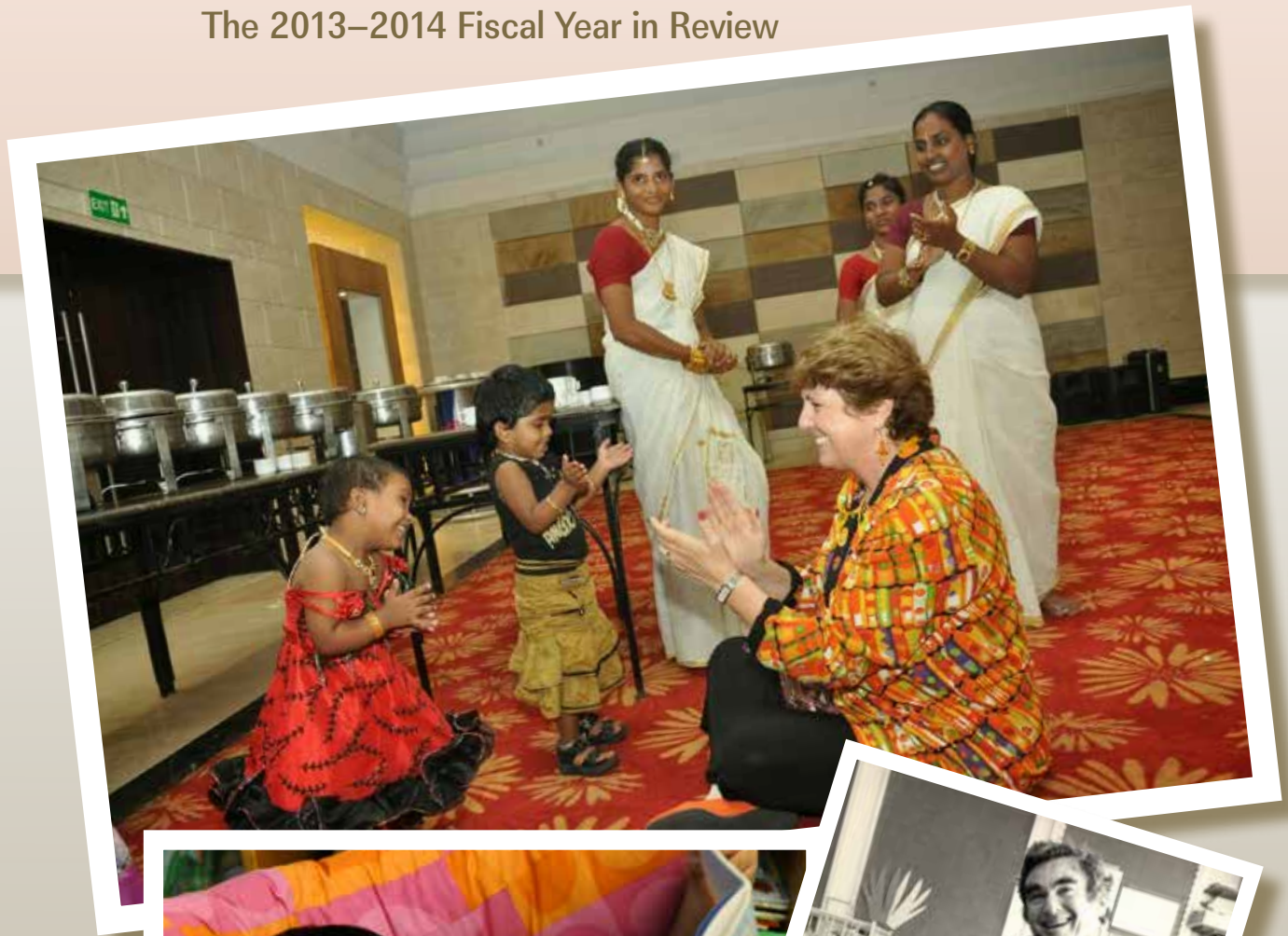


Stories from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

The 2013–2014 Fiscal Year in Review



UNC

FRANK PORTER GRAHAM
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Stories from the
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute:
The 2013–2014 Fiscal Year in Review

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From the Director

Dear Colleagues,

In this compendium of stories about FPG, you will read about the many achievements and contributions of our investigators, scientists, and senior scientists. Giving this preview commits many sins of omission, because of the other great work that is not mentioned here.

One of the biggest career achievements of an FPG senior scientist this year is Francis Campbell's publication of the Abecedarian Project's impact on health in *Science*, one of the premiere scientific publications in the world. Publication of the work on preschool programs for children with autism spectrum disorders, led by FPG fellow and scientist (respectively) Brian Boyd and Kara Hume, received recognition as one of the top 20 advances in autism treatment. Emeriti FPG senior scientist Dick Clifford and Mary Ruth Coleman provided leadership for the state by service on the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council, and a team of FPG colleagues continued to support the North Carolina Early Learning Challenge Grant. Led by senior scientist Pam Winton, the Professional Development Center at FPG completed its first successful year, with one of its major events being the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute. It attracted its largest national number of participants to date. Highlights of this conference were a striking keynote talk by Dwayne Ballen and a panel presentation by leaders from three major federal agencies that focus on early child care and education. The University of North Carolina recognized the SCRIPT Project's work to enhance the early childhood curriculum of community colleges around the state with the Provost's Engaged Scholarship Award. Lynne Kahn and Christina Kasprzak have led the re-organization of FPG's technical assistance projects into an "umbrella" unit now called the Trohanis projects, honoring our past colleague Pat Trohanis. The National Implementation Research Network sponsored their second successful Global Implementation Conference, as well as transitioning leadership of this productive group to Melissa Van Dyke and Allison Metz. In addition, FPG continues to expand its research through collaborative relationships with colleagues in China, Portugal, Singapore, and other countries. In the pages to follow, the reader will be able to learn about all of this work, as well as much additional great research and professional development conducted this year.

In this midst of this productive year, we did lose one of our senior leaders, Dr. James J. Gallagher. Although he did not start FPG, Jim was very much the "founding father," and we will all miss him. Other FPG researchers and staff have moved on to other positions in other organizations or have retired, and we wish them the best in the next phase of their careers and life. Amid these transitions, FPG is fortunate to have new and talented people joining the organization, which bodes well for the future.

I invite you to turn the page and read the stories about FPG's work.

Best regards,
Samuel L. Odom, Director





FPG at a Glance

Advancing knowledge. Enhancing lives.

FY 2013–2014 Projects

100

Funding

54% Federal Grants

18% Private Grants

15% State Grants

8% Fees, sales, royalties, other

5% State & University Appropriations

Sources of Federal Funding

79% Department of Education

15% National Institutes of Health

5% Administration for Children & Families

2% Other

People

195 Staff

68 Investigators

24 Fellows

17 Students, Graduate Assistants & Post Docs

15 Executive Leadership Board Members

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

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

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. These are stories from 2013–2014 about our mission to cultivate and share knowledge that enhances child development and family well-being.



Contents

1 The Latest Science

18 Spotlight: James J. Gallagher

21 Shaping Dialogue and Guiding Practice

44 Spotlight: Samuel L. Odom

47 Projects and Partners

51 2013-2014 Resources

The 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 and syntheses of research capitalize on FPG's wide and varied expertise to build the base of knowledge about how best to educate and care for children and their families. Over the past year, this science has addressed numerous urgencies, and what follows are snapshots of only some of our accomplishments.

The Latest Science

*new findings on early childhood care and education,
parenting, and autism*



High-Quality Early Education and Care Bring Better Health 30 Years Later

Major Findings from FPG's Abecedarian Project Reveal New and Significant Lifetime Benefits

With substantial implications for health care and prevention policy, FPG reported earlier this year that children who received high-quality early care and education in FPG's Abecedarian Project from birth until age 5 enjoy better physical health in their mid-30s than their peers who did not attend the childcare-based program.

The findings appeared in *Science* and are the result of FPG's collaboration with scientists from the University College London and the University of Chicago, where Nobel laureate James J. Heckman spearheaded an intricate

statistical analysis of data from the Abecedarian Project. Not only did FPG and Heckman's team determine that people who had received high-quality early care and education in the 1970s through the project are healthier now—significant measures also indicate better health lies ahead for them.

Previous findings from the Abecedarian Project have been instrumental in demonstrating that high-quality early education and care for at-risk children can have positive, long-lasting effects on cognitive functioning and academic achievement

that extend well into adulthood. However, the new study differs by examining physical measures of health.

“To our knowledge, this is the first time that actual biomarkers, as opposed to self-reports of illnesses, have been compared for adult individuals who took part in a randomized study of early childhood education,” said Frances Campbell, FPG senior scientist and principal investigator of the Abecedarian Project's follow-up studies. “We analyzed actual blood samples, and a physician conducted examinations on all the participants, without knowing which people were in the control group.”

“This study breaks new ground in demonstrating the emergence of the relationship between education and health,” said Craig Ramey, the original principal investigator on the project, who now serves as a professor of pediatrics and a distinguished research scholar at Virginia Tech. “It broadens our understanding of the power of high-quality early experience to change lives for the better.”

The study determined that people who received early care with the Abecedarian program have lower rates of pre-hypertension in their mid-30s than those in the control

People who had received high-quality early care and education in the 1970s through the project are healthier now. Significant measures also indicate better health lies ahead for them.

group. They also have a significantly lower risk of experiencing total coronary heart disease (CHD)—defined as both stable and unstable angina, myocardial infarction, or CHD death—within the next 10 years.

Compared to the control group, males treated in the Abecedarian program have lower incidences of hypertension in their mid-30s. In addition, treated men less frequently exhibit combinations of both obesity and hypertension, and none exhibited the cluster of conditions known as “metabolic syndrome,” which is associated with greater risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

From the start, the Abecedarian Project represented a revolutionary approach to early childhood education by providing care from early infancy and exposing children to a high-quality center for five years, instead of the shorter durations typical of other programs. Children in the treated group benefited from stable early childhood environments, which included on-site health care and nutritious meals.

They also attended full days, five days a week, year round, and they learned under the “Abecedarian Approach,” an innovative curriculum that began in infancy.

“It is of particular significance that an early educational intervention produced long-term health effects,” said FPG senior scientist emeritus Joseph Sparling, who co-created the Abecedarian Approach. Sparling noted the importance of the curriculum’s educational content and five-year duration, which he and colleagues are now adapting and applying in Canada, Mexico, China, and Australia.

Campbell, who has been with the project since it began in 1972, said many factors



FPG senior scientist Frances Campbell, principal investigator of the Abecedarian Project

might have contributed to the sustained and substantial health benefits now seen for study participants: more intensive pediatric monitoring, improved nutrition, a predictable and less stressful early childcare experience, and improved adult education. Even without pinpointing a single mechanism responsible for improved adult health, scientists involved in the Abecedarian effort agree that early childhood interventions are an encouraging avenue of health policy to explore.

“Good health is the bedrock upon which other lifetime accomplishments rest, and without it, other gains are compromised,” Campbell said. “Investing in early childhood programs has been shown to pay off in ways we did not anticipate forty years ago when the Abecedarian study was founded.”

Read the full study:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/343/6178/1478.full>

Read more about Joseph Sparling’s new work:

<http://tinyurl.com/JoeSparlingAustralia>

Early Childhood Educators Hold the Key to Children's Communication Skills

Parents Also Can Ignite Language Skills in Infants and Toddlers

This past November, FPG researchers completed a new examination of peer-reviewed science that revealed how early childhood educators can ignite the growth of language and communication skills in infants and toddlers. Nicole Gardner-Neblett and Kathleen Cranley Gallagher published the FPG team's research-based recommendations in an online report.



“Early language and communication skills are crucial for children’s success in school and beyond,” said Gardner-Neblett, principal investigator for the study. “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.”

Language and communication skills include a child’s ability to express himself or herself through words, gestures, or facial expressions, as well as the capacity to understand others. Co-principal investigator Kathleen Gallagher said that when teachers provide children with higher levels of language stimulation during the first years of life, children in turn have better language skills. “When teachers ask children questions, respond to their vocalizations, and engage in other positive talk, children learn and use more words,” said Gallagher.

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.

Among the FPG team’s recommended interactions are responding to children’s vocalizations and speech, eliciting conversations, and using complex grammar and a rich vocabulary. Each practice includes the science that supports it and examples of how to use it.

Gardner-Neblett and Gallagher said that many of the practices work well in combination with one another. They added that early childhood educators should keep in mind children develop differently and at varying rates.

In addition, while educators 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.”

Read *More Than Baby Talk*:
<http://mtbt.fpg.unc.edu>

NC Pre-K Gets High Marks on Child Outcomes

Student Progress Surpasses Normal Developmental Growth

According to FPG’s new evaluation study of NC Pre-K, students enrolled in the statewide program show significant gains across all areas of learning.

“Children are progressing at an even greater rate during their participation in NC Pre-K than expected for normal developmental growth,” said senior scientist Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, who leads the FPG team that has evaluated the program and provided it with recommendations for more than a dozen years. “Our research found growth in language and literacy skills, math skills, general knowledge, and social skills.”

NC Pre-K was designed to be a high-quality program to serve at-risk children. Since the program’s inception as “More at Four” in 2001, it has served over 255,000 four-year-olds.

Throughout this time, FPG researchers have provided annual updates on NC Pre-K’s outcomes. The NC Department of Health and Human Services funds these evaluations and reports the results to the state legislature each year.

“The pattern of developmental growth we found during the 2012-2013 school year is consistent with earlier findings,” said

Peisner-Feinberg. “In general, the quality of NC Pre-K has remained relatively stable over time across many measures.”

She said that NC Pre-K also has seen steady improvement in teacher education and credentials, with a higher proportion of teachers now holding BA degrees and the appropriate licenses than in past years. “The average class size was 16 children, and most classrooms were at the highest licensing levels—four-star and five-star,” she added.

The new findings on NC Pre-K add to a growing body of evidence about the benefits of quality pre-kindergarten programs, including Peisner-Feinberg’s recent evaluation of Georgia’s pre-k program, which revealed positive effects for all children, regardless of gender and income level.

Peisner-Feinberg said the new findings from 99 randomly chosen NC Pre-K classrooms suggest that while participation in North Carolina’s program is beneficial for all groups of children, it may be especially valuable for some students.

“Children with lower levels of English proficiency made even greater gains than their peers in some skills,” she said, adding



Inside an NC Pre-K classroom

that students who are “dual-language learners” showed significant growth for all skills measured in English and for most skills measured in Spanish.

Peisner-Feinberg’s earlier research in North Carolina revealed that children enrolled in the state’s pre-k program continued to make gains even after leaving it. 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 (EOG) tests than similar children who had not attended the state’s program.

“FPG’s 13-year history of bringing research-based recommendations to North Carolina’s pre-k program has helped the program maintain its quality as it has grown,” Peisner-Feinberg said.

“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 added. “It’s been very positive from our perspective to see the program make such good use of our research.”

Read the executive summary of FPG’s report:

<http://tinyurl.com/FPGonNCPreK>

Dual-Language Learners Make Key Gains in Head Start and Public Pre-K

Improving Language Skills Provides a Foundation for Learning

A comprehensive review of research on young Latino and Spanish-speaking children confirms that widely available public programs are helping dual-language learners make important academic gains. According to FPG scientists, children who have lower English-language abilities than their peers benefit the most from programs like Head Start and public pre-k—but exactly how and why remain unanswered questions.

“We know that early childhood is a critical period for children who are dual-language learners,” said Virginia Buysse, senior scientist at FPG and lead author of the review. “Many of them face the difficult task of learning a new language while acquiring essential skills to be ready for kindergarten.”

Buysse said that dual-language learners represent a large and rapidly growing group of children in the U.S. In 2006, nearly one in three children enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start lived in a household in which a language other than English was spoken.

According to co-author and fellow FPG senior scientist Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, dual-language learners enter kindergarten with skills that differ substantially from their

peers. “English proficiency has been linked to school performance, educational attainment, and the future economic mobility of Latino students,” said Peisner-Feinberg. “These children lag behind their peers when they begin school, though, and the gap only widens as they grow older.”

Buysse and Peisner-Feinberg emphasized that improving language skills in turn provides a foundation for learning in other content areas. “But relatively few studies have evaluated the effects of early care and education programs for dual-language learners,” said Buysse.

In 2007, the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics had referred to this knowledge gap as one of the most important unanswered questions within the field of early childhood education. Buysse and Peisner-Feinberg wanted to gauge the current state of research and conducted a comprehensive review of the latest studies, screening 4000 initial candidates from several academic databases before determining 25 that met their rigorous selection criteria.

“English proficiency has been linked to school performance, educational attainment, and the future economic mobility of Latino students.”



Buysse said the dearth of top-caliber research itself was an important finding. “This is a surprisingly small group of studies, given the number of children under the age of five in this country who do not speak English as their home language.”

Almost all of the studies focused on Latino or Spanish-speaking children who were 3–5 years old. Most were enrolled in center-based early childhood programs.

On the basis of these scientifically sound studies, Buysse and Peisner-Feinberg did find evidence to suggest that dual-language learners benefit from attending widely available, well regulated early childhood programs, such as Head Start or state-funded public pre-k. Moreover, these programs may be more beneficial for children who begin school with lower English-language abilities and less exposure to English—findings consistent with previous research.

“We also found some support across several studies both for using English as the lan-

guage of instruction and for incorporating the home language into strategies that focused on language and literacy,” said Buysse. “And none of the studies detected any negative effects of early education programs and instructional practices that target dual-language learners.”

Buysse added, though, that small sample sizes and other methodological challenges necessitated more research in order to demonstrate exactly which interventions truly hold the most promise for dual-language learners.

Read the full article:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2013.08.004>

Researchers Identify Key Classroom Predictors of Child Outcomes

Many Ratings Systems for Judging Child Care Need Refining

According to a study published in the journal *Science*, researchers have zeroed in on two factors used in ratings systems of child care quality that best predict child outcomes—findings with significant implications for how states rate their child care settings.

Researchers from FPG, the University of Virginia, and Northwestern University used data from studies of nearly 3,000 children in 703 state-funded pre-kindergarten classrooms from nine states, representing a variety of pre-kindergarten models in use across the United States. They calculated the extent to which various features of program quality included in each of nine different states' Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, or QRIS, predicted children's readiness for kindergarten at the end of their year in pre-k.

The study determined that ratings systems relying on a few factors with the strongest research evidence tend to work better. Two factors in particular are the best predictors of child outcomes; the quality of teacher-child interaction consistently is the strongest predictor of children's learning, followed by the learning environment.

The research team also made another key determination: aggregate ratings comprising

many measures, which many states currently use to measure quality, are not good predictors.

States use a QRIS for collecting and compiling information on program features presumed to measure program quality. If enrollment in high-quality pre-k programs is a means of fostering children's success in school, then children attending higher-rated programs should perform better on measures of kindergarten readiness.

However, because these findings reveal that enrollment in a highly rated program is at best only modestly related to children's gains in learning during pre-k or school readiness, the ratings systems used to judge child care in the majority of states likely need further refining. The study suggests that states can more accurately rate their programs by paying closest attention to the small number of factors that matter most, and deciding how to rate those factors is important for these ratings systems to be effective in predicting child outcomes.

Read the full study:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/341/6148/845.full>

Read about FPG's

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale:

<http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/early-childhood-environment-rating-scale-ecers-r>

Mounting Challenges Undermine Parenting

FPG's Family Life Project Shows How Poverty Impacts Child Outcomes

New findings from FPG's long-running Family Life Project, a study of nearly 1,300 rural children, reveal that parenting deteriorates when families face a number of risk factors at once. As a result, children's intellectual, emotional, and social development suffers.

The study helps to explain why a combination of risk factors like low maternal education, low income, and unsafe neighborhoods is a strong predictor of adverse outcomes for young rural children. "When social challenges mount for families, it's likely this cumulative risk negatively affects parenting, which in turn hinders child development," said Lynne Vernon-Feagans, the study's principal investigator.

According to Vernon-Feagans, a fellow at FPG and the William C. Friday Distinguished Professor in UNC's School of Education, roughly 20% of children in the United States live in rural communities, but surprisingly few studies have looked at poor children from these areas. Since 2003, the Family Life Project has helped to fill this gap by following 1,292 children from birth.

"We're examining a very understudied group of children in rural areas, and the study is sizeable," said Vernon-Feagans, who

published the latest findings with FPG fellow Martha Cox and key investigators from the Family Life Project in a special monograph from the Society for Research in Child Development.

In order to understand the effects of poverty on parenting and child outcomes, Vernon-Feagans, Cox, and colleagues wanted to account for the most important risk factors that poor rural families face. They used "cumulative risk" to incorporate measures of maternal education, income, work hours per week, job prestige, household density, neighborhood safety, and the extent to which the parents are consistently partnered.

The study also observed parenting in the home by looking at whether parents were sensitive and supportive or harsh and controlling. Likewise, researchers observed the amount each mother talked to her child during a wordless picture book task, as well as recording the material investments that parents made in their child's development.

In addition, the study examined important outcomes for children at age 3 by focusing on skills that enable children to undertake flexible, coordinated decision-making—a crucial ability for school readiness and aca-



Lynne Vernon-Feagans, FPG fellow

ademic achievement. Measures of language skills and social and emotional behavior also contributed to a model that revealed how numerous childhood skills are related to cumulative risk, telling a significant story about rural children in poverty.

Vernon-Feagans and her research team determined that cumulative risk, largely due to its effect on parenting, was an important predictor of these children's outcomes. "Overall, our findings indicated that the environment of poverty begins to shape child development very early in ways that have important implications for the child's ability to regulate emotion, attention, and behavior, as well as to use language in ways that school demands," she said.

Vernon-Feagans added that these findings reinforced the potential effectiveness of interventions that support parenting and other aspects of the rural child's social context, such as schools, neighborhood

supports, and community resources—all of which can bolster development.

As the Family Life Project enters its eleventh year of data collection, Vernon-Feagans said many more findings and conclusions are forthcoming as the project's children make the transition into and out of elementary school.

Read the full study:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mono.v78.5/issue toc?dmmsmid=80097&dmmssid=17563344&dmsuid=2125565>

Parenting Plays Crucial Role as African American Boys Move from Preschool to Kindergarten

Some Boys Experience Challenges as They Transition

Parenting affects the academic and social performance of African American boys as they move from preschool to kindergarten.

“The transition to kindergarten can be challenging for many children due to new expectations, social interactions, and physiological changes,” said Iheoma Iruka, FPG’s associate director of research and the study’s lead author. “Transitions may be even more arduous for African American boys, given the many challenges they are likely to face compared to their peers.”

However, Iruka says that previous research has demonstrated that many African American boys actually transition into kindergarten

“African American boys from homes where mothers frequently engaged in literacy activities and intentional teaching ... were likely to be in the high achieving groups.”

prepared to learn and excel. “In the early years, African American children, including boys, produce narratives of higher quality and have greater narrative comprehension than their

peers—and, once we account for family income, African American boys outperform other boys.”

Many previous studies of children sampled across ethnic groups have only emphasized the academic or social deficits of African American boys after entering kindergarten. By concentrating exclusively on these boys, Iruka and her research team hoped to look at a fuller range of experiences and outcomes. The team studied the transitions of 700 African American boys by examining family and child characteristics, as well as parenting practices.

With FPG’s Nicole Gardner-Neblett and Donna-Marie C. Winn, and Montclair State University’s J. S. Matthews, Iruka found four patterns for African American boys after they transitioned—and her team also demonstrated the key role that parenting plays in these outcomes.

Just over half the boys (51%) showed increases in language, reading, and math scores in kindergarten, but a sizeable group (19%) consisted of low achievers in preschool who declined even further academically after transition. The smallest group (11%) included early achievers who declined in kindergarten both academically and behaviorally; by contrast, 20% of the boys in the study comprised a group of early



achievers who remained on their high-performing academic and social paths after the transition.

According to Iruka, the results clearly suggest that some African American boys experience challenges to their academic achievement and social skills as they move into kindergarten.

“In addition, the two groups of early achievers are especially revealing about the importance of effective parenting,” she said. “African American boys from homes where mothers frequently engaged in literacy activities and intentional teaching—and other activities like playing games and taking the child on errands—were likely to be in the high achieving groups.”

Iruka’s study also showed that parent-child interactions influence whether a high-achieving African American boy stays on course.

“It’s important to note that the early achievers who declined academically and socially were more likely to be from homes in which the parents were inattentive,” she said. “The group of boys with detached parents showed a significant decrease in their reading and math

scores and an increase in aggression during the preschool-to-kindergarten transition.”

According to Iruka, these results fit well with other research that has shown how important it is for all children across socioeconomic lines to receive responsive parenting that is enriching and cognitively stimulating. Because of the importance of parenting, Iruka and her co-authors recommend involving parents in academic and social support for children throughout the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

“We believe this time of change requires families and teachers to work together,” she said. “Not only can such partnerships help to ensure the best academic and social outcomes for gifted African American boys—they can make a difference for all groups of children.”

Read a 2-page *Snapshot* of the journal article:

http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/snapshots/FPG_Snapshot71_2014.pdf

FPG Study on Autism Treatments Makes List of Top Advances

Quality May Be More Important than Type of Treatment Model

The Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has released its annual list of scientific studies that represent significant progress—naming FPG’s groundbreaking study on autism treatment one of the field’s top 20 advances in 2013.

It was the first study designed to compare



Brian Boyd, FPG fellow

longstanding comprehensive treatment models for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). A team of researchers from FPG and three other universities determined that preschoolers with ASD in high-quality classrooms make gains during the school year regardless of the

treatment model—findings with substantial implications for the field.

“Previous research has shown that when children with autism spectrum disorders have access to high quality early interven-

tion, the result is improved developmental performance, but until now debate has persisted over which approach to use,” said FPG fellow Brian Boyd, shortly after the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* first published the findings in 2013. Boyd was the study’s co-principal investigator and lead author of the article.

Early diagnosis and effective intervention can reduce ASD’s lifetime \$3.2 million price tag by two-thirds, and more children are being diagnosed with autism each year. Two frequently used comprehensive treatment models for ASD have a long history: LEAP (Learning Experiences and Alternative Program for Preschoolers and their Parents) and TEACCH (now known only by its acronym).

The TEACCH model is based on creating an environment that meets the characteristics and learning needs of young children with autism, often using visual schedules and work systems. LEAP bases its treatment approach on making accommodations in regular early childhood education settings that include children who are typically developing.

FPG’s study examined the relative effects of the LEAP and TEACCH school-based com-

Early diagnosis and effective intervention can reduce ASD's lifetime \$3.2 million price tag by two-thirds, and more children are being diagnosed with autism each year.

prehensive treatment models when compared to each other and to special education programs that do not use a specific model. The multi-site study took place only in high-quality classrooms and enrolled 74 teachers and 198 3–5 year-olds in public school districts.

The study found that children made gains over the school year regardless of the classroom's use of TEACCH, LEAP, or no specific comprehensive treatment model. "Each group of children showed significant positive change in autism severity, communication, and fine motor skills," said FPG scientist Kara Hume, co-author of the article, commenting when the study was published. "No statistically significant differences were found between models, which challenged our initial expectations—and likely the field's."

Research has long demonstrated that classroom quality is an important predictor of typically developing children's social, language, and academic outcomes. This study may reflect the importance of general classroom quality in promoting the positive development of children with ASD, too.

Because all of the classrooms in FPG's study were high quality, the findings also could reflect that teachers in high-quality class-

rooms are aware of and use similar practices to educate children with autism.

"This study may shift the field's thinking about comprehensive treatment models designed for young children with ASD," said co-author Samuel L. Odom. Odom serves as FPG's director and was the study's principal investigator. "Perhaps it's not the unique features of the models that most contribute to child gains but the common features of the models that most influence child growth."

Read a 2-page *Snapshot* of the journal article:

http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/snapshots/FPG_Snapshot70_2013.pdf

Research Backs More Strategies for Children and Youth with Autism

Comprehensive Review Includes New “Tried and True” Practices

The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC) has 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 disorders (ASD) to locate the soundest research on interventions for children from birth to age 22.

“More children than ever are being diagnosed with autism,” said FPG director Samuel L. Odom, who co-headed the new review. “We’re catching them earlier, with better tools, and these children need the right services.”

ASD carries an average lifetime cost of \$3.2 million per person, but early diagnosis and effective interventions can reduce that cost by two-thirds.

“Some interventions may seem cutting-edge, but we don’t yet know if they have any drawbacks or trade-offs,” said FPG investigator Connie Wong, who co-headed the new review of research. “Our report only includes what’s tried and true.”

“These evidence-based practices are extremely valuable,” said Charlotte Crane, an

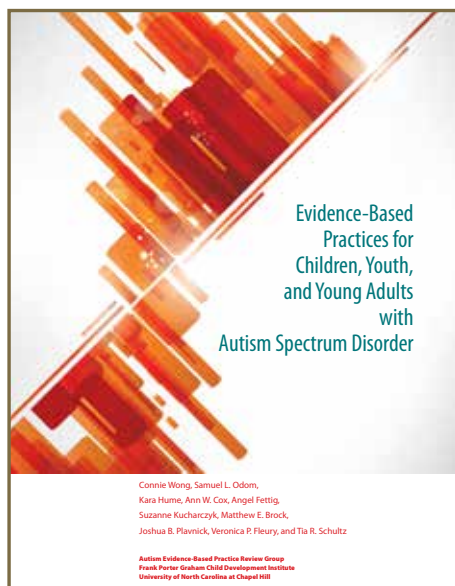
autism consulting teacher and board certified behavior analyst for Loudoun County Public Schools in Leesburg, Virginia. “This report gives us all a way to speak the same language and provide consistent research-based interventions.”

Kristine Ganley and Karen Berlin, training and technical assistance providers at George Mason University, heavily rely on the NPDC’s reports on evidence-based practices to help people seeking professional development. “We don’t provide training on practices not included on it,” said Berlin.

According to Ganley and Berlin, before the NPDC published its comprehensive reviews of research, interventions for children with autism were much more controversial. “Internet searches returned as many different approaches as authors behind them, and mastery of any practice was rare,” said Ganley.

“If there were no reliable report on evidence-based practices, intervention would be based upon myths,” added Berlin.

“Expanding the list offers more tools to educators and service providers,” said Ganley. “This improves outcomes for children with ASD.”



Not only does the NPDC’s report provide guidance for professionals, it also is an essential tool for families. “Parents often pay for interventions that have no evidence behind them, but this report will allow them to make the best choices,” said Odom.

For Allison Smith, the Pawtucket, R.I., mother of identical twin 4-year-old boys with autism, the NPDC reports have helped her to advocate for her sons’ services.

“Knowledge is power,” Smith said. “Knowing what works has given us the upper hand in acquiring appropriate therapy and tools.”

According to Smith, video modeling, a longtime evidence-based practice from the NPDC’s list, helped her boys learn how to blow a feather. Development of this key motor skill is often associated with the ability to speak.

“They couldn’t learn how to blow a feather until they watched their older brother doing it on video,” she said, even though therapists had been working face-to-face with the boys on the task for months. “But it only took a

few viewings of the short clip before both boys got it.”

“Being able to research the practices and then try them took a lot of guess work out of the process,” said Smith. “If there was no review of evidence-based practices, a lot of children would be without the interventions and services that are most appropriate for them.”

Read the full report:

<http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/sites/autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/files/2014-EBP-Report.pdf>

Watch Samuel L. Odom’s presentation on evidence-based interventions on a broadcast earlier this year from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

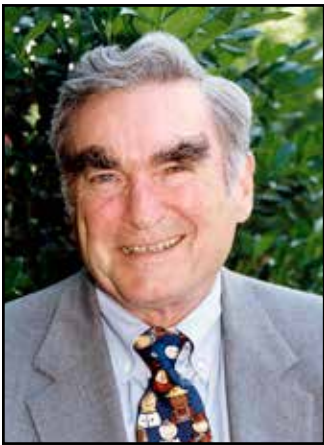
<http://www.cdc.gov/cdcgrandrounds/archives/2014/april2014.htm>

Spotlight

James J. Gallagher

The Child Development Field Mourns the Passing of a Pioneer

James J. Gallagher, an internationally recognized expert on special education and gifted education, died on January 17, at the age of 87. The former director of FPG was a senior scientist emeritus, as well as former Kenan Professor in UNC's School of Education.



“For many years, Dr. Gallagher was a mentor, colleague, and friend,” said FPG director Samuel L. Odom, who added that the former director was irreplaceable. “With this grief, we also need to remember his great life and achievements.”

Gallagher's career full of awards had continued in 2013 with more major recognition. In November, UNC's School of Education honored him with the Peabody Award for his extraordinary contribution to the field of education.

“James J. Gallagher has sparked, shepherded, and inspired an age of enlightenment in more than six decades as a pioneer in the discipline of child development and social policy—and as the nation's premier scholar in the fields of giftedness and developmental disabilities,” said Bill McDiarmid, dean of the School of Education, who presented the award.

Earlier in 2013, former N.C. state senator Howard Lee had presented Gallagher with another honor, the prestigious Old North State Award. N.C.'s Office of the Governor issues the award only to people with a proven record of exemplary service and commitment to the state.

As news of Gallagher's passing spread, his colleagues were quick to note a lifetime of priceless service, and former N.C. state senator Ellie Kinnaird called him a giant. “I am so sorry for this loss to the field for all children,” said Kinnaird.

For Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, Gallagher evoked a centuries-old remark by the English poet Andrew Marvell: “So much can one man do who doth both know and act.”

Donald J. Stedman, president and CEO of New Voices Foundation and former dean of UNC's School of Education, emphasized his 55-year friendship with Gallagher. “He cared about children,” Stedman added. “He was relentless in his pursuit of real issues in research and teaching.”

Among his many contributions, Gallagher played an integral role on Governor James B. Hunt's planning team to develop the North Carolina School for Science and Mathematics,

which was the first residential school of its kind focusing on talented students in science and mathematics at the secondary level. Gallagher also was instrumental in updating state law and regulation to better serve gifted students in North Carolina.

Prior to joining FPG, Gallagher was the first chief of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped in the then U.S. Office of Education. He oversaw a wide range of new legislation representing the first major efforts to ensure a free and appropriate education for children and youth with disabilities.

In 1970, Gallagher became Kenan Professor of Education at UNC and director of FPG. “His leadership was foundational in FPG’s development,” said Odom. “FPG became one of the nation’s leading research institutions.”

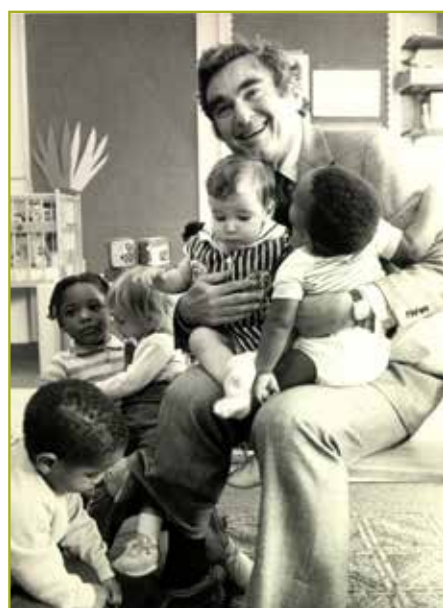
Gallagher wrote over two hundred articles for a wide range of professional journals, as well as 39 books, including one of the most widely used textbooks in gifted education, which he co-authored with his daughter, Shelagh Gallagher.

In 2009, the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) honored Gallagher as the third inductee into the NAGC Legacy Series. More than four decades had passed since he had delivered a timeless speech to the NAGC. “This generation cannot afford to be a spendthrift in intellectual resources as it has been in its physical gifts,” said Gallagher in 1965. “This price of failure is too high.”

Writing for *Roeper Review* last July, Gallagher echoed that same call, arguing for an end to the “unilateral disarmament” of our educational system. “If the national defense plans for the 21st century are based on brains, not just bombs,” he contended, “then we need time and concentrated effort to create conditions where our education system turns out intelligent citizens ready to build a society that is impervious to outside influence or economic attack.”

In the weeks before his death, Gallagher had been finishing the 14TH edition of the textbook *Educating Exceptional Children* with co-author Mary Ruth Coleman, FPG senior scientist emerita.

Olson Huff, former chair of the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Partnership for Children, joined others who described Gallagher as an inspirational figure: “His legacy will live on as long as there are children to be born.”



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 only drives positive outcomes for children and families 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.

Shaping Dialogue and Guiding Practice

from research to real-world solutions



New Program for Students with Autism Offers Hope After High School

Complex Educational Needs Called for a Comprehensive Program

An innovative program from FPG and six partner universities is preparing students with autism for life after high school.

“Public high schools may be one of the last best hopes for adolescents with autism—and for their families,” said FPG director Samuel L. Odom. “Many of these students will face unemployment and few social ties after school ends.”

According to Odom, teachers and other professionals in the schools work hard to achieve beneficial results for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). But positive outcomes remain elusive, given the scarcity of specific programs in high schools designed to help adolescents with ASD.

To fill this gap, Odom and other scientists formed the Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (CSESA).

“We developed our approach from research in several fields,” said Odom, CSESA’s principal investigator. “Because of the complex educational needs of many students with ASD, it was important to develop a comprehensive program for high schools.”

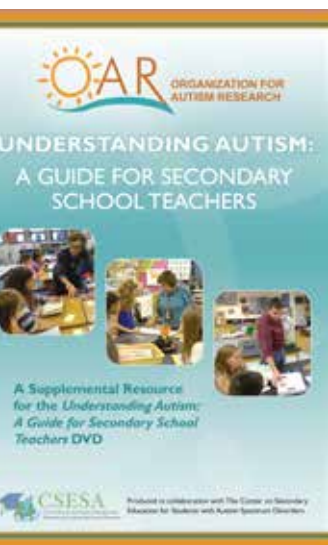
CSESA focuses on understanding emotions, developing friendships, and social problem-solving. Early results at a high school in the Raleigh-Durham, N.C. area show that student groups designed to bring together adolescents with and without ASD have helped them engage with one another more often.

“Even a simple hallway ‘hello’ between students with autism and their peers is more likely now,” said Kara Hume, CSESA’s project director and co-principal investigator.

CSESA also addresses literacy skills, which can be limited in many students with ASD. At Myers Park High School (MPHS) in Charlotte, N.C., the program helped with Christopher Stickell’s inclusion in an English class.

“Not only did my son have access to a wider world than his self-contained classroom, but the students in the English class had some of their pre-conceived notions about autism shattered,” said Lois Stickell. “Many were surprised when Chris read aloud a passage from Julius Caesar.”

“We help develop basic high school survival skills,” Hume said, adding that another cornerstone of the program is its emphasis on promoting responsibility, independence,





courtesy of Jeff Frye

and self-management.

According to Odom, many teens with ASD continue to live with their parents after high school. “Not surprisingly, parents worry about the future as they anticipate their child’s transition out of the public schools,” he said.

“CSESA has provided opportunities for greater collaboration and relationship building with the families who have attended ‘Transitioning Together’ sessions,” said Phyllis Alston, the exceptional children teacher for compliance at MPHS. Each week, CSESA staff and school district personnel lead these discussion groups with families.

“We became aware of resources available that without CSESA we may not have been made aware of,” said Faith Hamilton, whose teenager will be attending Central Piedmont Community College in the fall to study photography. “My son gained confidence and his grades improved this year.”

Although most complex programs may take 5 to 7 years to put into place, Odom said schools in North Carolina and 5 other states began using CSESA’s approach within weeks, and he projects that they will be administering the program on their own within 2½ years.

“CSESA will expand to 60 more schools over the next 3 years,” he added. “We hope a lot more students with autism spectrum disorders will be able to leave high school better prepared for the challenges they’ll face.”

Read articles, stories, and research snapshots from the special issue of *Remedial and Special Education: Autism, Adolescence, and High School*, guest edited by Kara Hume, CSESA’s co-principal investigator: <http://fpg.unc.edu/news/superior-visual-thinking-may-be-key-independence-high-schoolers-autism>

Read CSESA’s *Understanding Autism: A Guide for Secondary School Teachers*: <http://cseesa.fpg.unc.edu/sites/cseesa.fpg.unc.edu/files/UnderstandingAutismSecondaryTeachersGuide.pdf>

Access CSESA’s *Understanding Autism Professional Development Curriculum*: <http://cseesa.fpg.unc.edu/resources/understanding-autism-professional-development-curriculum>

Read more about CSESA: <http://cseesa.fpg.unc.edu/>

FPG Launches National Pre-K and Early Learning Evaluation Center

“We’ll help design, implement, and rigorously evaluate pre-k and early learning programs.”

President Obama’s renewed call this year for universal pre-kindergarten programming joined many appeals from federal and state policymakers for increased investments in public pre-k and early learning programs—along with calls to evaluate these services. In May, to meet the growing need for guidance from researchers with experience in early childhood education and program evaluation, FPG launched the National Pre-K and Early Learning Evaluation Center.

The new center comes at a time when many administrators across the country are

“With new early learning programs and 30 states already moving ahead on pre-k, research and evaluation will be essential to guiding design and ensuring quality.”

designing and implementing new pre-k or early learning programs—or updating programs they already have in place. “Thirty states have raised pre-k funding on their own,” said

the President during this year’s State of the Union Address. “They know we can’t wait.”

FPG director Samuel L. Odom said research reveals the long-term benefits of high-quality early care and education.

“FPG’s Abecedarian Project provided comprehensive high-quality care and education for children birth to age 5, and decades later they’re still reaping the benefits,” Odom said. “Other FPG studies have shown that even the single year of pre-k can help children while in the program and for several grades afterward.”

FPG senior scientist Ellen Peisner-Feinberg directs the new National Pre-K and Early Learning Evaluation Center and has headed many evaluation studies of statewide pre-k programs, including Georgia’s.

“Participating in Georgia’s Pre-K Program during the year prior to kindergarten had significant, positive effects on key measures of children’s language, literacy, and math skills,” said Peisner-Feinberg.

When Peisner-Feinberg’s team announced their findings from their latest evaluation of Georgia’s Pre-K Program, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that Steve Barnett, director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, had praised the study as “very rigorous.” Peisner-Feinberg said the same careful science will be the foundation for her center to help states serve all children,

including those with disabilities, those at risk, and dual language learners.

“We’ll help design, implement, and rigorously evaluate pre-k and early learning programs,” Peisner-Feinberg said. “We’ll also disseminate evaluation findings to policy-makers and other stakeholders.”

According to Peisner-Feinberg, benefits for children have been found in several state-wide program evaluations, including NC Pre-K, which she has studied since it opened as More at Four over a dozen years ago. She said FPG’s 13-year history of bringing research-based recommendations to North Carolina’s pre-k program has helped to ensure the program’s quality as it has grown.

“With new early learning programs and 30 states already moving ahead on pre-k, research and evaluation will be essential to guiding design and ensuring quality,” Peisner-Feinberg said.

Joining Peisner-Feinberg on the new center’s leadership team is co-director Virginia Buysse, who headed a seminal review of research last year on dual-language learners in public pre-k and Head Start programs. Buysse, a senior scientist at FPG, also

recently served on an integral workgroup for the Council for Exceptional Children on new standards for evidence-based practices in special education.

Margaret Burchinal and Pamela Winton, both senior scientists, and Chih-Ing Lim, an investigator, round out the new Evaluation Center’s leadership team.

Read more about the National Pre-K and Early Learning Evaluation Center:
<http://prekeval.fpg.unc.edu/>



Ellen Peisner-Feinberg directs the new National Pre-K and Early Learning Evaluation Center

New Era of Leadership Opens at FPG's National Implementation Research Network

When Dean Fixsen and Karen Blase created the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) in 2002 to accelerate growth in the field of implementation science, only a handful of implementation experts existed. With FPG's support, NIRN has since flour-



NIRN directors Melissa Van Dyke, left, and Allison J. Metz, right, flank founders Dean Fixsen and Karen Blase.

ished, organizing practitioners, program developers, researchers, and policymakers—and people in numerous roles and disciplines have come to better understand the benefits of implementation science. Now, NIRN encounters new opportunities as its co-founders pass the responsibilities for leading the seminal FPG project to scientists Melissa Van Dyke and Allison J. Metz, two

highly respected implementation experts who have served as co-directors of NIRN for the past year with Fixsen and Blase.

The inaugural issue of *Implementation Science* defined their discipline as “the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice,” often in typical service and community settings. As a field, the science and practice of implementation has been developing since the Great Society programs began in the 1960s. By the time Fixsen and Blase created NIRN, they already had spent decades learning about evidence-based programs and how to use them with optimal results in many different settings.

“It had become clear that implementation was the key to realizing the benefits of evidence-based programs on a socially significant scale,” said Fixsen.

Today, implementation science is hot. In a recent edition of *Exceptional Children*, Fixsen, Blase, Metz, and Van Dyke identified the main reason for its demand: the powerful inertia to which systems naturally succumb and which can “overwhelm virtually any attempt to use new evidence-based

programs.” Not surprisingly, a passive “train and hope” approach to implementation rarely succeeds in the meaningful realization of evidence-based practices. Also ineffective: implementation by laws, mandates, or regulations alone; implementation by only providing funding or incentives; implementation without changing supporting roles; and implementation solely based on the diffusion or dissemination of information.

“Those strategies alone routinely produce only 5–15 percent success rates,” said Blase. “However, a purposeful investment in implementation can produce significantly greater gains for program recipients.”

Only about 20 percent of people and organizations may be ready to be mobilized to bring an evidence-based program into practice, but planned and strategic implementation can help to create readiness, identify and nurture leaders, develop “buy in”, and locate or provide supports. In addition, implementation science includes effective processes and mechanisms to anticipate issues and barriers as use of an evidence-based program sends ripples through organizations and systems.

According to Fixsen, the small number of experts in implementation science before NIRN’s founding has since increased exponentially, and the field is ready for the next leap forward.

“Melissa Van Dyke and Allison Metz are in a great position to lead NIRN and to lead the next generation of implementation scientists and practitioners,” added Blase. “They have been outstanding contributors to implementation science and have gained the trust and admiration of scientists, practitioners, and leaders in human services in the U.S.—and around the globe.”

“As I’ve aged, I’ve come to realize we’re all born into families and groups of associates that have been developing for millennia and will continue to develop after our time has passed,” said Fixsen. “I’m proud of what has been accomplished and sad to participate less in the next steps, but I recognize that is the natural course of events. NIRN and the field of implementation are in excellent hands.”

Both Metz and Van Dyke expressed their deep appreciation for the mentorship Fixsen and Blase provided to them and for the invaluable foundation on which NIRN can continue to build.

“We feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work for and learn with Dean and Karen over these last years,” said Van Dyke. “It truly is exciting to be a part of this rapidly developing field of study.”

“We’re delighted to be part of a team of committed ‘scientist practitioners’—or ‘practitioner scientists,’” Metz added. “We’ll continue to learn together and contribute to the growing knowledge and practice base of implementation.”

Fixsen plans to spend less time on the road for NIRN projects, more time writing a book on implementation science, and more time visiting family and friends around the country. Blase will continue her work in education but with more time for implementation projects, creative endeavors, and travel, as well as for friends and family.

“It will be exciting to see how the field of implementation science develops and the contributions that NIRN will make with great leadership from Allison and Melissa,” said Blase. “There’s still so much to do and learn.”

Read more about FPG’s National Implementation Research Network: <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/>

Visit NIRN’s Active Implementation Hub: <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/>

Read more about NIRN and implementation science in “When Just Do It! Doesn’t Do It”: <http://fpg.unc.edu/news/purposeful-implementation-increases-success-rates>

Read about one of Karen Blase’s studies in “Researchers Bring Product Testing to Foster Care”: <http://fpg.unc.edu/node/6364>

Read about one of Allison J. Metz’s projects in “Success Coaches Keep Families Together”: <http://fpg.unc.edu/node/6224>

FPG Opens New Professional Development Center

The PDC@FPG Provides New Offerings and a Portal to a Wide Array of Resources



As schools opened again last fall, FPG opened a new cross-disciplinary professional development center to provide a wide array of PD opportunities related to child development and education. The Professional Development Center at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (PDC@FPG) addresses the needs of administrators, faculty, evaluators, specialists, researchers, teachers, and professional development providers. Designed with the same rigor that FPG brings to its research and outreach, the PDC@FPG's offerings include: Institutes and Intensive Workshops, Online Learning, Technical Assistance Services, Study Visits, and more.



“In today’s climate, with tight budgets and fewer resources, it’s especially important to provide teachers and other education professionals with

the high-quality, research-based professional development they need to ensure the best outcomes for children,” said Pamela J. Winton, FPG’s director of outreach.

“There’s always a demand for what FPG contributes to professionals in early childhood

education and in our schools,” Winton added, noting that one of the PDC@FPG’s new workshops had sold out even before the official opening. “The new Professional Development Center will help us to meet that demand.”

The PDC@FPG’s workshops provide rigorous short-term educational experiences on a variety of topics related to child development and learning. Offerings during the past year have included a series of independent workshops focused on research methodology and observation tools, including “Using the *Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)* with Proficiency.” The PDC@FPG also offered workshops on the *Autism Program Environment Rating Scale (APERS)*, “Using the APERS with Proficiency,” which drew attendees from near and far, including Saudi Arabia. Rounding out the PDC@FPG’s first year was a new workshop on “Student Motivation and Engagement,” a professional development sequence from FirstSchool’s Adam Holland that provided teachers and other participants with research-based strategies to use in classrooms.

This past year, the PDC@FPG also has served as a portal to major conferences, including: the Global Implementation Conference in

Washington, DC, supported by FPG's National Implementation Research Network; Improving Data, Improving Outcomes, a three-day national meeting, also in DC, sponsored by the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy), the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, and the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center; and, the annual return of FPG's National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute, the popular conference that draws people from around the world to meet, learn, share, and problem-solve about inclusion for young children.

Winton and FPG director Samuel L. Odom developed the PDC@FPG to provide easily-accessible resources at cost or no charge. "We understand many teachers and administrators have no travel budget, so we're also offering many of the center's resources online," said Odom.

The PDC@FPG serves as a hub for free online learning by connecting visitors directly to resources at FPG's well-established professional development centers, including the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion, the Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge (Project CONNECT), and the Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (CSESA). Each of these centers—as well as other projects at FPG—offers popular online lessons, modules, and other resources.

Through the PDC@FPG visitors also can access the Active Implementation Hub, a gathering of modules, lessons, and resources. FPG's State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-Based Practices Center and FPG's National Implementation

Research Network support and drive the Active Implementation Hub.

FPG also has a long history of providing technical assistance to states, districts, communities, and programs, on which the PDC@FPG capitalizes to offer fee-based Technical Assistance Services from several FPG projects. These services provide a planned series of activities, from basic to intensive, that result in changes to policies, programs, or practices. TA Services include The CROSSWALKS Model: Infusing Diversity in Pre-service Education, Developing Cross-Sector PD Systems, Using an RTI Approach in Early Childhood, and Teaching Approaches for Dual-Language Learners.



Through the PDC@FPG, professionals from around the world also can schedule in-person study visits to learn from FPG projects, and visitors can access a vast range of additional resources online.

"That's only a sampling of what's in store," said Winton. "Participants will benefit from the collective expertise of dozens of researchers, policy experts, faculty, and TA specialists. The PDC@FPG is continuing FPG's 47-year commitment to professional development."

Read about the latest offerings from the PDC@FPG:
pdc.fpg.unc.edu

TV Journalist Dwayne Ballen Delivers Keynote at Sold-Out Inclusion Institute

FPG's National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute has become the premier educational opportunity for anyone involved in the care and education of young children with special needs in inclusive settings. For over a dozen years, the popular three-day conference has drawn people to Chapel Hill from across the country and around the globe. This year, when journalist Dwayne Ballen delivered his keynote address to a sold-out crowd, he spoke before the largest audience in the Institute's history.

Ballen captivated a packed auditorium at UNC's Friday Center with stirring anecdotes about how his son Julian has benefitted



from inclusion. The former network sports anchor and current autism activist explained how Julian's mainstreaming was especially important, because high-functioning autism meant Julian was aware he was different. Ballen told how Julian's inclusion helped the boy feel like he was part of the group, like

he belonged. He also spoke frankly about agony—about how it felt, when Julian was older, to hear an administrator inform the family there was no place for Julian in his school.

Yet, the reasons Dwayne Ballen believes so firmly in inclusion go far beyond the benefits that it has brought his son and other children with special needs.

“People with special needs have much to offer us,” Ballen said. “I hope I'm a better person for having Julian. I hope I'm a better father. But one thing is certain, my life is better for having been Julian's father.”

Julian's autism comprises a blend of challenges and gifts. Ballen chronicled life with his son in the acclaimed *Journey with Julian*, in which he recounts how Julian has had a penchant for drawing ever since his grandmother first suggested giving him a pencil and paper in church to calm his fidgeting. While many parents know the strategy well, the result with Julian was particularly striking, igniting a lifelong passion for drawing that has kept his sketchpad often in tow—and in use no matter the environment. When Julian was a teenager, even at the Smith Center during the frenetic last few

seconds of a UNC-Duke basketball game, the artist still was intent on his sketches.

Now age 20, Julian's talents also include laser-like interests in animals, mythology, and all things Disney. His ability to focus intently on his favorite subjects, coupled with his memory, means he has developed his own forms of expertise in these areas.

"He can talk about his interests for hours," Ballen said. "If you get into a discussion with Julian about his favorite topics, you are headed for the deep weeds."

As a father of a neurotypical son, too, Ballen is well aware of the particular gifts Julian brings to the family. His wife Martina, younger son Jared, and Ballen himself all benefit from an extraordinary perspective.

"We get to see the world through Julian's eyes," Ballen said. "And it's a wonder. He sees everything with such unalloyed joy. That's what we get to experience—the purity of his joy for his life, devoid of duplicity. It's the greatest gift."

Ballen explained, though, that many schools are unprepared for students like Julian. "It's hard, because you run into problems in middle school and high school, where there's a divergence in the tracking between those students headed to college and those who aren't," he said. "We sat in a room full of educators, who told us that at best we could expect a certificate of attendance for Julian—not a high school diploma."

Julian would graduate with a high school degree, but only after a failed placement and a period of devastating emotional turmoil, which then took months of recovery for him. The Ballens found a small public school that helped children who had experienced

nervous breakdowns and other issues, and Julian eventually flourished there.

Julian's recovery was so thorough, he even volunteered later at a summer camp with kindergartners, which Ballen writes

about in *Journey with Julian*. At the camp, Julian enthralled children with his drawings of animals and Disney characters, as well as his detailed knowledge of the Yeti and other mythological creatures. His interests and "sweet innocence," Ballen writes, were a perfect match for the children, and the camp director praised Julian's work repeatedly, inviting him to help with additional camps that summer.

Regardless of how the next chapter unfolds, the artist's impact is already significant and lasting—thanks to his family's commitment to bringing him into inclusive environments and publicly embracing all that he is.

"Julian doesn't even realize how he is helping to make the world more accepting of thousands like him," Ballen writes, "simply by being himself."

Next year's Inclusion Institute convenes May 12-14.

For more information, please visit:
<http://inclusioninstitute.fpg.unc.edu/>



Project CONNECT Delivers Evidence-Based Practices around the Globe

An FPG Professional Development Project Finds International Popularity

FPG has been providing free training to a rapidly growing worldwide audience, helping early childhood educators learn how to teach young children with disabilities. Since FPG's Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge (Project CONNECT) first pioneered the use of their online multimedia modules in 2010, the project has delivered cutting edge instructional resources to users in more than 180 countries.

For FPG senior scientist Pamela J. Winton, CONNECT's principal investigator,

the popularity of the online modules was a classic case of supply and demand. "The research showed that many early childhood practitioners didn't have the confidence and skill they really needed to serve young children with disabilities," said Winton. "Early childhood teacher preparation programs often don't require any courses on

working with children with disabilities—

even when a program's stated mission is to prepare early interventionists and early childhood special educators."

Since many higher education programs designed to produce the next generation of teachers for classrooms with children with disabilities never actually offered professional development regarding those children, Winton and colleagues launched CONNECT. Through a partnership with the University of Kentucky and the University of Kansas and with funding from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, the project was born. CONNECT began developing its web-based modules on effective research-based practices in order to help faculty and professional development providers fill that vacuum of program content on children with disabilities.

Each of CONNECT's seven modules focuses on a discrete practice in a key content area and builds the capacity of early childhood practitioners for evidence-based decisions—a crucial emphasis, according to Winton. "The modules show educators how to recognize realistic problems they can solve and how to understand the importance of bringing multiple perspectives and

"The modules show educators how to recognize realistic problems they can solve and how to understand the importance of bringing multiple perspectives and sources of evidence to home-based and classroom situations."



Pam Winton



Virginia Buysse



Chih-Ing Lim

sources of evidence to home-based and classroom situations,” she said. Winton added that CONNECT also helps practitioners to identify which content is high-quality and most pertinent.

Winton and the CONNECT team developed the modules through ongoing feedback from faculty and other professional development providers, administrators, and families. Constant collaboration, testing, and refinement established a two-way flow of information, which Winton termed “a core value of our work.” The result was instruction that came in a variety of formats—including audio and video clips, activities, handouts, and supporting resources for instructors—content that was easily adaptable to the needs of multiple audiences and contexts.

In short, that two-way flow of information helped to make for modules with built-in popularity. With a no-cost price tag for users during the federal funding period and the globe-shrinking power of the web, CONNECT’s multimedia instruction has circumnavigated the planet—generating over 1.8 million page views of the modules alone.

The project’s international appeal has fostered even greater demand, such as the

invitation for Winton and co-principal investigator Virginia Buysse to deliver several presentations and workshops this past fall in Melbourne at Australia’s inaugural National Early Childhood Inclusion Conference.

Buysse and project coordinator Chih-Ing Lim also have answered requests to travel to Singapore to discuss the project, with Lim having trekked to speak to IndoCare in Jakarta last year as well. In addition, the modules have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin.

Lim also recently co-authored an article in *Early Childhood Education Journal* on a new study of CONNECT modules, which revealed learners reported the modules were effective over and above other instructional methods.

Access CONNECT Modules:

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/>

Read more about Project CONNECT:

<http://connect.fpg.unc.edu/>

“Supporting Change and Reform in Preservice Teaching in North Carolina” Wins Engaged Scholarship Award

FPG Project Supports Early Childhood Educators in NC Community Colleges



Attending the award ceremony from SCRIPT-NC were (left to right) principal investigator Tracey A. West, co-principal investigators Dale J. Epstein and Chih-Ing Lim, and investigator Camille Catlett. UNC Chancellor Carol L. Folt (right) presented the award.

This past spring, the 2014 Office of the Provost Engaged Scholarship Award went to Supporting Change and Reform in Preservice Teaching in North Carolina (SCRIPT-NC). The FPG project partners with community college programs across North Carolina to better prepare early childhood educators to meet the needs of young children with disabilities and children who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

One of SCRIPT-NC’s key partnerships is with the early childhood education department at Vance-Granville Community College, which is offering a cutting-edge program for the next generation of teachers who will serve young children.

“It’s been a real eye opener,” said Tracey Bennett, who has taught at VGCC for ten years and serves as department chair. “We had a good program already at Vance-Granville, but with SCRIPT-NC we realized what we really wanted to be.”

Not only did SCRIPT-NC help Bennett and her faculty to enrich the content of their

courses with the latest evidence-based research, the partnership also led her department to examine its role in the community. “We realized that programs in our area are serving a lot of young children whose families’ first language isn’t English—or they don’t speak English at all,” said Bennett. “These programs also serve children with different kinds of abilities.”

Bennett anticipated a crucial shift in how her department’s students will interact with children and families. “Instead of only addressing themes, new graduates will focus on each child’s particular needs, each classroom’s particular needs, and the families’ particular needs,” she said. “And on how they can really address those needs.”

In addition to working intensively with four community colleges, SCRIPT-NC offers online resources, including course-specific information and widely viewed webinars open to all North Carolina community colleges.

Read more about SCRIPT-NC:

<http://scriptnc.fpg.unc.edu/>

FPG Collaborates on the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans

Successful Young African American Men Voice Strategies and Concerns in White House Summits

The route to early success for African American men requires adept navigation of conscious and unconscious racism, as well as capitalizing on available supports, according to a new report from UNC's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG). The report from FPG's Research, Policy, and Practice Alliance for Supporting Excellence in Black Children (RPP) reviews the first public summits this year that are part of the new White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans (WHIEEAA).

The purpose of these town hall meetings is to raise awareness, highlight best practices, and support community engagement by listening to young African American males who have distinguished themselves in their communities and at their academic institutions. The report summarizes themes and provides samples of conversations with panelists ranging in age from high school freshmen to college seniors in summits at Morehouse College in Georgia and Jackson State University in Mississippi.

"These are probably among the most important discussions that we will have," said WHIEEAA executive director David J. Johns in the report. "Far too frequently people talk about Black men and boys without allowing

us the space to articulate what it is that we feel, what it is that we think, and how it is that we are already working to change our schools and our communities and our country."

As a group, the panelists spoke about the value of using their education and receiving support from family members, other individuals, and programs to help them develop and excel. Although none discussed experiencing the more overt and heinous acts of racism and discrimination of past decades, they provided numerous examples of facing contemporary bias—which people sometimes hold unconsciously.

"Unconscious or implicit bias describes discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes that are outside of an individual's awareness or intentional control," said FPG scientist Donna-Marie C. Winn, whose RPP team spearheaded the report in partnership with CommonHealth Action. "These biases are different from the ones that individuals choose to conceal because of pressures to be socially or politically correct. These biases happen in an instant, but they do not have to determine our actions."

The African American males who participated in the summits have been subject

to a variety of very restrictive stereotypes, including such personas as “criminals” and “entertainers,” as well as such attributes as “lazy,” “uneducated,” and “lacking in aspirations.” As one panelist reported, “We are expected to barely get by or to fail.”

“Dispelling myths and highlighting true, accurate narratives of Black men and boys can work to remove barriers to academic success and workforce preparedness,” said Winn, who has been speaking at the summits about



ways to promote educational excellence among African Americans. “There’s overwhelming evidence from research and practice that our nation can do a much

better job of removing the obstacles that disproportionately undermine the success of young males of color. The only question is, “Will we?”

In spite of experiencing bias, many young African American males continue to succeed in school and afterwards. To cope, the panelists said they wear “masks” to seem less dangerous in public; rely on trusted family, friends, and mentors; defer to authority when necessary; learn to problem-solve and adapt; use humor; and enjoy defying old stereotypes. They also recognize their worth in their communities.

In addition, the young panelists place great significance both on providing and receiving mentorship, which they cited repeatedly as an integral resource for learning, growth,

and development. Many of them actively identify strengths in the people and institutions that are available to support them.

According to the report, panelists have distinct goals for the supports they receive and recognize that by further engaging fathers, minority male educators, and mentors these supports “can take them to the next level.” Said one young panelist, “If everyone helped one person get to that next level, who knows where we’d all be?”

In addition to Donna-Marie C. Winn, FPG’s Research, Policy, and Practice Alliance for Supporting Excellence in Black Children includes Marvin McKinney, Iheoma Iruka, Christine Harradine, Jenille Morgan, Nakenge Roberts, Mark McDaniel, and Toni Glatz.

Read the Summary Report on 2014 Summits and Town Halls on Educational Excellence for African American Males:
<http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/news/SummaryReport2014Summits.pdf>

Read more about FPG’s Research, Policy, and Practice Alliance for Supporting Excellence in Black Children:
<http://rpp.fpg.unc.edu/>

FPG Experts Serve on the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council

NC Governor Appoints Group to Ensure Healthy, Happy Children

North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory has appointed 23 new members to the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council. According to the Office of the Governor, the council's charge is to develop a shared vision for young children and a comprehensive system of family strengthening services.

"The quality of care during early childhood can often determine the level of success a person achieves later in life," said Governor McCrory in a statement after authorizing the council.

The council's responsibilities include advising on the \$70 million award that North Carolina received through the federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELC).

"North Carolina has exciting opportunities to strengthen our early childhood system through this grant," said the council's Mary Ruth Coleman, FPG senior scientist emerita.

After the council's first meeting, Coleman praised its comprehensive approach and noted its members include a wide range of researchers, educators, and health care professionals, as well as state senator Ron Rabin and state representative Justin Burr.

Joining Coleman from FPG are the Brookings Institution's Ron Haskins, who serves on FPG's executive leadership board, and Richard Clifford, senior scientist emeritus.

Coleman said the council will provide the innovative and practical advice the state needs to strengthen its early childhood system. "North Carolina has been a leader in early childhood, with strong collaboration across public and private sectors, and the council is committed to building on this," she said.

"With Governor McCrory's support, funding from Race to the Top, and the Early Childhood Advisory Council's expertise, North Carolina now has the opportunity to make significant strides forward in enhancing the lives of children and families in our state," said FPG director Samuel L. Odom.



Mary Ruth Coleman,
FPG senior scientist
emerita



Richard Clifford,
FPG senior scientist
emeritus

FPG Spearheads Intervention Projects for Dual-Language Learners

Understanding Our 21st-Century Melting Pot Has Never Been More Important

Because the United States is a nation of many cultures, understanding the needs and strengths of the children from populations from across the world who now live in the U.S. remains crucial. These dual-language learners (DLLs) represent a large and rapidly growing group. By 2006, already nearly one in three children enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start lived in a household in which a language other than English was spoken.

Children who have lower English-language abilities than their peers benefit the most from programs like Head Start and public pre-k—but exactly how and why require continued exploration. Understanding the *how* and *why*—as well as applying what we know—has become the mission of several FPG projects designed to help DLLs in preschool and beyond.

These FPG projects include the Center for Early Care and Education Research—Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL), which sponsored the Policy Forum on Early Development and Education of Dual Language Learners at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. In their brief to Congressional staffers, CECER-DLL investigators provided a synthesis of research on dual-language learners and made several federal-level policy recommendations.

FPG's Nuestros Niños Program examined strategies for promoting school readiness for DLLs. Over the last decade, the project has moved through three phases, addressing important issues brought about by the changing demographics of the nation and the need for more information about the appropriateness of services for children and families from diverse backgrounds. The Nuestros Niños intervention consists of an array of strategies that teachers use specifically to support children's development and learning in the areas of language, literacy, math, and social competence.

The primary aims of the current phase of the project are to evaluate the effectiveness of the Nuestros Niños intervention, examine the extent of the effects of the intervention at entry into kindergarten and first grade, and determine which factors moderate the effects of the intervention on the short-term and longer-term outcomes of Spanish-speaking English language learners.

Improving pre-k through 3RD-grade school experiences for Latino children and their families is a primary goal of FPG's FirstSchool, which also focuses on African American and low-income children and families. The FirstSchool team provides



expertise and professional development in collaboration with districts, schools, administrators, and teachers to help them move toward a seamless approach for children ages 3 to 8. FirstSchool has assisted with the North Carolina Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge Grant and conducted outreach, dissemination, and professional development at state and national levels. In April, senior White House and Administration staff invited FirstSchool director Sharon Ritchie to discuss their work and the President’s Early Education Agenda. In addition, Teachers College Press recently released *FirstSchool: Transforming PreK–3rd Grade for African American, Latino, and Low-Income Children*.

Ritchie, lead author of the new book, also heads FPG’s From Evaluation to Inquiry, a project funded by the NC Department of Public Instruction to provide educators in struggling schools with lenses through which to view the experiences of their students and to make informed decisions about how to improve their school experiences. One of the key goals of the project is for administrators and teachers to explore the principles and use of collaborative inquiry to inform instructional practice and knowl-

edge of student learning and progress, with a focus on improving learning of African American, Latino, and low income students.

While findings mount about the importance of pre-k for DLLs and suggest how to tailor their education, complex early experiences and shifting demographics suggest that fully appreciating the needs and strengths of growing numbers of DLLs and their families will be an ongoing challenge. Because the early years in particular are central in shaping the lives of all children, FPG’s work on many fronts will continue to play a prominent role in understanding the people who comprise our 21st-century melting pot.

Read more about CECER-DLL:

cecerdll.fpg.unc.edu

About Nuestros Niños:

<http://fpg.unc.edu/projects/nuestros-ninosprogram-promoting-school-readiness-english-language-learners>

About FirstSchool:

<http://fpg.unc.edu/projects/firstschool>

About From Evaluation to Inquiry:

<http://fpg.unc.edu/projects/evaluation-inquiry>

Four-Decade History of Technical Assistance Undergirds New TA Projects

Current Work Continues FPG's Legacy and Even Draws Interest from Singapore

Describing her job has been the curse of Lynne Kahn's Thanksgiving dinners. The FPG scientist is an integral part of the leadership of several FPG technical assistance centers, including the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, the Early Childhood Outcomes Center, and the IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems TA Center, as well as the North Carolina Early Learning TA Network and six other national and state TA projects. But Kahn said explaining the nitty-gritty of all that to family members without jargon is extremely difficult.

"And as far as I can tell, the word 'technical' is as useful as the *e* on the end of *Lynne*," she said. "It doesn't add anything."

For over 42 years, FPG has been committed to providing TA services, and Kahn has settled on a broad but simple definition of what that really means: helping people do whatever it is they're trying to do more efficiently and more effectively. Who FPG has helped, what those groups have wanted to accomplish, and how Kahn and company have provided TA have evolved over the years to meet the demands of new research and paradigm shifts. Yet, Kahn said, a two-pronged approach has remained constant—

a dual focus on process and content.

Kahn now heads several grants, which support states by facilitating strategic planning and program management, as well as embedding evaluation into the implementation process.

"Under Lynne's leadership, the number and diversity of TA projects has grown tremendously," said Christina Kasprzak, who serves with Kahn as co-director of FPG's new Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center. Kahn and Kasprzak have led the re-organization of FPG's technical assistance projects into an umbrella unit, the Trohanis TA Projects, named for FPG's Pat Trohanis, who was a TA pioneer. Despite commonalities over time and across projects, the content of the Trohanis TA Projects varies widely.

"Sometimes it's supporting the overall implementation of IDEA—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities," said Kasprzak. "Sometimes we have a very targeted focus, helping with longitudinal data systems or outcome measurement systems, for example, and sometimes

we may have very small projects within a state, such as helping the North Carolina Early Intervention program with their family survey.”

After an award from the Office of Special Education Programs in 2012, the ECTA Center has taken center stage among FPG’s large-scale TA projects. “Our mission is really to improve state early intervention and the early childhood special education service systems,” said Kasprzak, “as well as increasing the implementation of effective practices and enhancing outcomes for young children.”

One of the ECTA Center’s key activities focuses on systems building. “We’re working on figuring out a cutting-edge systems framework that really helps states think about what it means to have a quality system,” said Kasprzak. The goal: to ensure effective and efficient early intervention and preschool programs for young children with disabilities. The ECTA Center is collaborating with national, regional, and state partners.

“We’re also looking at critical implementation components,” said Kasprzak. “We’re taking the work of implementation science and making sure we help support states in understanding what it means to use what we know are good practices for scaling up and sustaining effective practices.”

In addition, the ECTA Center is providing support to the Division for Early Childhood (DEC), Council for Exceptional Children. Last year, the DEC created a Recommended Practices Commission to update and revise its recommendations and to develop a process by which Recommended Practices

will be updated regularly. With the ECTA Center’s help, the DEC recently published its updated practices.

Major TA projects at FPG also include the Early Childhood Outcomes Center, as well as the IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems TA Center (DaSy).

The current vibrancy and multifaceted nature of TA projects do not go unnoticed. This past spring, for instance, a group from the largest medical facility in Singapore visited FPG to work with Kasprzak and technical assistance specialist Kathi Gil-laspy. Such crucial, far-reaching service also highlights the appropriateness of Lynne Kahn’s shorthand explanation of technical assistance. She might have coined it for the sake of smoothing over dinnertime conversation, and, to be sure, it does not do justice to the nimbleness and talent that have guided FPG’s comprehensive approach to TA for the past 42 years. And, by itself, it says nothing explicit about the betterment of outcomes for children and families that have resulted from that tradition. But even though her definition is a great understatement, FPG’s legacy in TA continues to be about helping people do what they’re trying to do.

For over 42 years, FPG has been committed to providing TA services, and Kahn has settled on a broad but simple definition of what that really means: helping people do whatever it is they’re trying to do more efficiently and more effectively.

Read more about the ECTA Center and other TA projects at FPG: <http://ectacenter.org/>

FPG Brings New Research and Evidence-Based Practices to International Audiences

Presentations Contribute to FPG's Global Profile and Foster New Collaborations

FPG's legacy of research and service has long had a growing global influence, and over the past two years alone, people in 185 countries have used FPG online resources and read about the institute's projects. As well as hosting visiting scholars from universities around the globe, FPG has active projects in



FPG scientist Camille Catlett with children and family members from the Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children in Chennai, India

Canada and Saudi Arabia. FPG's rising international presence also stands on an ongoing commitment to sharing expertise at international conferences and events.

In addition to

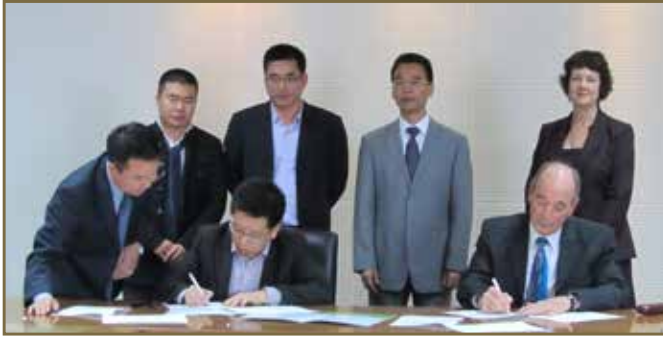
speaking to local, state, and national audiences, our scientists travel the world, exchanging knowledge and insight with policymakers, colleagues at colleges and universities, and many other professionals.

This past year, these presentations have included National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) co-director Melissa Van

Dyke at the Annual Danish Implementation Conference, as well as fellow co-director Karen Blase's talks in Edinburgh and Belfast. Blase presented at the NHS Education for Scotland Conference and delivered the closing plenary at Improving Children's Lives: An International Interdisciplinary Conference.

Along with NIRN co-directors Dean Fixsen, Allison Metz, and Van Dyke, as well as with FPG communication specialist Jonathan Greene, Blase also presented at last year's Global Implementation Conference. NIRN provides support for the biennial conference, which gathered a diverse group of participants to share ideas and research around implementation science, practice, and policy. Planners designed the conference to set goals for the field of implementation science for 2020 and beyond.

FPG scientist Camille Catlett headed to India to present two workshops, which drew audiences of early childhood and early intervention professionals at the Fourth International Conference and Tenth National Workshop for the Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children in Chennai, India. In addition, she made a presentation



FPG director Samuel L. Odom (seated, right) signed a memorandum of agreement for collaboration with leaders at Zhejiang Normal University.

to early childhood educators at the Center for Early Childhood Education and Development at Ambedkar University in Delhi.

Over the past year, many of the scientists who comprise the core of FPG's expertise on autism spectrum disorders (ASD) also have made presentations to international audiences. Scientist Kara Hume, FPG fellow Brian A. Boyd, investigators Jessica R. Dykstra and Suzanne Kucharczyk, and postdoctoral research associate Veronica P. Fleury all spoke at the 2014 International Meeting for Autism Research. In addition, FPG director Samuel L. Odom spoke on effective early treatment of children with ASD and on the social integration and inclusion of children with ASD at the Child Socialization, Social Integration, and Inclusion Conference, which the Theodor Hellbrugge Foundation convened in Munich to award Odom with the Arnold Lucius Gesell Prize. (For more, see *Spotlight: Samuel L. Odom.*)

Odom's many other professional travels included a trip with scientist Kathleen Cranley Gallagher to Hangzhou in China to deliver featured presentations at an international conference on early childhood teacher education—and to sign a memorandum of

agreement with Zhejiang Normal University to exchange scholars, provide opportunities for training teachers, and collaborate on research projects. According to Odom, FPG's new agreement with ZNU will benefit researchers, scholars, and professionals on both sides of the globe, solidifying a relationship with an international university with considerable resources.

“Dr. Gallagher and I have learned a lot about the impressive early childhood programs we've visited,” said Odom. “This collaboration will enhance our work.”

Read more about FPG's presentations:
<http://tinyurl.com/FPGPresentations>

Spotlight

Samuel L. Odom

FPG's Director Wins an International Award for Child Development Research



Samuel L. Odom (right) receives the 2013 Arnold Lucius Gesell Prize

This past December the Theodor Hellbrugge Foundation awarded FPG director Samuel L. Odom the 2013 Arnold Lucius Gesell Prize for an outstanding career in the field of child development. Noting Odom's "extraordinary contributions" in research and service, the foundation presented him with the award at an international conference in Munich, convened to celebrate the prize.

The Gesell Prize carries an award of 10,000 euros, a medal forged in silver, and a legacy alongside the international leaders in child development research. Only a dozen others had received the award before Odom.

"I'm extremely honored to receive the Arnold Lucius Gesell Prize and to be added to a list of people whose work I've deeply admired," said Odom, whose distinguished career has focused most recently on studying autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Seventeen years ago, the foundation conceived the prize in memory of its namesake, Arnold Lucius Gesell, the esteemed pediatrician and psychologist whose accomplishments included founding the Yale Clinic of Child Development in the 1930s.

Past winners of the prize have hailed from Prague, St. Petersburg, London, and Zurich, in addition to the U.S. Recipients have included T. Berry Brazelton, the Harvard University MD whose publications include the popular Touchpoints book series, a guide for parents to their children's phases of development, and Marc H. Bornstein, the head of child and family

research at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Emmy Werner, the University of California-Davis researcher best known for piloting a 40-year study of nearly 700 Hawaiian infants, won the prize in 2001. “Dr. Odom’s work, which I greatly admire, clearly deserves the Gesell Prize,” said Werner.

Autism spectrum disorders, developmental disabilities, inclusion, and special education are among Odom’s areas of expertise, which he cultivated over a long career that originally led him as a University of Tennessee graduate student to Gesell’s writing.

“Arnold Gesell’s work was fundamental,” said Odom, recalling his first exposure to the Yale pediatrician’s research. “He was one of the first to chart the course of child development, clearly defining milestones for young kids as they grow, as well as helping to assess what might be typical or atypical.”

Not long after his introduction to Gesell’s work, Odom’s budding career took him into research, too. Over the years he subsequently wrote or co-wrote over 100 publications, and he edited or co-edited 10 books on early childhood intervention and developmental disabilities. He often explored topics related to early childhood inclusion and preschool readiness, before later focusing on autism spectrum disorders, the epicenter of his current projects.

Odom’s previous awards include honors for his teaching, service, and research, and Congressional committees twice have called upon him for expert testimony. But it was his term on the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Educational Programs for Children with Autism that led him to turn his attention primarily to autism.

Since 2006, he has directed the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, served as a professor in UNC’s School of Education, and led several seminal projects. His recent work has addressed the effectiveness of a variety of approaches for children with ASD, including peer-mediated interventions, independent work systems, and other strategies and techniques.

He currently heads the pioneering Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, which is developing a comprehensive treatment model specifically designed for high school students—the first of its kind. In addition, he also has served as principal investigator for the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC). An FPG team recently completed an exhaustive review of the latest science for the NPDC, offering crucial guidance to parents and professionals about the most effective practices to use with children and youth with ASD.

“It’s an exciting time to focus on children with ASD,” said Odom. “The research on the most effective behavioral and social interventions for these children is accelerating—and so are our understandings of how best to translate and implement these approaches in homes, schools, and communities.”

Earlier this year, the Center for Disease Control reported that 1 in 50 children in the U.S. live with autism, up from 1 in 88 in 2012. These children will incur an average additional cost of more than three million dollars for treatment and care over a lifetime, but early diagnosis and effective interventions can reduce that cost by two-thirds.

“Despite isolated reports of interventions helping some children to progress out of the autism spectrum, we’re not yet at a cure,” said Odom. “But the field’s increasing understanding of effective practices, as well as its ability to make use of them, will lead to many more positive outcomes for children and families.”

Across Odom’s career, Gesell remained important to his thinking about child development. In an editorial for the *Journal of Early Intervention*, Odom considered the pediatrician in light



of research emerging from some of the new millennium’s foremost scientists and their followers. He termed Gesell a “developmental geographer” and a pioneer who himself had spawned an influential following of noted researchers in early childhood education and special education.

In addition to receiving the Gesell Prize at the Munich conference, Odom delivered two featured presentations, which included updates on the state of the current science on ASD. Indeed, Odom’s work has found an audience in Germany far more easily than Gesell’s own research originally did, and not merely because of the ease with which information today crosses the globe.

According to the Theodor Hellbrugge Foundation, National Socialism had isolated Germany from international research during a time when interest outside the country in Gesell’s long list of books was at its highest. This, in fact, prompted the German foundation to establish the award in Gesell’s memory.

Clearly, from Odom’s start as a young graduate student at the University of Tennessee to his present place among the international elite of child development researchers, no such barriers have stood between him and the legacy of Arnold Lucius Gesell.

Projects and Partners

300 people, 100 projects, and a host of collaborators

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 100 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 2013–2014 active projects, as well as the list of partners who have supported FPG over the years and who continue to make our work possible. Through this network of projects and collaborators, FPG continues to grow and evolve, enhancing the lives of more and more children and families.

2013–2014 Projects

- A Family-Genetic Study of Autism and Fragile X Syndrome
- A Family-Genetic Study of Language in Autism
- A Gathering of Leaders (AgoL) 2013
- A Neuroscience-Based Health Curriculum to Promote Academic Success
- A Study of Child Care Settings in Multiple Communities
- An Integrated Lifecycle and Intergenerational Approach to Health and Other Capabilities
- An Investigation of the Overlap of Autism and Fragile X Syndrome: Insights From Language Prosody
- 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
- Center for Early Care and Education Research—Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL)
- Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems
- Center on Secondary Education for Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder (CSESA)
- 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
- Community Health Inclusion Index Project
- CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge
- Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Vocabulary Approach for Dual Language Learners
- 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
- Early Learning Network Reliability Training on the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)
- Educare Learning Network's Data Utilization Study
- ELEVATE: A Technology Mediated Professional Development Program in Literacy: Helping Teachers Close the Achievement Gap for High Needs Children in Low-Wealth Rural Communities
- Evaluation of Georgia's Pre-Kindergarten Professional Development Initiative
- 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 (SCRIPP)
- Evaluation of the Head Start Designation Renewal System
- 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"
- Family Adaptation to Fragile X Syndrome
- FirstSchool Implementation
- From Evaluation to Inquiry
- Georgia Early Childhood Program Evaluation Project
- Georgia Pre-Kindergarten Evaluation
- Healthy Places North Carolina (HPNC)
- Human Capital Interventions Across Childhood and Adolescence
- IDEA Data Center
- Implementation Evaluation of the Triple P System in Two North Carolina Counties
- Improving Parenting Capacity to Promote Safe Driving for Adolescents With ADHD
- Improving Social-Communication and Engagement of Elementary Students With Autism Spectrum Disorders: Adapting a Preschool Intervention for Elementary School Classrooms
- Joint Attention Mediated Learning Intervention for Toddlers With Autism Spectrum Disorders and Their Families
- Key Early Childhood Practices for Fostering Young Children's Communication Skills
- Measurement Development: Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers
- Mid-South Regional Resource Center
- Montana Maternal and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MECHV) Evaluation
- National Evaluation Partner for the Educare Learning Network Implementation Study
- National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders
- NC Part C Family Survey Project
- New Hampshire Early Childhood Advisory Council (SparkNH) TA Project
- North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council Support
- North Carolina Early Learning Network
- North Carolina Family Survey Project
- North Carolina Office on Disability and Health (NCODH)
- 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
- Obesity Research Project on Prevalence, Adaptations and Knowledge Translation in Youth and Young Adults With Disabilities From Diverse Race/Ethnic Backgrounds
- Partnership in Using Implementation Science to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families
- Post-Doctoral Training in Special Education Research
- Postdoctoral Research Training Fellowship in Early Childhood Education Sciences
- Pragmatic Skills of Young Males and Females With Fragile X Syndrome
- Preschool Special Education Evaluation Project
- Process Evaluation of NC's Maternal, Infant & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
- Project to Provide Implementation Support for Permanency Innovations Initiative Grantees
- Project to Provide Training and Technical Assistance to Long-Term Foster Care 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
- Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge TA Center
- Ready Classrooms
- Recognition and Response: Addressing Early Learning Difficulties in Math Through an RTI Model for Pre-K
- Reliability Training on the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)
- SCRIPP
- SERP OUSD Partnership
- SERRC Early Childhood TA Support
- SISEP-NC DPI-OEL
- Snapshot Data Collection Project
- Stability and Change in Attachment and Social Functioning, Infancy to Adolescence
- State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-Based Practices (SISEP) Center
- Stress Exposure and Immune Outcomes in Children
- Study of EHS-CC Partnerships-Services Component 1: Knowledge Base and TOC Model
- Supplement to Evaluation to Inquiry
- Supplemental Activities: Parent Focus Groups
- Supporting Change and Reform in Preservice Teaching in North Carolina (SCRIPT-NC)
- Synthesizing and Interpreting the Evidence on Early Intervention

- Tacoma Community College Paraeducator Project
- Technical Support to CDC EHDI Team on Part C Programs
- Temperamental Precursors of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- 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 Sociolinguistic Significance of the Post-Secondary School Stage in the Longitudinal Development of African American English
- The State of Alaska Early Intervention and Infant Learning Program
- 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)
- To Build Implementation Capacity at ENW RCC
- Toddlers and Families Together: Addressing Early Core Features of Autism
- WRRRC TA Project
- 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
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- 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
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Partners

- 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
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- Duke Endowment
- Duke University
- Evergreen Evaluation and Consulting, Inc.
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- Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities
- Center for Developmental Science
- Department of Linguistics
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Public Policy
- Diversity and Multicultural Affairs
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2013–2014 Resources

books, articles, briefs, multimedia, and much 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 hundreds of media outlets in the past year alone. Yet, FPG's local, state, national, and international reach clearly 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 2013–2014.

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