



A Strategic Plan for 2010–2015



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FPG CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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This document is the culmination of a strategic planning process that occurred over several months. Sam Odom and Kelly Maxwell facilitated this process and edited the document. The goals and objectives were developed in committees for each of the identified emphasis areas. Virginia Buisse and Kara Hume co-chaired the Developmental Disabilities committee. Kelly Maxwell and Liz Pungello led the Early Care and Education committee. Peg Burchinal, Iheoma Iruka, and Debra Skinner led the International Initiative committee. Lynne Kahn and Pam Winton co-chaired the committee on Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Implementation Science. Karen Luken and Sam Odom co-chaired the Physical and Social Health committee. Camille Catlett and Donna Marie Winn co-chaired the committee on Race, Ethnicity, Linguistic, Cultural and Socioeconomic Diversity. Dick Clifford and Ellen Peisner-Feinberg co-chaired the committee on Public Policy and Evaluation. In addition to the committee work, all of the broader FPG community had an opportunity to help shape the goals and objectives. Although this strategic plan serves as a roadmap for FPG, we expect to make revisions over time as we review our progress and revisit the goals and objectives.

To learn more about FPG, please visit

www.fpg.unc.edu

FPG 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. Our mission is to cultivate and share knowledge that enhances child development and family well-being.

Advancing knowledge. Enhancing lives.

A young child with dark skin and short hair is looking intently at several toy cars on a wooden table. The child's hands are positioned near the cars, suggesting they are playing with them. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting with a green wall and a wooden table. The overall tone is warm and focused on early childhood development.

FPG Strategic Plan for 2010–2015 Seven Areas of Emphasis

FPG's mission is to cultivate and share knowledge that enhances child development and family well-being.

Since 1966, FPG Child Development Institute (FPG) research, outreach, technical assistance, and service have shaped how the nation cares for and educates young children. About 300 researchers, outreach and technical assistance specialists, staff, and students work on over 60 projects related to young children, individuals with disabilities, and their families. We also have a nationally accredited child care center that serves 80 families with young children, including those with disabilities and those at risk for later school problems. FPG's dedication to research, outreach, and technical assistance is embodied in our motto—*Advancing knowledge. Enhancing lives.*—and is evident throughout our work.

In 2009, the FPG community developed this strategic plan to guide our work in the coming years. The plan is organized by seven emphasis areas of FPG's work. Strategic goals and objectives are provided for each area.

Developmental Disabilities

Developmental disabilities can impose significant limitations on the lives of infants, children, youth, and their families. Understanding the processes that underlie disability and their effects on development informs theory and practice. Early intervention has the potential to produce positive outcomes for infants, young children, and their families. FPG investigators have established some of the central features of practice in early intervention, such as family-focused programming, early childhood inclusion, and response to intervention. FPG will continue its commitment to identifying the features of disability that potentially impact development and the participation of individuals in society, establishing practices that are effective in promoting positive outcomes for children, and using this information to inform policy and practice.

Goal 1: Advance the knowledge base about processes underlying, and conditions associated with, developmental disabilities.

Objective 1. Conduct interdisciplinary studies of the mechanisms of identified disabilities and syndromes (particularly fragile X syndrome, autism, and Down syndrome).

Goal 2: Develop effective practices for promoting development and learning of children with developmental disabilities.

Objective 1. Develop and evaluate specific interventions for children with particular types of disabilities.

Objective 2. Continue to develop and evaluate tiered approaches to serving young children at risk of future disabilities.

Examples of Current FPG Work

- The **Recognition & Response (R&R) Project** is developing and evaluating a tiered model for providing high quality instruction and targeted interventions that are matched to the learning needs of children ages three through five.
- The **Autism Spectrum Disorder Treatment Comparison Study** is examining the immediate and long-term effects of two comprehensive treatment models (TEACCH and LEAP) on the developmental performance of preschool-age children with autism spectrum disorder.

Early Care and Education

Early care and education is fundamental to the success of the United States because it allows parents to be more productive and efficient at work while providing a strong foundation for children's school and life success. It is also central to FPG's work. In the 1970s, one of the first and most influential FPG projects was a longitudinal, random assignment study of the effectiveness of an early care and education intervention for children raised in poverty. In addition, the most commonly used set of child care quality measures was developed by FPG investigators. FPG will follow this important tradition by focusing its efforts on 21st century advances in early care and education.

Goal 1: Advance the knowledge base regarding effective early care and education practices.

- Objective 1. Conduct research related to the development of, and early care and education for, infants and toddlers.
- Objective 2. Continue a program of research related to preschool through third grade care and education.
- Objective 3. Develop the next generation of tools to assess the quality of early care and education.

Goal 2: Enhance the provision of evidence-based practices for children birth through third grade.

- Objective 1. Improve early childhood teacher preparation and professional development initiatives.

Examples of Current FPG Work

- The **Abecedarian Early Intervention Project** continues to study the long-term effects of early intervention on participants 30 years later.
- The **FPG Child Care Center** is a nationally accredited, inclusive early care and education program that serves about 80 young children and their families.

International Initiative

Although cultural practices may differ, promotion of child development, health, and education is of central interest to all societies. FPG wants to generate and share knowledge that will contribute to the well-being of children and families around the world. As an internationally-known institute for child development, FPG engages in projects with collaborators in other countries. In the future, we will continue to establish relationships with child development scientists and practitioners in other countries.

Goal 1: Advance cross-national knowledge related to child development, health, and education.

Objective 1. Conduct international research on developmental disabilities and early care and education through new international collaborations.

Objective 2. Promote awareness of cross-cultural perspectives on research design and methodology.

Example of Current FPG Work

- Over the last 15 years, the **Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) International Workgroup** has met annually to discuss current studies using the ERS and plan future collaborative projects.



Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Implementation Science

FPG's motto is *Advancing knowledge. Enhancing lives.* FPG is committed to understanding and learning about processes to effectively move research into practical applications that benefit families and children. FPG is engaged in multiple projects with a focus on developing and studying evidence-based practices and providing technical assistance for systematic implementation at program, community and state levels.

Goal 1: Systematically increase and sustain the use of evidence-based practices by service providers and state agencies.

Objective 1: Advance the evidence base for knowledge utilization.

Objective 2. Develop tools, structures, and collaborative partnerships to advance the evidence base for systems change and implementation science.

Objective 3. Increase the capacity of systems and individuals to implement and sustain the use of evidence-based practices and other innovations.

Examples of Current FPG Work

- The **National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)** aims to close the gap between science and service by improving the science and practice of implementation in relation to evidence-based programs and practices.
- The **National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)** serves as the U.S. Office of Special Education Program's national resource for states on implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), particularly the early childhood provisions.



Physical and Social Health

The physical and social health of children and youth are tied closely to their overall development and life outcomes. FPG has a history of examining health issues of young children, such as the effects of otitis media on language development, the frequency of colds in child care centers, and the provision of health services for individuals with disabilities. In the future, investigators at FPG will continue the commitment to address the health needs for individuals of all ages with disabilities. FPG will also respond to the growing need for knowledge about how best to increase children's physical activity, support appropriate nutrition, and prevent obesity. FPG's interest in health also extends to the mental health of young children through early childhood education curricula and intervention that promote social competence and prevent the development of challenging behaviors.

Example of Current FPG Work

- The **NC Office on Disability and Health (NCODH)**, housed at FPG, promotes the health and wellness of persons with disabilities in North Carolina through an integrated program of policy, practice, and evaluation.

Goal 1: Advance the knowledge base of practice that promotes the physical health of young children with and without disabilities.

Objective 1. Develop and evaluate interventions that promote the nutritional health of young children with and without disabilities.

Objective 2. Develop and evaluate interventions that promote physical activity of young children with and without disabilities.

Goal 2: Enhance the physical health of individuals with developmental disabilities across the age span.

Objective 1. Conduct research on the health disparities experienced by people with disabilities across the age span.

Objective 2. Conduct research about the incidence of and interventions to reduce maltreatment of children with and without disabilities.

Goal 3: Advance the knowledge base of practices that promote the development of social-emotional health of young children with and without disabilities.

Objective 1. Develop and evaluate interventions to promote the social-emotional development and well-being of infants and young children with and without disabilities.

Race, Ethnicity, Linguistic, Cultural, and Socioeconomic Diversity

Nationwide, children of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds are too often viewed as challenging, “at-risk,” and of limited intellectual capacity. Wide disparities in achievement bear witness to the ways in which the educational and social systems have failed those most in need of support. Historic discrimination coupled with changing demographics necessitates clear and intentional efforts to support young children who are racially and ethnically diverse in achieving their personal, academic, and economic potential. A primary mission of FPG is to generate knowledge about the social context in which children of color live, establish programs that produce positive outcomes for those children and their families, and use the knowledge to prepare teachers and caregivers to provide the best possible environment for promoting development and success.

Goal 1: Advance the knowledge base about practices that promote learning and development of children who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse.

Objective 1. Conduct studies to better understand the learning and development of children who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse.

Objective 2. Develop and evaluate interventions to promote the learning and development of children who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse.

Objective 3. Develop and evaluate professional development methods and materials that reflect knowledge about children of color.

Goal 2: Increase the capacity of the field to conduct high quality research focusing on the development and learning of children who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse.

Objective 1. Develop and evaluate research methodologies and assessment tools that reflect knowledge of children who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse.

Objective 2. Create a formal Race and Ethnicity Center with partnering Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in North Carolina.

Examples of Current FPG Work

- **Nuestros Niños Program: Promoting School Readiness for English Language Learners** is evaluating an integrative intervention to improve school readiness among Spanish-speaking English Language Learners who are at risk of experiencing school difficulties.
- **FirstSchool** is a response to a national need to address an ongoing achievement gap, improve mediocre quality in classrooms, and improve the school experiences and trajectories of poor and minority children.

Public Policy and Evaluation

Policymakers need information and support to implement public policies that promote effective service systems, high quality practices, and positive outcomes for young children and families. FPG has a strong history of analyzing and evaluating policies, programs, and initiatives for young children.

Goal 1: Enhance the formation of public policy for young children based on scientific evidence and professional wisdom.

Objective 1. Increase the capacity of the field to develop, evaluate, analyze, and interpret policy.

Goal 2: Increase the capacity of the field to conduct and utilize scientifically valid evaluations.

Objective 1. Create an evaluation unit to facilitate and expand FPG's evaluation work.

Examples of Current FPG Work

- FPG is conducting the state evaluation of **More at Four, North Carolina's State Pre-kindergarten Program.**
- FPG is evaluating **Quality Counts, Miami-Dade's Quality Rating and Improvement System.**
- A team from FPG is editing the Society for Research in Child Development's **Social Policy Report**, which translates child development research into policy implications and is disseminated to approximately 10,000 readers.





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