial personnel in the partner states, and a technical work group of renowned early childhood professionals.

"It was a huge team," said Kasprzak. "We wanted to make sure we heard as many voices as possible to help us come to consensus."

Kasprzak said the process started with a review of the literature and current research findings, as well as discussions with partner states. "We asked our partners if they had particular policies in place," she said. "If their policies were being implemented well. If they were evolving and being revisited, given new knowledge and research."

"It was an iterative process," said McCullough. "Part C and 619 folks were very active. For each component of the system we asked our partner states what they were trying to achieve and what quality meant in their contexts, and along the way we got some nice feedback, validating what we were doing, as well as some really good input that sparked us to revisit draft content."

The ECTA Center and its collaborators organized the System Framework around six interrelated components: "governance," "finance," "personnel/workforce," "accountability and quality improvement," "quality standards,"and "data system." Kasprzak and McCullough credited the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) with developing the framework's "data system" component (see below).

In partnership with the DaSy Center, the ECTA Center also has developed a corresponding self-assessment for the framework to assist states as they evaluate their Part C and Section 619 systems.

"We hope that rich conversations will happen in states around the framework content," Kasprzak said. "States can use the framework and the self-assessment to identify areas for improvement."

The ECTA Center's *System Framework*
http://ectacenter.org/sysframe

Strengthening Capacity of State Data Systems

State data systems can overwhelm both public and private programs and organizations, but the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) has developed a new framework for an effective statewide data system for early intervention and preschool special education.

According to Martha Diefendorf, former co-lead of DaSy Technical Assistance Planning and Coordination, helping to improve services for every child means being able to answer key questions.

"Where do kids do better?" she said. "Which children have better outcomes when they enter preschool? What are the characteristics of effective programs? What are the characteristics of the workforce that predict the best outcomes?"
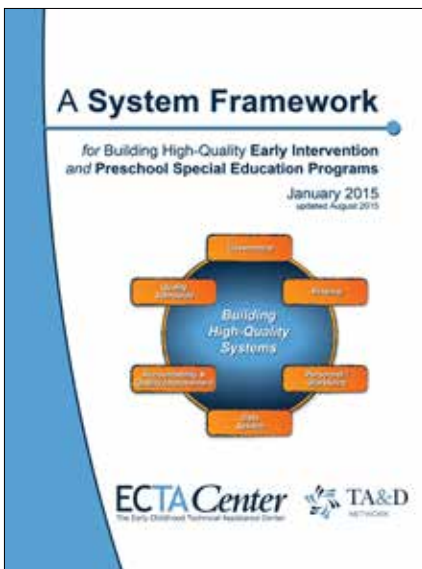
Martha Diefendorf, who retired this year as co-lead of DaSy Technical Assistance Planning and Coordination

Diefendorf, who retired this year, noted that with the right tools and strategies, the answers to these and many other critical questions can arise from the wide array of data compiled by state early intervention (Part C) and preschool special education programs (Section 619) supported through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

"States want to improve their data sets," said Diefendorf. "DaSy helps them focus on the quality and depth of their data and on building new linkages with data from other programs."

The Office of Special Education Programs funded the DaSy Center, which is a multi-institutional collaborative effort to work with state Part C and 619 coordinators and data managers, local administrators, technical assistance specialists, and others. DaSy tailors its support to be responsive to needs of states of different sizes and with different structures, but the end goal always remains the same: helping to arm decision-makers with the right information to improve programs for young children with special needs.

Despite the numerous complexities involved in building a useful data system, Diefendorf said FPG's rich history of technical assistance successes makes her optimistic. Part of Diefendorf's optimism also comes from DaSy's strong partnership with seven states to develop the *DaSy Data System Framework.* This new resource, including a corresponding self-assessment, provides a guiding structure for technical assistance and a valuable reference for states when they assess key aspects of their data system and plan for coordination.

"In the end, states will be able to build better systems of services and programs," Diefendorf said. "And that can improve outcomes for young children with disabilities and for their families."

DaSy Data System Framework
http://dasycenter.org/framework/index.html

FPG's Ximena Franco Discusses the Benefits of Bilingualism

This past spring, FPG's Ximena Franco discussed the latest research on the benefits of early childhood immersion in a second language and the benefits of bilingualism in general. Her presentation was part of "Mi Escuelita Crece" ("My Little School is Growing"), a free event at The Arts Center in Carrboro, North Carolina, in order to help educate the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community about the significant lifetime benefits of dual-language learning in early childhood and to raise money for a scholarship fund for the Mi Escuelita preschool.

Several months ago, the Foundation for Child Development produced "Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education," a research brief in collaboration with the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), on which FPG senior scientist Margaret Burchinal was co-author. The brief concluded "preschool programs that systematically integrate both the children's home language and English language development promote achievement in the home language as well as English language development." The SRCD brief further explained that "home language development does not appear to come at the cost of developing English language skills, but rather strengthens them. Thus, programs that intentionally use both languages

can promote emergent bilingualism, a characteristic that may be valuable in later development."

More recently, FPG fellow Elizabeth R. Crais, FPG scientist Kirsten L. Kainz, and their co-authors published a study that found "benefits of strategically combining the first and second language to promote English and Spanish vocabulary development" among dual-language learners.

Franco herself has more than 10 years of experience in clinical, life-span developmental psychology, and applied research. Most of this experience stems from working with ethnically diverse children and families within clinic, school, and community settings, and she has served in key roles on seminal FPG projects studying dual-language learners. She also co-authored "The Role of Early Care and Education in the Development of Young Latino Dual Language Learners" in the first volume of *Latina and Latino Children's Mental Health.*

At Mi Escuelita school, Spanish-speaking children are supported in maintaining their native language and cultural traditions, while English-speaking children develop a strong foundation for a second language and exposure to a variety of cultural traditions.

"Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education"
http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/FCD_Evidence-Base-on-Preschool-Education_2013.pdf

New Measure Points to Better Classrooms for North Carolina Children with Disabilities

A pilot study in 51 North Carolina classrooms shows the effectiveness of a new observational measure in assessing the quality of practices in inclusive preschools. Not only is the *Inclusive Classroom Profile* (ICP) a reliable instrument, researchers say it also reveals the types of inclusive settings that may be best serving preschoolers with disabilities.

"Inclusion encourages active participation and a sense of belonging and membership for all children, with and without disabilities, who learn and develop in the same classroom," explained the study's lead author Elena P. Soukakou, senior lecturer at the University of Roehampton in London. "This is an important aim of early childhood education."

Soukakou, who developed the ICP as part of her dissertation study at Oxford University, explained that research already exists that can help programs to enhance the quality of their inclusive settings.

"We know that specialized instructional techniques and the use of assistive technology will support the development and learning of young children with disabilities in inclusive settings," Soukakou said. "We also know that a range of factors—such as program standards, professional development, and resources—are likely to affect the quality of inclusive classrooms."

Federal and state laws and policies mandate inclusion for young children with disabilities. However, a 2014 report from the Office of Special Education Programs informed Congress that less than two-thirds of all preschool children with disabilities who were served under the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act were enrolled for some amount of time in regular early childhood settings.

Co-author Pamela J. Winton, chair of the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute (more below), explained that in order for inclusion to succeed, administrators, specialists, teachers, and families must actively collaborate to meet the needs of children with disabilities. "And studies show that when we do it right, inclusion benefits all children—those with and without disabilities."

Winton said that thanks to the ICP, researchers now can capture important information about what's happening on the ground. Each of the instrument's 12 items elicits ratings of research-backed practices to

"Nor have they had systematic technical assistance related to serving children with disabilities, which has been more widely available historically to the other programs," said West, who delivers training on the ICP through FPG's Professional Development Center (The PDC@FPG).

"The most meaningful purpose of any classroom quality assessment system is to support teaching and practice," Soukakou said. "My hope is that the ICP will not only help people in assessing the quality of implemented inclusive practices, but also in identifying areas for improvement and developing relevant action plans to support the needs of all the diverse learners included in early childhood classrooms."

see how much a program's staff adapts the classroom's environment, activities, and instructional support in ways that encourage the active participation of each child with disabilities.

Soukakou trained experienced raters who then took the ICP to inclusive preschools serving 2–5-year-olds in 46 counties across North Carolina, where the raters used the measure to observe classrooms in which one or more children had an identified disability.

"Head Start and public pre-k settings significantly outscored the licensed child care programs," she said of the inclusive preschool environments. "Developmental day programs scored highest of all."

In North Carolina, developmental day programs are certified to provide specialized services to children with identified disabilities, include at least one staff member who holds certification or licensure issued from the state's Department of Public Instruction, and meet teacher-child ratio requirements. Co-author Tracey West, an investigator at FPG, said better quality of inclusive practices at Head Start, public pre-k, and developmental day settings could be a result of child care programs never having had a direct mandate or mission associated with serving children with disabilities.

FPG's workshops on using the *Inclusive Classroom Profile*
http://pdc.fpg.unc.edu/using-inclusive-classroom-profile-proficiency

FPG's National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute at the Epicenter of New Federal Policy

On May 12TH at a special plenary federal panel at the 2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services debuted a draft policy statement with recommendations to states, local educational agencies, schools, and public and private early childhood programs for increasing the inclusion of infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities in high-quality early childhood programs.

"The federal interagency policy statement on inclusion is a significant milestone for all of us in the field of early development and education," said FPG's Pamela J. Winton, chair of the Inclusion Institute.

Special plenary federal panel at the 2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute

After debuting the draft policy statement at the Inclusion Institute and incorporating feedback from multiple stakeholders, federal officials finalized the new policy over the summer. According to their Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, "all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations."

"Inclusion has stalled in terms of implementation," Winton said. "This new policy statement explicitly identifies a research-based roadmap for states and local communities to jumpstart progress toward making high-quality inclusive options a reality for all young children with disabilities—and it also aims to help their families."

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the release of the new policy statement in Kansas City during the first stop of the department's sixth annual back-to-school bus tour.

"As our country continues to move forward on the critical task of expanding access to high-quality early learning programs for all children, we must do everything we can to ensure that children with disabilities are part of that," Duncan said. "States, school districts, local organizations, communities and families must work together so that children with disabilities have access to programs that offer individualized and appropriate help in meeting high expectations."

The new statement calls for improving infrastructure and offering professional development to strengthen and increase the number of inclusive high-quality early childhood programs nationwide. Winton and her colleagues have created innovative online professional development that hundreds of thousands of people around the globe have used. Most recently, for practitioners with young children, she spearheaded development of CONNECT Courses, new self-guided learning that awards continuing education units and that several states also approve for training.

In addition to noting FPG's CONNECT online learning, the federal policy statement also highlights key resources from FPG's Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and FPG's National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. FPG also provides training on using the *Inclusive Classroom Profile* (see above).

FPG's CONNECT Courses on Inclusion
http://connect.fpg.unc.edu/connect-courses

FPG's Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
http://ectacenter.org

FPG's Training on the Inclusive Classroom Profile
http://pdc.fpg.unc.edu/using-inclusive-classroom-profile-proficiency

The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion
http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu

National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute Features Pioneering Mother-Daughter Team

FPG's 2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute featured a formidable and multi-talented mother-daughter team renowned for their research, service, and advocacy. Ann Turnbull, co-founder of the University of Kansas's Beach Center on Disability, and daughter Kate Turnbull, a mindfulness coach who works with children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, delivered the keynote address at the popular three-day conference and played key roles in several other Institute offerings.

The special education field has long hailed Ann Turnbull as a leading researcher on family support, family quality of life, family-professional partnerships, and other subjects—but national and international family networks also know the Beach Distinguished Professor Emerita as a visionary and relentless advocate and leader. She said she was excited to co-present the keynote address with daughter Kate because of Kate's insights about having grown up with her brother Jay (1967–2009), who had multiple disabilities.

"What happens to siblings becomes part of their being," Ann said. At earlier Inclusion Institutes, Ann had talked about her family's quest to support Jay in having an "enviable life." This was the first time, though, that Kate shared her own journey with Jay.

"Siblings need an emotional adaptability that most 5–9 year-olds don't have the full capacity for," said Kate, who had delivered a stunning eulogy when Jay passed in 2009. During the keynote, which focused on launching siblings of children with disabilities into lives full of well-being, Kate made recommendations about how families and practitioners could nurture sibling relationships.

Afterward, Ann and Kate served as co-facilitators for a special opening day panel that continued the discussion on siblings and families. They each also contributed to one of the conference's dozens of concurrent sessions. Based on Ann's decades of research and leadership, she delivered a session on "Empathetic Communication"; Kate, drawing on the importance of mindfulness in her adult life and her experience using it with children, presented "Focusing Attention: Mindfulness Training for Young Children with Self-Regulation Challenges."

The Inclusion Institute is the premier event for people from all early childhood sectors to come together to learn, share, and problem-solve about inclusion for young children. The 2015 conference sold out months in advance.

FPG's National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute
http://inclusioninstitute.fpg.unc.edu

FPG's Autism Team Offers Free Online Learning: AFIRM Modules

In June, FPG launched AFIRM Modules to teach the step-by-step process of planning for, using, and monitoring an evidence-based practice with learners with autism up to age 22.

Each AFIRM module includes engaging case examples that demonstrate the behavior or practice in use, audio and video clips, and interactive assessments that provide feedback based on responses. In addition, supplemental materials and handouts are available to download. Users learn key components of each evidence-based practice, including the various approaches that can address specific behaviors and skills of learners with autism spectrum disorder.

The initial launch included modules for "Peer-Mediated Instruction and Intervention" and "Prompting." Peer-mediated instruction and intervention supports positive and meaningful social interactions between peers and learners with autism; prompting reduces incorrect responding as learners acquire new skills.

New AFIRM modules for other evidence-based practices are now available, too. "Reinforcement" increases the likelihood that a learner on the autism spectrum will perform a target skill or behavior in the future. "Time Delay" systematically fades prompts during instructional activities, and "Visual Supports" help learners focus on key elements.

The Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education funds the AFIRM project.

AFIRM Modules
http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules

FPG director Samuel L. Odom at the annual research conference of Ireland's National Council on Special Education

FPG Director Odom Warns Against "Snake Oil Salesmen" of Treatments for Autism

FPG director Samuel L. Odom traveled to Dublin late last year to tout the importance of evidence-based programs for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder for the annual research conference of Ireland's National Council on Special Education (NCSE).

Based in part on Odom's work, the NCSE planned to give formal policy advice to Ireland's Minister for Education and Skills on the education of students with ASD. As a result, Odom's special session drew interest from Irish newspapers and radio.

On *Newstalk,* a popular Irish current affairs radio program, Odom explained some of the challenges facing parents with children with ASD, such as "snake-oil salesmen" who hawk unproven treatments, and he emphasized that evidence-based practices can markedly improve children's lives.

For the *Irish Times,* Odom's message included a focus on young adults with ASD who have completed their schooling: "In the U.S., parents of children with autism

face a real challenge when they graduate from high school and go into the community. We do know the outcomes for those individuals are often very poor."

In another article for the *Times,* he termed base-less interventions "the Dark Arts," explaining that "parents want the best for their children and many of these treatments cost lots of money. And to be pulled into a treatment that has very little evidence of efficacy, I think, is a dark thing to do."

In addition, the *Irish Examiner* noted Odom's criticism at the conference of "attempts by some groups to endorse alternative approaches which do nothing and can even damage the children involved."

Earlier in the year, the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders had released its much-anticipated update on evidence-based practices for children and youth with autism. FPG scientists spearheaded the project, screening 29,000 articles about autism spectrum disorder to locate the soundest research on interventions for children up to age 22.

"More children than ever are being diagnosed with autism," said Odom when the report was published. "We're catching them earlier, with better tools, and these children need the right services."

the report on evidence-based practices for children and youth with ASD
http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/2014-EBP-Report.pdf

Young Adults with Autism Call for Higher Expectations

Earlier this summer, the annual meeting for researchers affiliated with the Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (CSESA) included a five-person panel of young adults with autism, who spoke about challenges they faced in high school and as new job seekers.

FPG's Kara Hume thanks a panelist at CSESA's Annual Meeting.

Their message: "Raise the bar."

The U.S. Department of Education funded CSESA to develop, adapt, and study a comprehensive school-and-community-based education program for high school students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In addition to scientists from FPG, researchers from six other universities collaborate with schools, businesses, families, and adolescents with ASD to build and study the high school program, which supports optimal outcomes for students before and after graduation.

FPG scientist Kara Hume, who serves as CSESA co-principal investigator, said the young panelists energized the CSESA team and provided engaging insights about their high school experiences.

"They never complained about some of the complexities of high school that often create added challenges for students with autism spectrum disorder," said Hume. "Instead, they repeatedly said they felt that expectations were too low for them, and 'raising the bar' was a consistent theme of their discussions."

Hume said CSESA is committed to partnering with communities to create post-secondary opportunities for people with autism spectrum disorder. She serves on the board of Persever8, a Chapel Hill nonprofit group

that offers access to technology instruction in order to prepare high school, community college, and university graduates with training for living-wage employment.

Persever8's goals include creating opportunities in the tech sector, helping people with ASD navigate the workplace culture through job skills education, and teaching life skills to educate and prepare people for the responsibilities and demands of independent adult life.

"Some of the panelists at CSESA's annual meeting did note that they sometimes had felt unseen in high school or didn't want to interact with people who didn't share their interests," Hume said. "An additional benefit for Persever8 participants is the opportunity for them to form lasting, supportive friendships with one another."

ASD affects different people in different ways and includes many talents and strengths. Persever8 touts its participants as possessing an affinity for technology, strong visual thinking and learning skills, and the ability to concentrate for extended periods of time on repetitive activities—among several other skills employers find useful.

"For CSESA researchers, hearing the panelists was our reward for doing what we do," Hume said. "And it reminded us yet again how much people with autism spectrum disorder have to offer our communities."

Center on Secondary Education for Students with
Autism Spectrum Disorder
http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu

FPG's Professional Development Center Provides Training Packages to Support Teachers and Practitioners with Student Motivation and Classroom Behavior

The PDC@FPG has been offering professionals training packages that include intensive workshops with follow-up technical assistance. Two of these target teachers and other practitioners whose work

benefits students in elementary school: "Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management Group Leader Training" and "Student Motivation and Engagement: Informing Classroom Practice."

FPG's associate director for research, Desiree W. Murray, leads training for professionals who in turn train teachers in the evidence-based Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management Program, which is used in early childhood and elementary classrooms for children ages 3–8.

The program strengthens teachers' classroom management skills, promotes children's competence and school readiness, and reduces classroom aggression and disruptive behaviors.

Additionally, the curriculum helps teachers effectively collaborate with parents to support their school involvement and promote consistency between home and school. Teachers also report decreased stress levels after attending the training.

Adam Holland, an investigator with FPG's First-School PreK-3 initiative, leads "Student Motivation and Engagement: Informing Classroom Practice" for pre-k and elementary teachers, principals, and state and district administrators. Through a one-day face-to-face workshop and ongoing technical assistance, they learn research-based strategies for promoting students' motivation and engagement in the context of classroom instruction.

The workshop focuses on problems with how teachers use old ideas in classrooms today, new understandings of motivation, and addressing such topics as tattling, bathroom time, lining up, and persistent misbehavior. Participants also raise and discuss issues.

The PDC@FPG will offer both training packages again next year and will announce times and dates in 2016.

The PDC@FPG

http://pdc.fpg.unc.edu

FPG's Implementation Scientists Strengthen State Departments of Education

FPG's State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-Based Programs Center (SISEP) establishes and strengthens the capacity for action in state departments of education by supporting the infrastructure and mechanisms necessary to produce significant student outcomes.

Dean Fixsen, co-director of the SISEP Center

Research points to implementation capacity as the missing component in efforts to move national and state policy into effective action in districts, schools, and classrooms. According to SISEP co-director Dean Fixsen, research also shows that people on the ground often have little implementation knowledge, skill, or expertise—and there also is little use of or support for "implementation teams."

"Organized and effective implementation teams make a big difference," Fixsen said. These teams consist of a minimum of 3–5 people who are accountable for guiding the implementation of an initiative through each stage of the process. "Without implementation teams, districts, schools, and states are left to their own imaginations to figure out implementation science and best practices." (For full background on implementation teams, see the online learning module: http://tinyurl.com/ImTeams.)

Fixsen explained that to bring evidence-based practices into schools effectively, states need an infrastructure that relies on implementation teams at regional, district, and building levels, with education employees and partners fulfilling these teams' roles and functions. At each level of the infrastructure, implementation teams can apply crucial expertise to develop implementation capacity, relying on principles and practices of implementation science to rapidly assess and adjust to unique conditions.

Fixsen noted the particular importance of implementation teams at the regional level within states.

"On average, each state education department attempts to support 280 school districts, yet research contains no example in which a 1-to-280 management ratio works effectively," he said. "By addressing this gap in the organizational structure through making use of regional implementation teams, each state's responsibility becomes manageable."

According to Fixsen, SISEP has learned through its work with states that rapid development of regional implementation teams is crucial to take advantage of political will to engage in systemic change and to begin to uncover obstacles to that change.

"Inability to develop regional implementation teams was a major impediment in two states that altogether have ceased attempting to build implementation capacity," Fixsen said.

SISEP developed the "State Capacity Assessment" (SCA) to measure statewide progress.

"Two of the five states from our initial group of partners demonstrated significant gains on the SCA," said Fixsen. "And this showed the potential for a state to develop a very competently functioning infrastructure within five years."

He added that scores on an analogous assessment of capacity at the district level revealed the importance of regional implementation teams. "Without support

from a regional implementation team, districts failed to progress at all."

Fixsen also said that states from SISEP's second group of partners are benefiting from lessons learned from the first group as SISEP continually adapts its work. "The second group of states improved substantially after only 18 months," he said. "And they continue to progress rapidly."

State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-Based Programs Center
http://sisep.fpg.unc.edu

FPG's Allison Metz, director of NIRN

FPG's National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) Expands Its Agenda

"This is an exciting time for NIRN to continue building the science and practice of implementation and achieving social impact globally," said NIRN director Allison Metz. "Fresh off an exciting Global Implementation Conference, we all realize there is lots of new work on the horizon."

Metz said NIRN will continue building implementation capacity with the Active Implementation Frameworks, as well as to share lessons, tools, and resources through the growing online Active Implementation Hub.

"NIRN's research agenda is also growing with focuses in several areas," Metz explained. "Recent emphasis has been on developing and testing implementation capacity measures for different levels of complex service systems. This includes assessing the relationships among implementation capacity, high fidelity implementation of program of practices, and positive outcomes."

Caryn Ward, senior implementation specialist at NIRN, said NIRN's sound measures of implementation capacity and other constructs are essential to forming and guiding capacity building efforts.

"Our current capacity measurement efforts have also included developing resources for building competency of administrators. For example, District Capacity Assessment now has an online training short course for administrators of the assessment," said Ward.

According to Metz, NIRN also is studying the roles of stakeholders and relationships in supporting the use of research evidence through co-creation processes.

"Co-creation unites potential stakeholders to create an outcome they all value," Metz explained. "Co-created value occurs, for instance, when researchers, policy makers, service providers, and communities come together to select, implement, and sustain programs and practices that will address needs and improve outcomes."

Two new NIRN projects are taking on the challenge of looking at the potential of co-creation and implementation science.

"Implementation science and field knowledge are growing at a rapid pace," Metz emphasized. "NIRN looks forward to continuing to learn together with our partners around the globe to improve outcomes across the spectrum of human services."

National Implementation Research Network
http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu

FPG Partners with Spanish-Immersion Elementary School to Solve Class Participation Mystery

When the principal of a North Carolina Spanish-immersion elementary school approached FPG with a mystery, a groundbreaking new project was born. FPG researchers Doré R. LaForett and Ximena Franco have been examining how the elementary school's language immersion program affects different students' academic engagement and social networks.

"The principal had noticed something that immediately got our attention," LaForett explained. "She said it seemed to her that students whose home language was Spanish weren't participating in class as much as she thought they would—even when teachers primarily taught in Spanish."

According to LaForett, if in fact this were the case, it could contradict theory and expectations about Spanish-speaking learners in immersion classrooms. As a result, LaForett and Franco launched a partnership with the elementary school on the "Social Networks and Academic Engagement in a Bilingual Education" project.

"We followed 340 pre-K to 5TH-grade students," explained Franco, who also has served as project director for a multi-site study on the relationship between language exposure and language development of bilingual children. "The school employs a variety of models across classrooms, ranging from full immersion, majority Spanish instruction with some English instruction, and a 50–50 English-Spanish mix, which varies by grade level and subject."

In addition to conducting their own classroom observations, LaForett and Franco gathered data from teachers and children. "We're looking at which students hang out with whom and which students actually are participating in class," said LaForett, who has been involved in several research projects and initiatives focused on young dual-language learners and their families. "We're even asking the students to tell us who they consider to be good students."

In the end, the researchers hope to answer questions about home language, the language of instruction, peer networks, and classroom participation—and how these pieces of the puzzle fit together. "No one else is doing this," LaForett said.

According to Franco, the mixture of instructional models and grade-levels has made data analysis more time-consuming, but the researchers expect to share preliminary findings with the school in late 2015.

Debra Skinner
Chronicles the Cutting Edge:
Ethics and the Promise of New Genomic Medicine

"There are famous chronicles of the discovery of the double helix or of the making of penicillin," FPG senior scientist Debra Skinner said. "This is one of those times: I get to chronicle genomic medicine as it's being formed."

For three years, Skinner and FPG post-doc Kelly Raspberry have worked on the North Carolina Clinical Genomic Evaluation by Next-Generation Exome Sequencing (NCGENES) project at UNC, which is establishing best practices for the use of genomic technologies in medical practice. They study the social and cultural aspects of clinical exome sequencing, a new option for medical professionals that sequences their patients' DNA in order to diagnose the genetic cause of illnesses and their potential courses of treatment.

Analysis of the whole human exome, which constitutes about 1% of the genome, costs less than analyzing the entire genome while offering most of the same clinically relevant information. Not only can whole exome sequencing provide insight into patients' current conditions, it can even forecast conditions patients may suffer from later.

"The clinical application of genomic knowledge is just beginning," Skinner explained. "When we started the project, this application mostly was being done as research, but in the last three years, it's moved into clinical medicine."

NCGENES brings whole exome sequencing to a wide variety of children and adults, including underrepresented populations. Other tests have failed to diagnose the cause of the conditions of the several-hundred patients enrolled in the project, each of whom researchers suspect has a genetic disorder. "These are people who've already been through other forms of genetic testing," Skinner said, "and NCGENES researchers are trying to discover that rare genetic variant that points to an explanation."

From a single vial of blood, whole exome sequencing can examine tens of thousands of genetic variants and find one that causes a single, particular disease. Not only is the project evaluating the usefulness and effectiveness of whole exome sequencing—and diagnosing many previously un-diagnosable patients along the way—NCGENES is documenting the effects on patients who sometimes learn new and potentially life-altering information in addition to their diagnostic result.

This is where Skinner's expertise comes into play. As a sociocultural and medical anthropologist, she captures what she calls "the ethnography of the result." She and Raspberry catalog the social and technical factors that go

into the making of a genomic result, following that result as researchers interpret it and clinicians communicate it to patients—and documenting its impact on patients' lives.

Skinner, director of FPG's Qualitative/Ethnographic Methods and Analysis Core, has taken on many seminal roles on projects that have helped young children and their families—including earlier projects that looked at the implications of genetic disease for families and their children. On the NCGENES project, she has been privy to insider discussions as researchers worked to devise standards and best practices related to clinical exome sequencing.

"There has been a tremendous amount of labor in deciding what genetic variants to report to patients," she said. "Do we report only the pathological variants related to the person's illness? What's our obligation to look for secondary findings—variants unrelated to the person's illness but that could cause another disease?"

From the beginning, the NCGENES project team has been aware of the ethical questions raised by the magnitude of potential information available through sequencing. The considerations can become extremely complicated, especially because sequencing generates secondary or incidental findings—information that wasn't the object of a diagnostic search.

"Our people at UNC have been very instrumental in classifying the information that whole exome sequencing generates," Skinner said. "For the diagnostic information they ask: can this variant explain your disease, or do I reasonably think it can? They also look for and return other secondary information for conditions that are medically treatable. NCGENES participants are told that if sequencing detects these conditions—for example, a mutation that's 80% likely to cause colon cancer and early death—they will be informed, because screenings can be done that may well prevent the cancer's onset."

At FPG, Skinner previously has studied parent experiences in a pediatric genetics clinic, and last year she wrapped up work on a project that examined families' responses to newborn screening for Fragile X Syndrome.

"We've had—and continue to have—many projects at FPG that conduct family studies and look at the development of children with disabilities, and my role on NCGENES fits squarely into that tradition," she said. "The parents enrolled in NCGENES have had a lot of experiences with their child's disabilities, but they don't know what the genetic cause is. We want to know what difference getting the diagnostic results from sequencing makes for them. And how do they use that information?"

more about Debra Skinner and NCGENES

http://fpg.unc.edu/news/chronicling-cutting-edge-ethics-and-promise-new-genomic-medicine

Projects

FPG is one of the nation's oldest and largest multidisciplinary centers devoted to the study of young children and their families. Over 300 researchers, implementation and technical assistance specialists, staff, and students worked on dozens of projects during the past fiscal year across seven major areas of emphasis: developmental disabilities; early care and education; physical and social health; professional development, technical assistance, and implementation science; public policy and evaluation; the international initiative; and racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity.

Each FPG project has its own story to tell. What follows is a compendium of the past year's active projects, through which FPG continues to enhance the lives of children and families.

- A Family-Genetic Study of Autism and Fragile X Syndrome
- A Family-Genetic Study of Language in Autism
- A Gathering of Leaders
- A Neuroscience-Based Health Curriculum to Promote Academic Success
- A Study of Child Care Settings in Multiple Communities
- An Epidemiological and Longitudinal Study of Rural Child Literacy Trajectories
- ASD Toddler Initiative: Promoting the Use of Evidence-Based Practices for Toddlers with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Building Implementation Capacity to Promote and Support Evidence-Based Home Visitation in Washington
- CalSTAT Project
- Capacity Building and Evaluation to Support the Implementation of Healthy Places North Carolina
- Center for Early Care and Education Research– Dual Language Learners
- Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems
- Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Child Care and Early Education Quality Features, Thresholds, Dosage, and Child Outcomes Study Design
- Children Living in Rural Poverty: Phase 3 of the Family Life Project
- Collaboration between Easter Seals UCP of North Carolina and the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
- CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge
- Delaware Higher Education Project
- Development of a Computerized Assessment of Executive Function for Preschool-Aged Children
- Diversity Learning Table 2
- Early Childhood Development Secondary Data Analysis Project
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

- Educare Follow-up Studies
- Educare Learning Network's Data Utilization Study
- Evaluation of Georgia's Pre-Kindergarten Professional Development Initiative
- Evaluation of Shape NC Phase II
- Evaluation of Smart Start's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Child Care Health Consultant Project
- Evaluation of Supporting Change and Reform in Inclusive Personnel Preparation
- Evaluation of the 2015 Rising Pre-Kindergarten Summer Transition Program
- Evaluation of the Head Start Designation Renewal System
- Evaluation of the Mississippi Child Care Quality Stars Program
- Evaluation of the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program
- Evaluation of Wake County Public School System's "Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL) Coaching: Building Capacity and Ensuring Fidelity"
- FirstSchool Online Education and Support: Inquiry and Equity in PreK through Third Grade
- FirstSchool Online Education and Support: NC Partnership
- FirstSchool Support for Demonstration Classrooms
- From Evaluation to Inquiry
- Georgia Early Childhood Program Evaluation Project
- Georgia Pre-Kindergarten Evaluation
- IDEA Data Center
- Illinois QRIS Validation and Child Outcomes Study
- Immigrant Parents and Children in Transitions: Cultural Models and U.S. Early Childhood Education
- Implementation Evaluation of the Triple P System in Two North Carolina Counties
- Improving Social-Communication and Engagement of Elementary Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Adapting a Preschool Intervention for Elementary School Classrooms

- Introducing Students with High Functioning Autism to
  Peer Social Networks
- Joint Attention Mediated Learning Intervention for Toddlers with
  Autism Spectrum Disorders and Their Families
- Mid-South Regional Resource Center
- Montana Maternal and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MECHV)
  Evaluation
- More Than Baby Talk: Improving Child Care Providers' Capacity to
  Promote Infant/Toddler Language and Communications
- National Evaluation Partner for the
  Educare Learning Network Implementation Study
- North Carolina Early Learning Network
- North Carolina Family Survey Project
- North Carolina Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant
  Transformation Zone Evaluation
- North Carolina Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Support
- Nuestros Niños Program: Promoting School Readiness for
  Dual Language Learners
- Online Module Development of Evidence-Based Practices for
  Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Partnership in Using Implementation Science to Improve
  Implementation of Evidence-Based Home Visiting in Montana
- Partnership in Using Implementation Science to Improve
  Outcomes for Children and Families
- Postdoctoral Research Training Fellowship in
  Early Childhood Education Sciences
- Preschool Special Education Evaluation Project
- Project to Provide Implementation Support for
  Permanency Innovations Initiative Grantees
- Promoting the Use of Evidence-Based Practices for Children and
  Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Their Families in
  Saudi Arabia
- Provincial System Support Program Expert Consultation
- Ready Classrooms
- Recognition and Response: Addressing Early Learning Difficulties in
  Math through an RTI Model for Pre-K
- Reliability Training for Three Participants
- Reliability Training on the Inclusive Classroom Profile for the
  Early CHOICES Project
- SCRIPP
- SERP OUSD Partnership
- SISEP-NCDPI-OEL
- Snapshot Data Collection Project
- STARNET Region IV: Reliability Training on the
  Inclusive Classroom Profile
- State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-Based Practices
  (SISEP) Center
- Stress Exposure and Immune Outcomes in Children
- Stress, Self-Regulation and Psychopathology in Middle Childhood
- Study of EHS-CC Partnerships-Services Component 1:
  Knowledge Base and TOC Model

- Summarizing Abecedarian Over Time
- Supporting Change and Reform in Preservice Teaching in
  North Carolina (SCRIPT-NC)
- Tacoma Community College Paraeducator Project
- Teacher Leaders in Early Intervention/Early Childhood
  Special Education
- Technical Support to CDC EHDI Team on Part C Programs
- Testing the Effectiveness of Interactive Writing in the
  Targeted Reading Intervention in an Urban School
- The Early Childhood Outcomes Center
- The Partners Project: Working Together to Enhance
  Inclusive Early Childhood Environments
- The Role of Behavioral and Instructional Match in the Prediction of
  Early Classroom Engagement and Academic Achievement
- The Targeted Reading Intervention: A Web-Based Professional
  Development Program Targeting K-1 Classroom Teachers and
  Their Struggling Readers
- Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS)
- Toddlers and Families Together:
  Addressing Early Core Features of Autism
- Train the Trainer Professional Development Sequence
- UNC-Charlotte Targeted Reading Intervention Training
- Vermont Early Childhood Consultant
- Vermont FirstSchool Partnership
- WRRC TA Project

more about FPG's projects

http://fpg.unc.edu/projects

Barbara H. Wasik Serves as Acting Director

While director Samuel L. Odom was on research leave during the Spring 2015 semester, FPG fellow Barbara H. Wasik stepped in to serve as acting director. Her scholarship and service on FPG's behalf already have proven invaluable for decades—almost since the Institute's earliest days when its home was a collection of trailers. Among her many projects, she worked with pioneers from FPG's seminal Abecedarian Project in the 1970s on an experimental study of daycare and home visiting, and today, this William R. Kenan, Jr. Distinguished Professor's work continues to advance the field.

Wasik bases her scholarship on an ecological framework, which recognizes how environmental factors interact with personal characteristics to influence behavior, and she has become a national leader in developing interventions for children who are at risk of school failure. Her interventions address a wide range of concerns, including children's social and emotional development, as well as language and literacy development. Within all her work, she has focused on assessment concerns, leading to the development of a number of instruments. She was one of the first researchers to study children's behavior in classrooms, using systematic observational procedures.

During FPG's Carolina Approach to Responsive Education (Project CARE) from 1977 to 1982, Wasik partnered with FPG researchers Craig Ramey, Joseph Sparling, and Donna Bryant. She developed a home-based intervention to help parents learn coping and problem solving skills, an intervention that became the basis for her interest in home visiting. Her early experiences led her to recognize that home visitors received little preparation for their work with families, and she became committed to addressing this gap.

"The lead home visitor in Project CARE was Carrie Bynum, a social worker by training," Wasik said, "but most of the individuals who were providing home visiting in Project CARE had not received training for this role." As a result, efforts shifted to helping the visitors develop the skills necessary for effective home visiting. This work, taking place in the late 1970s, was one of the first efforts in the country to recognize the importance of training and supervision for home visitors.

With other FPG investigators, she also developed the home visiting component of the national experimental study, the Infant Health and Development Program conducted in eight sites around the country in the 1980s. Her experience with Project CARE and other research have pointed to key elements in supporting effective home visiting.

"Targeting the supervisors of home visitors with information and professional development helps them to understand the importance of training home visitors, monitoring implementation, and having hiring guidelines in place that bring in people who are best-suited for the role," she said.

Despite its many challenges, Wasik explained that the home visiting model also offers advantages. Home visits have the potential to be more family-centered and culturally responsive than other services. They also reduce barriers, such as child care and transportation.

"It is a service that reaches out to individuals in their own homes; it lets families know they are valued," Wasik said.

Wasik's research and service have included consulting for several national organizations, serving on national boards, and holding office in state and national organizations. For the American Psychological Association, she was chair of the Board of Educational Affairs, a member of the Council of Representatives, and chair of the Task Force on Early Childhood Education. She has been president of the North Carolina Psychology Association and an invited participant at the White House Conference on Child Care. She also served on the Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy of the National Academy of Sciences and was a co-director for the National Forum on Home Visiting.

Although the scope of her expertise reaches well beyond home visiting, that particular subject is especially hot. Fourteen years after the second edition of *Home Visiting: Procedures for Helping Families,* co-authored with Donna Bryant, the book remains the leading reference in the field, and she now has plans for a new book: *Home Visiting for the Twenty-First Century.*

Wasik's current work also includes development of an online clearinghouse for information and resources on home visiting—complete with a history of home visiting—as well as publishing updated resources for home visitors. All of which means that long after having returned the director's chair to Odom, she will continue on FPG's behalf to conduct scholarship and service that shape the field.

Home Visiting: Procedures for Helping Families
http://tinyurl.com/byWasikAndBryant

Partnerships

Leadership, Collaboration, and Donor Support

FPG's partners continue to make our work possible and extend its impact. Through this network of collaborators, FPG grows and evolves, bringing better outcomes for children, families, and communities around the globe.

This past year, FPG's Executive Leadership Board welcomed five new members to its team. These expert advisors offer knowledge, expertise, and partnerships and help define FPG's mission and focus. New board members include:

- **Tamara Barringer,** state senator from North Carolina's 17th district and former managing partner of the Barringer Law Firm. She also is a former PTA President and longtime public school volunteer, who believes "We must give our teachers the tools they need to get our students career ready."

- **Liz Pungello Bruno,** president of the Brady Education Foundation, which promotes collaboration between researchers and educators in order to close the achievement gap for children at risk for poor school outcomes. She is a research associate professor in the Developmental Psychology Program at UNC-Chapel Hill and a former scientist on FPG's Abecedarian Project.

- **Kenneth A. Dodge,** the founding director of the Duke Center for Children and Family Policy. Dodge's work bridges basic scientific research in children's development with public policy affecting children and families.

- **Eugene Garcia,** professor emeritus at Arizona State University and former senior officer in the U.S. Department of Education. Garcia has published extensively in the areas of early learning, bilingual development, and equal educational opportunity.

- **Michael L. López,** principle associate in the Education Practice at Abt Associates, who leads the new National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families. He is a renowned authority on the development, education, and wellbeing of young children, particularly low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

These five new experts join the following members already serving on FPG's Executive Leadership Board:

- **W. Steven Barnett**
  Director, National Institute for Early Education Research
  Rutgers University

- **Barbara T. Bowman**
  Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Development
  Erikson Institute

- **Peggy Carter**
  Chair, Board of Directors
  Winston-Salem State University Foundation

- **Ron Haskins**
  Senior Fellow, Economic Studies
  Co-Director, Center on Children and Families
  The Brookings Institution

- **Olson Huff**
  Medical Director Emeritus
  Mission Children's Hospital

- **Hal Kaplan**
  President and CEO
  Kaplan Early Learning Company

- **David Lawrence Jr.**
  President
  Early Childhood Initiative Foundation

- **Howard Lee**
  President
  Howard N. Lee Institute
  Formerly, North Carolina State Board of Education

- **Marvin McKinney**
  UNC/FPG Research Fellow
  Formerly, W. K. Kellogg Foundation

- **Evelyn Moore**
  President Emeritus
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- **Duncan Munn**
  Munn & Munn, LLC
  Formerly, Division of Early Intervention and Education,
  NC Department of Health and Human Services

- **James M. Perrin**
  Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School
  Director, Center for Child and Adolescent Health Policy
  Massachusetts General Hospital

- **Karen Ponder**
  Owner
  Ponder Early Childhood, Inc.
  Formerly, North Carolina Partnership for Children

- **Donald J. Stedman**
  President and CEO
  New Voices Foundation
  Formerly, Dean of the UNC-CH School of Education

In addition, FPG collaborates with several centers, institutes, schools, and departments at UNC, including:

- Carolina Center for Genome Sciences
- Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities
- Center for Developmental Science
- Department of Linguistics
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Public Policy
- Diversity and Multicultural Affairs
- Gillings School of Global Public Health
- Kenan-Flagler Business School
- Office of Research Communications
- School of Dentistry
- School of Education
- School of Medicine
- School of Nursing
- School of Social Work

FPG's work transcends the university's boundaries, too, through collaborations with many external groups and organizations, including:

- Autism Speaks
- Brady Education Foundation
- Buffett Early Childhood Fund
- Burroughs Wellcome Fund

- California State University
- Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Casey Family Programs
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
- Child Trends
- Delaware Office of Early Learning
- Duke Endowment
- Duke University
- Evergreen Evaluation and Consulting, Inc.
- Forsyth County Schools
- George Kaiser Family Foundation
- Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- Indiana University
- JBS International Inc.
- KKH Hospital in Singapore
- Kannapolis City Schools
- King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre Riyadh
- Lansing School District
- Learning Connections
- Longview Foundation
- Marquette-Alger Regional Education Service Agency
- Maternal and Child Health Bureau
- Mathematica Policy Research Inc.
- Napa County Office of Education
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- National Institutes of Health
- National Science Foundation
- New York University
- North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- North Carolina Division of Child Development
- North Carolina Division of Public Health
- North Carolina Partnership for Children
- Northampton Community College
- Northwestern University
- Office of Special Education Programs
- Office of the North Carolina Governor
- Oregon Department of Education
- Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute
- Organization for Autism Research
- Ounce of Prevention Fund
- PACER Center
- Pennsylvania State University
- Peoria County Regional Office of Education
- Research Foundation for the State University of New York
- RTI International

- San Joaquin County Office of Education
- Spencer Foundation
- SRI International
- State of Minnesota Department of Education
- State of Montana
- State of Washington, OSPI
- Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute
- Support for Families of Children with Disabilities
- Tacoma Community College
- Third Sector New England
- Thrive by Five Washington
- U.S. Department of Education
- University of California, Davis
- University of Chicago
- University of Colorado
- University of Connecticut
- University of Kansas
- University of Kentucky
- University of Nebraska
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- University of Oklahoma
- University of Oregon
- University of Rochester
- University of South Florida
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Toledo
- University of Washington
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Urban Institute
- Vanderbilt University
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center
- Wake County Public School System
- Walsh Taylor, Inc.
- Westat, Inc.
- ZERO TO THREE

In addition, FPG received crucial financial support from our 2014–2015 Honor Roll of Donors. These sponsors have enabled FPG to broaden and deepen our work:

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- Deborah D. Hatton
- David Lawrence Jr.
- James McKinney and Anne Hocutt
- Mari E. Norcross
- Samuel E. Poole
- Susan R. Rakow
- Diane J. Rand
- Jennifer R. Reilly
- Stephanie M. Ridley
- Joseph A. Rodriguez III
- Joseph and Marilyn Sparling
- Robyn L. Terrell
- Kathryn M. Trainor
- Donna Trohanis
- Allison C. White

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Lynne Kahn Retires as Co-Director of the Trohanis Technical Assistance Projects

*W*hen FPG fellow Barbara H. Wasik served as acting director while Samuel L. Odom was on research leave, she compiled the following tribute to mark the retirement of Lynne Kahn, co-director of FPG's Trohanis Technical Assistance Projects (named after TA pioneer Pat Trohanis). Lynne Kahn has been an integral contributor to TA projects at FPG, including key leadership roles with the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (the ECTA Center), and several other projects.*

While Sam Odom is on leave, I have the pleasure of recognizing Dr. Lynne Kahn on the occasion of her retirement at the end of February after a long and illustrious career at FPG. She has been a part of our organization for 30 years, serving children with disabilities and their families at the local, state, and national levels with distinction and dedication.
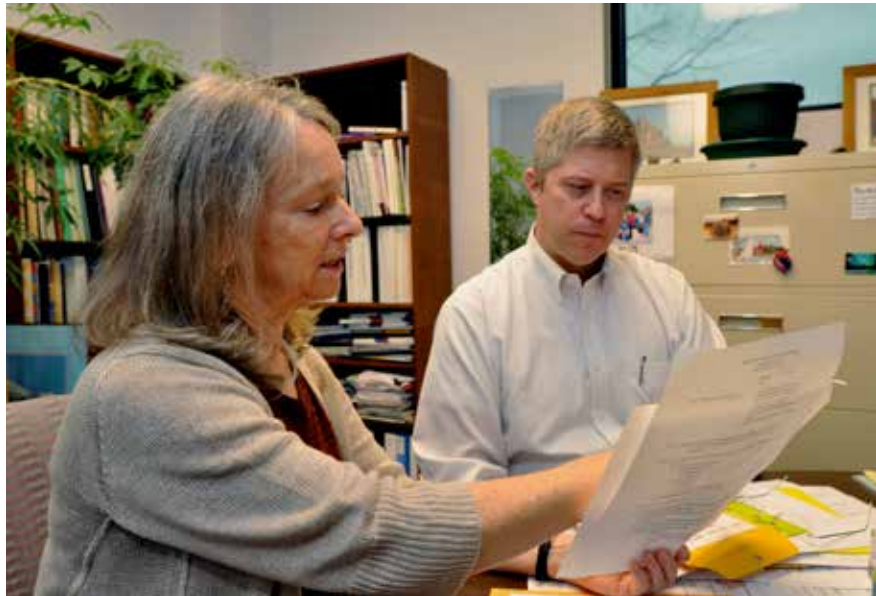
She is much admired by colleagues both here at FPG and nationally. Some of our FPG colleagues who have worked most closely with Lynne have captured for us what it has meant to work with her.

Betsy Ayankoya, associate director (technical assistance), ECTA Center:
"Lynne has taught us so much about collaboration! She has been a positive influence on our work with other organizations and projects on behalf of all young children. Her idea for 'co-staffing' with national centers stretched us in so many ways and helped us to learn

FPG technical assistance pioneer Lynne Kahn (left) retired earlier this year.

new content and function in different contexts. We'd like to think that we're both stronger and wiser because of her leadership!"

Joan Danaher, associate director (information resources), ECTA Center:
"When Pat Trohanis died in 2007, Lynne stepped up at the urging of her colleagues to lead NECTAC, to prepare

us to compete successfully for the ECTA Center, and to grow the Trohanis TA Projects group at FPG. Lynne possessed the expertise to meet the demands of her new role from her many years of experience in evaluating technical assistance and program outcomes and in designing an approach to TA for state systems improvement. She laid the foundation for our current work in developing and implementing a state system framework; implementing evidence-based practices; and, improving data and outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families. Her collaboration with funders and peer TA projects has benefited, and will continue to benefit, the programs we serve directly as well as other early childhood programs that interface with early intervention and early childhood special education. She has been committed to nurturing and mentoring the next generation of TA leaders and leaves us in good stead."

Robin Rooney, principal investigator, North Carolina Early Learning Network:
"I'd like to acknowledge Lynne's critical role in guiding the creation of our statewide training and TA system for preschool in NC: the Early Learning Network. With her help we've gotten the Network up and running—on high speed—in less than two years. Could never have accomplished that without her!"

Christina Kasprzak, co-director, Trohanis Technical Assistance Projects:
"Lynne has been a national leader in the field of TA to Part C and Section 619 systems, leading many of the OSEP-funded TA projects at FPG, including NECTAC, the ECTA Center, the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy), and the IDEA Data Center (IDC). She is passionate about what it means to provide high quality TA—helping people do whatever it is they're trying to do more efficiently and more effectively. For over 30 years, she has been responding to the needs of early intervention and preschool special education programs in order to help them improve their systems, services, and ultimately the outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families. On a more personal level, I will say that she is incredibly smart and supportive and cares very much about those she works with."

Though Lynne is formally retiring, she is not ending her involvement in all professional activities, but I do wish her time in this next chapter of her life to enjoy other things she has not had time for during the past years. Thank you, Lynne, for your professional contributions both inside and beyond FPG.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara H. Wasik
Fellow and Acting Director, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor, UNC School of Education

more about Lynne Kahn's pioneering commitment to technical assistance
http://fpg.unc.edu/news/42-year-tradition-fortifies-fpgs-new-technical-assistance-projects

Resources

Books, Articles, Briefs, Multimedia, and More

FPG experts serve as leaders in professional associations, government task forces, and community organizations, as well as on advisory, editorial, and foundation boards. They testify before Congressional committees and brief their staffs, and our projects have drawn national and international coverage by dozens of media outlets in the past year alone. FPG's local, state, national, and international reach also includes the impact of a vast array of highly anticipated and widely respected publications and other resources, which take numerous forms for multiple audiences at home and abroad. What follows is a compilation of these resources from the past fiscal year.

Assessments and Instruments

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Curricula

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http://fpg.unc.edu/resources

FPG's 50th Anniversary–and Beyond

A Seminal Symposium and New Strategic Plan

In December of 2014, Don Stedman, co-founder of New Voices Foundation, officially launched plans for FPG's 50th Anniversary Celebration in 2016. Stedman, former Dean of UNC's School of Education and former associate director of FPG, presented FPG director Samuel L. Odom with the first donation designated for the festivities.

"FPG is a world class child development organization," said Stedman, who made the donation at the annual meeting of FPG's Executive Leadership Board, on which he has served for several years. "A half century of work has helped transform both how and when children need educational support to make their lives better and richer."

FPG's celebratory plans include a two-day symposium in May 2016 to discuss state-of-the-art research and practice, as well as new directions for FPG and the fields of child development and education. According to Stedman, the event will include opportunities to look at what FPG and its many researchers, past and present, have done to enrich the lives of children and families.

"But, best of all, it will examine what the futures of children need to be and how research can make that happen," he said. "New Voices Foundation is proud to play even a small part in helping to launch the planning and development of this historic event."

This year is FPG's last under *A Strategic Plan for 2010–2015*, which FPG's leadership formulated in 2009. That plan offered a roadmap that focused FPG for the last several years on seven areas of emphasis: developmental disabilities; early care and education; diversity; health; professional development, technical assistance, and implementation science; public policy and evaluation; and an international initiative.

FPG's plans will include opportunities to celebrate how it has grown since 1966 to become one of the world's most prominent institutes on child development. More importantly, 2016 will mark FPG's first in-depth look at its next 50 years, and Stedman plans to remain an active leader on FPG's planning team.

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