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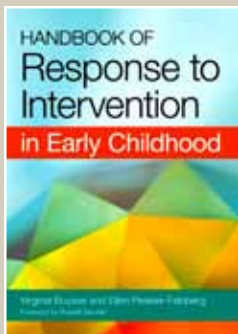FRANK PORTER GRAHAM
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

From Research to Practice
Professional Development, Technical Assistance,
and Implementation Science

new resources

Handbook Provides Comprehensive Look at Response to Intervention in Early Childhood

FPG senior scientists Virginia Buysse and Ellen Peisner-Feinberg have edited the first comprehensive examination of the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) to promote pre-k children's development and learning. The *Handbook of Response to Intervention in Early Childhood* delivers an overview of how RTI is designed to be used in pre-k, including detailed information on its defining principles and features, its evidence base, and program-level supports needed for implementing it.

The handbook also provides seminal material on specific RTI models, such as Recognition & Response (R&R)—which was developed at FPG. The R&R model uses small-group lessons that focus on vocabulary, letter names, and sound awareness to provide enriched instruction, more teacher attention, and more opportunities to practice. It also embeds learning in the environment and other activities in order to reinforce skills taught during small-group instruction. In October 2012, the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation and Campaign for Grade-Level Reading released a comprehensive report and action plan for helping children with learning disabilities reach grade-level reading proficiency, which identified the R&R model as good practice in action.

In the *Handbook of Response to Intervention in Early Childhood,* editors Buysse and Peisner-Feinberg present cutting-edge research and scholarship from over 60 leading experts, including 13 FPG investigators. This foundational resource serves as an essential reference for early childhood practitioners, researchers, administrators, faculty, and policy makers.

http://products.brookespublishing.com/Handbook-of-Response-to-Intervention-in-Early-Childhood-P667.aspx

FPG Offers Free 24/7 Implementation Training

FPG's newly launched Active Implementation Hub is a free, online learning environment for use by practitioners, educators, coaches, trainers, and others involved in active implementation and scaling up of programs and innovations. Its goal: to increase the knowledge and improve the performance of persons engaged in actively implementing any program or practice.

The AI Hub includes:

- **Modules and Lessons—**self-paced, computer-based training on active implementation;

- **A Resource Library—**searchable implementation resources and tools (e.g., planning tools, assessments, and activities); and

- **Learning Spaces—**shared, online spaces for learning and applying implementation knowledge and practices.

FPG's State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-Based Practices Center (SISEP) and FPG's National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) support and drive the Active Implementation Hub.

The Active Implementation Hub
http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu

FPG. Advancing knowledge. Enhancing lives.

contents

early developments

From Research to Practice
Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Implementation Science

In a recent article for the *Roeper Review,* FPG senior scientist emeritus James J. Gallagher called for the end of political attacks on teachers. For Gallagher, a former director of FPG, such attacks render us "demonstrably weaker as a nation in the face of our international competitors" and are symptomatic of our nation's unilateral "educational disarmament."

"We can only imagine the roar of outrage if there were suggestions to cut half our Marine Corps units, put our aircraft carriers in mothballs, and reduce our satellite scanners by 60%," he wrote. "Yet we stand by while the core of our educational enterprise at all levels is bruised and dismembered."

In the same article, Gallagher also quoted the Business Roundtable, which in 2008 deeply feared the implications of such disarmament:

"One of the pillars of American economic prosperity—our scientific and technological superiority—is beginning to atrophy even as other nations are developing their own human capital. If we wait for a dramatic event—a 21st century version of Sputnik—it will be too late. There may be no attack, no moment of epiphany, no catastrophe that will suddenly demonstrate the threat. Rather, there will be a slow withering, a gradual decline, a widening gap between a complacent America and countries with the drive, commitment, and vision to take our place."

For Gallagher, education is a matter of U.S. security: "If the national defense plans for the 21st century are based on brains, not just bombs, 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 turn, he proposed steps toward developing a world class educational infrastructure.

As we present our Fall 2013 *Early Developments,* James J. Gallagher's "Educational Disarmament, and How to Stop It" is especially salient. For decades, FPG has been dedicated to providing many of the kinds of support and resources that he suggests expanding for our nation's troops—the teachers, administrators, and decision-makers on the front lines. This issue of *Early Developments* provides examples of the many ways that FPG contributes knowledge and expertise—beyond conducting research—to our educational system and other human services. When we consider education comprehensively—which also must include its nesting within contexts of poverty, health, and other influences on child development—FPG's central role in arming our educational system becomes especially clear.

FPG director Samuel L. Odom and University of Hawaii co-author Bryan G. Cook recently wrote in an issue of *Exceptional Children* that "educators generally agree that broad implementation of practices shown by scientific research to reliably cause increased student performance (i.e., evidence-based practices, EBPs) will result in increased student outcomes." However, Odom and Cook also were quick to note that while "there has been considerable progress in generating and applying guidelines for identifying EBPs," putting them into practice is a different matter.

Odom's seminal work with investigator Connie Wong and others at FPG on updating evidence-based practices for children and youth with autism spectrum disorder is nearing completion. (See "New Evidence-Based Practices for Children and Youth with Autism.") Yet, because scientific study only drives positive outcomes for children and families when evidence-based practices see successful implementation, support, and maintenance, Odom and many others at FPG also have dedicated much of their service to traversing that well-known valley between research and its real-world application. "Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Implementation Science" remains an integral area of emphasis at FPG, with 31 current projects undertaking this work.

New Evidence-Based Practices for Children and Youth with Autism

The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (NPDC) has finished its much-anticipated report on evidence-based practices for children and youth with autism. Scientists at FPG spearheaded the project, screening 29,000 articles to identify published research on the most reliable interventions.

"More children than ever are being diagnosed with autism," says FPG director Samuel L. Odom, who co-headed the review of evidence-based practices. "We're catching them earlier, with better tools, and these children need the right services."

Kristine Ganley and Karen Berlin, training and technical assistance providers at George Mason University, base much of their work on the NPDC's determination of evidence-based practices. "We use the list as the primary means to help individuals and teams seeking professional development," says Berlin. "We don't provide training on practices not included on it."

The NPDC's report adds new evidence-based practices to the 24 it identified in its 2008 review of the research. According to Ganley, before the NPDC made its determination of evidence-based practices, ASD interventions could be much more controversial. Internet searches returned as many different approaches as authors behind them, and mastery of any practice was rare.

"Some interventions may *seem* cutting-edge," adds Connie Wong, the FPG investigator who co-headed the review of research with Odom. "But we don't yet know if they have any drawbacks or trade-offs. Our report only includes what's tried and true."

Visit **http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/**

This issue of *Early Developments* describes how FPG marries research and reality and concludes with a look at another FPG initiative to arm the front lines—our new professional development center, the PDC@FPG.

Read more about FPG's emphasis on Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Implementation Science
http://www.fpg.unc.edu/emphasis-area/professional-development-technical-assistance-and-implementation-science

See also
Cook, B. G., & Odom, S. L. (2013). Evidence-based practices and implementation science in special education. *Exceptional Children, 79,* 135-144.
Gallagher, J. J. (2013). Educational disarmament, and how to stop it. *Roeper Review, 35,* 197-204.

When *Just Do It!* Doesn't Do It

Purposeful Implementation Increases Success Rates

Metz & Fixsen

Blase   **Van Dyke**

Months before the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, the co-directors of FPG's National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) published an article in the *American Journal of Community Psychology,* in which they quoted a decade-old lament from the 2001 Executive Summary of the Surgeon General's report on youth violence:

> After years of effort and massive expenditures of public and private resources, the search for solutions to the issue of youth violence remains an enormous challenge. Some traditional as well as seemingly innovative approaches to reducing and preventing youth violence have failed to deliver on their promise.

Despite a considerable national investment in developing evidence-based programs and other innovations to combat youth violence, the need remains to deliver on that promise. In "Mobilizing Communities for Implementing Evidence-Based Youth Violence Prevention Programming: A Commentary," NIRN co-directors Dean L. Fixsen, Karen A. Blase, and Melissa K. Van Dyke not only presciently addressed a troubling topic—they also went on to provide a look at the science behind successful implementation.

As a field, the science and practice of implementation has been developing since the Great Society programs began in the 1960s. In 2006, the inaugural issue of *Implementation Science* defined the 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. Today, implementation science is hot, and earlier this year in *Exceptional Children,* Fixsen, Blase, Van Dyke, and fellow NIRN co-director Allison Metz identified the main reason for its demand: the powerful inertia to which systems naturally succumb, 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. Such strategies routinely produce only 5–15% success rates.

In short, Nike's motto doesn't apply to bringing evidence-based practices to fruition; *Just Do It!* doesn't do it.

However, a purposeful investment in implementation can produce significantly greater gains for recipients of programs. After synthesizing years of research, Fixsen and Blase maintain that such active implementation must include five frameworks: *Usable Interventions,* which are effective and well operationalized; *Implementation Teams* that support the full, effective, and sustained use of effective instruction and behavior methods; *Implementation Drivers,* the key components of capacity that enable the success of innovations in practice and assure development of relevant competencies, necessary organization supports, and engaged leadership; *Implementation Stages,* which show the integrated, non linear process of deciding to use an effective intervention and finally having it fully in place to realize the promised outcomes; and *Improve-ment Cycles* that support systematic and intentional change.

In their article on youth violence, Fixsen, Blase, and Van Dyke focused in particular on Implementation Stages and Implementation Teams for employing evidence-based practices and bridging the science-to-service divide. They first outlined the interactive, four-stage process for successful implementation of a program or innovation:

1. *The Exploration Stage* begins when community members learn about potentially new solutions to persistent problems. This stage involves sharing ideas, forming groups, engaging leaders, and seeking detailed information about problems, potential solutions, and methods and resources required to implement the intervention.

2. *The Installation Stage* often begins while community groups still are exploring the possibility of using one or more evidence-based programs. This stage consists of securing resources to support implementation activities and support the uses of the chosen interventions in practice. The use of an evidence-based program usually requires access to implementation expertise, funding for positions and services, referral sources, attention to licensing and accreditation, space, and equipment, as well as other considerations. This stage involves selecting staff, organizing and providing initial training, and developing coaching and data routines.

3. *The Initial Implementation Stage* includes supporting the development of staff competencies as the staff implements the innovation, creating organization supports, enhancing leadership, and redirecting system resources to facilitate the full and effective uses of the evidence-based program. Initial Implementation is a rocky period. Everything is new to practitioners, organization managers, leaders, system units, and community members, all of whom are attempting to use the core components of the evidence-based program while creating changes in practices, organizations, and systems to accommodate and support new ways of work.

4. At the *Full Implementation Stage,* half or more of the practitioners begin to meet performance standards routinely. As Full Implementation is sustained for a few years, the intervention and the implementation supports become embedded. The evidence-based program is actually "in use;" funders, community members, administrators and others will expect their assessments of outcomes to show that the program has begun to bear fruit.

According to NIRN's co-directors, stage-based work is not common, and challenges occur when stages

are neglected. Policies or funding practices commonly exert pressure on communities and organizations to skip stages altogether. Often, due to funding and grant processes, expectations are for programs to start at Initial Implementation with little buy-in from stakeholders or access to necessary supports and resources. In addition, funding requirements include assessing intended benefits in the first year, which often means that results reflect programs in the awkward Initial Implementation stage. Predictably, outcomes do not meet expectations, promising programs are dropped before they are implemented, and attention turns to the next "shiny object."

In "Mobilizing Communities for Implementing Evidence-Based Youth Violence Prevention Programming: A Commentary," NIRN's co-directors championed Implementation Teams as a critical means to developing the *capacity* to move evidence-based programs successfully through the Implementation Stages. An Implementation Team consists of skillful users of implementation methods who know interventions from a "practice point of view." They also are thoroughly engaged in continuous quality improvement cycles in all aspects of their activities. They are not necessarily new entities; current teams and structures can be repurposed to do the work of implementation.

Implementation Teams promote sustainability by serving as a continuing resource to local community groups and provider agencies to cope with staff turnover, shifts in socioeconomic and political contexts, and issues that arise when people interact. These teams also can assure the effective involvement of stakeholders.

Without Implementation Teams, the burden to utilize evidence-based programs falls on would-be practitioners and related personnel, and "Mobilizing Communities for Implementing Evidence-Based Youth Violence Prevention Programming: A Commentary" cites formidable statistics to show that do-it-yourself implementation results in only modest outcomes, but Implementation Teams improve success rates from under 15% to 80% and reduce time-frames for successful use from 17 years to 3 years.

The authors also noted that only about 20% of people and organizations may be ready to be mobilized, and creating readiness therefore is an important role for Implementation Teams. During the Exploration Stage, experienced Implementation Teams can work with individuals to form community groups, identify and nurture leaders, develop ''buy in'' for evidence-based programs, locate or provide supports for implementation, and help community groups anticipate issues they will face as the uses of the evidence-based program send ripples through organizations and systems.

In addition, Implementation Teams can be a great comfort to communities when a new evidence-based program is beginning. During Initial Implementation, efforts teeter precariously. Many implementation attempts fail within a year or two, but comfort with change increases with the presence of Implementation Teams, who know what it takes to build practitioner competencies. The teams also remain alert to changes needed in organizations to support the intervention and can help negotiate system changes in order to facilitate the work of organizations and practitioners as they fulfill new responsibilities.

Successful implementation also has other facets and complexities, and NIRN's co-directors believe that embedding the capacity for effective implementation in human services is the means of realizing the promise of evidence-based programs. Purposeful implementation is crucial, and implementation science is the field well-equipped to replace *Just Do It!* approaches.

To Learn More

National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)
http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/
State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP)
http://sisep.fpg.unc.edu/
Active Implementation Hub
http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/

When Just Do It Won't Do It draws upon "AI Hub Handout #1" on Active Implementation Frameworks and these journal articles

Eccles, M. P., & Mittman, B. S. (2006). Welcome to *Implementation Science. Implementation Science, 1,* 1-3.

Fixsen, D. L, Blase, K. A., Metz, A., & Van Dyke, M. K. (2013). Statewide implementation of evidence-based programs. *Exceptional Children, 79,* 213-230.

Fixsen, D. L, Blase, K. A., & Van Dyke, M. K. (2011). Mobilizing communities for implementing evidence-based youth violence prevention programming: A commentary. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 48,* 133–137.

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Helping People Do What They Do

FPG's Four-Decade Commitment to Technical Assistance

Describing her job has been the curse of Lynne Kahn's Thanksgiving dinners. The FPG scientist is integral in 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 says explaining the nitty-gritty of all that to family members *without* jargon is extremely difficult. After all, FPG's own "Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Implementation Science" workgroup defines TA as "an on-going negotiated relationship between TA providers and recipients, resulting in a planned series of supports and services designed to increase recipients' capacity to improve service and/or system outcomes," which, when intensive, "typically results in development of or changes to infrastructure, systems, policy, organization or practice, and contains iterative evaluation and feedback strategies."

And the term "technical assistance" itself offers little help. "As far as I can tell, the word *technical* is as useful as the *e* on the end of *Lynne*," she says. "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 says, a two-pronged approach has remained constant—a dual focus on *process* and *content*.

In the 1970s, under director Pat Trohanis, the mission of FPG's Technical Assistance Development System (TADS) centered on helping innovative, federally-funded early childhood initiatives conduct demonstration outreach projects, such as those designed to address early language, provide intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders, or train respite workers to relieve families. TADS was FPG's first national early childhood TA center, helping grantees to implement projects that addressed the needs of young children with disabilities and the needs of these children's families.

On *process*, TADS helped these projects identify and understand their innovations, which in turn led to developing approaches to evaluate the implementation of the innovations. TADS assisted with project management and planning,

> For over 42 years, FPG has been committed to providing TA services, and ECTA Center co-director Lynne 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.

"Our mission is really to improve state early intervention and the early childhood special education service systems," says Christina Kasprzak, co-director of the ECTA Center, "as well as increasing the implementation of effective practices and enhancing outcomes for young children."

"We began morphing into areas of expertise that were more at a state-systems level," says Kahn. *What does it take to build a system?* became the over-arching, driving question behind TA at FPG during this time. What infrastructures, policies, and supports did states need to implement to facilitate the use of effective practices in service delivery? What finance systems would support best practice? What kinds of personnel competencies and personnel systems would work best? What kinds of child-find systems should states utilize? How could FPG facilitate strategic planning?

Kahn now heads several grants, which she and her colleagues call "The Trohanis TA Projects" in honor of FPG's TA pioneer. Several of these projects support states by facilitating strategic planning and program management, as well as embedding evaluation into the implementation process.

including facilitating the timing necessary to study, implement, and evaluate innovations all within the typical three-year cycle of these federal grants.

FPG also provided integral support on *content*. For each focus area of these grants, TADS recognized that it was important to be able to bring together experts and to facilitate interactions among those grantees who were studying the same topic, so that they could share and "push the envelope" with one another. TADS also connected expertise that didn't have grant funding but that could offer important insight.

"We were a hub," says Kahn, who worked closely with Trohanis as part of his core leadership staff for several TA projects at FPG. "TADS brought together those who were on the cutting-edge, investigating approaches to solving problems."

According to Kahn, TA at FPG continued its dual focus on process and content even as the 1980s saw great advancement in the field of early childhood special education and an accompanying paradigm shift from clinic-based and separate groupings for young children with disabilities to more integrated settings and natural environments. New federal funding for the development of early intervention systems in individual states meant that FPG undertook a series of projects designed to support state administrators who were developing a state-coordinated system of services requiring, supporting, or encouraging effective practices provided at the ground level for families and children.

Christina Kasprzak, who serves with Kahn as co-director of FPG's new Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center, says that the Trohanis TA Projects are held together by common principles and values, overlapping staff, overlapping missions, and overlapping clients—many of which are state administrators. All clients still work with services for young children with disabilities and for the families of these children.

"Under Lynne's leadership, the number and diversity of TA projects has grown tremendously," says Kasprzak. 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)," says 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 last fall, 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," says Kasprzak, "as well as increasing the implementation of effective

practices and enhancing outcomes for young children."

In keeping with FPG's tradition since the 1980s, 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," says 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 and already has identified six partner states that reflect the diversity of state systems: Delaware, Idaho, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The ECTA Center also has created a technical workgroup composed of national technical assistance providers, researchers, and consultants to help guide the development process.

Based on literature and field input, the ECTA Center's system framework will guide state-level coordinators and staff in evaluating their current systems and identifying areas for improvement. "We're also looking at critical implementation components," says 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."

Measuring outcomes—with a focus on children and families—is central to the ECTA Center's mission. "You don't get good outcomes if you don't implement effective practices at the local level," she says. "And if we don't have a quality system, we can't ensure that effective practices are happening at the local level."

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. The DEC's objective is to provide guidance on practices connected to better outcomes for young children with disabilities, the children's families, and the personnel who serve them.

Major TA projects at FPG also include the 5-year-old Early Childhood Outcomes Center, which the ECTA Center is bringing under its umbrella, as well as the IDEA

> "You don't get good outcomes if you don't implement effective practices at the local level," says Kasprzak. "And if we don't have a quality system, we can't ensure that effective practices are happening at the local level."

Early Childhood Data Systems TA Center (DaSy), which is developing coordinated systems linking data in order to answer critical questions about policy and practices and to understand what happens to kids and families in different programs over time. Among the several other TA projects at FPG are the state-funded North Carolina Early Learning TA Network and a new subcontract to support NC preschool special education in providing high-quality IDEA data in order to maximize accountability and improvement.

The current vibrancy and multifaceted nature of TA projects at FPG highlight the appropriateness of Lynne Kahn's short-hand 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 has 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 certainly has been about helping others do what they're trying to do.

To Learn More

This article draws upon Lynne Kahn and Christina Kasprzak's presentation at FPG's 2013 annual meeting, as well as on materials available at the ECTA Center's website, which serves as a portal to numerous resources and to other TA projects at FPG.

Visit: **http://ectacenter.org/**

Eye-Openers and *A-ha!* Moments

Three Professional Development Projects at FPG

Professional development (PD) encompasses teaching and learning experiences designed to support the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions and to help with their application in practice. PD projects can utilize traditional modes of delivery and new technology, including modules, lessons, workshops, curricula, retreats, guides, videos, and other vehicles, with the primary goal of enhancing the competence of professionals—and sometimes this can happen through moments of great revelation.

Many projects enhance competencies by directly addressing a group of professionals—such as teachers of young children. Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) webcam coaching, a seminal project from FPG, exemplifies this approach and helps struggling kindergarten and first grade readers in rural classrooms to keep pace with their peers. Not only does the TRI reduce the gap between readers who struggle and those who do not, but it does so by using a low-cost technology that eliminates geographic barriers.

Unlike many other strategies designed to improve reading skills, the TRI webcams make use of classroom teachers already in place to deliver enriched instruction. Literacy coaches, who can be located far off-site, provide state-of-the-art professional development in the form of coaching to teachers in classrooms as they work in 15-minute one-on-one sessions with struggling readers. Each teacher uses a laptop with a webcam so that she can see and hear her off-site coach's real-time feedback and the coach can see and hear the teacher as she works with a child.

"Teachers need to see results with their students or they won't stick with it," said Lynne Vernon-Feagans, the researcher behind the TRI webcam strategy. "When their readers make rapid gains, teachers have those *A-ha!* moments."

Other professional development projects emphasize addressing knowledge mediators, technical assistance specialists, and higher education faculty—the professionals themselves responsible for guiding, supporting, and educating other professionals. One such project, FPG's Supporting Change and Reform in Preservice Teaching in North Carolina (SCRIPT-NC), also abounds in *A-ha!* moments. Through new partnerships with early childhood education departments, SCRIPT-NC is helping community colleges to offer cutting-edge programs for the next generation of teachers who will serve young children.

Tracey West, SCRIPT-NC's principal investigator, says the FPG project works to better prepare early childhood educators to meet the needs of young children with disabilities and children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. SCRIPT-NC offers online resources, including course-specific advice and widely viewed webinars open to all North Carolina community colleges. The FPG project also works intensively with four community colleges in the state, including Vance-Granville Community College (VGCC).

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

Not only did SCRIPT-NC help Bennett and her faculty 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," says Bennett.

SCRIPT-NC works to better prepare early childhood educators to meet the needs of young children with disabilities and children who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

"These programs also serve children with different kinds of abilities."

Early in the partnership, SCRIPT-NC's team organized a retreat that brought together the community's program directors, the VGCC department's alumni, Bennett's early education faculty, and other stakeholders. "The retreat really sharpened our perspectives," says Bennett. Since then, her department has focused on developing early childhood educators who are best equipped to work for local programs.

"One of SCRIPT-NC's key objectives is to help future early childhood educators in North Carolina become more knowledgeable and comfortable working with young children from diverse backgrounds," says Dale Epstein, who, along with Chih-Ing Lim, serves as co-principal investigator for the project.

SCRIPT-NC has roots in Crosswalks, an earlier FPG project that also prepared educators to work with culturally and linguistically diverse

children and families. FPG scientist Camille Catlett, an investigator on the SCRIPT-NC team, has been the project's primary liaison with Bennett. "In the last year and a half, Tracey already has taken a good program a long way toward being an extraordinary one," says Catlett.

There's also no shortage of *A-ha!* moments for users of CONNECT modules, developed by FPG's Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge (Project CONNECT). These multimedia modules have been popular across the country and around the world since FPG scientists developed them for university faculty and professional development providers to use in PD for practitioners and preservice learners. In the last two years alone, CONNECT modules have been a resource for over 90,000 online users.

Each module focuses on a specific research-based practice or set of practices for meeting the needs of young

children in inclusive settings and is organized within an innovative 5-Step Learning Cycle™. The modules incorporate videos, handouts, and activity guides and address seven content areas that reflect early childhood practices with a strong evidence base: Embedded Interventions, Transition, Communication for Collaboration, Family-Professional Partnerships, Assistive Technology Interventions, Dialogic Reading Practices, and Tiered Instruction.

"There are quite a few of us who are one-man shows in community colleges," says Cheryl Bulat, who teaches at Morton College in Cicero, Illinois. "Because of this, we sometimes have to teach content that we may not be well-versed in and need help to find the best available resources. CONNECT has served as a support."

Sandy Wilberger, co-director of the Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center at Virginia Commonwealth University, says that CONNECT modules are central to her class work. "Actually, I was starting off with the thought that the CONNECT modules would really augment the work that we were doing through the readings in the textbook," she says. "But it turned out to be the opposite. CONNECT was the stand-alone—and then I used the textbook to augment what was shared there."

Wilberger also sees broad applications for the CONNECT modules' 5-Step Learning Cycle™. "It's a really good framework to teach students to use when they are practicing. You could apply it to any of the dilemmas that come up within inclusive settings, working with families or children," she says. "If you get into the habit of using it, then it becomes the basis for what you go to for problem solving on many different things that are going to take place in service delivery to young children with disabilities."

FPG's CONNECT Modules, SCRIPT-NC, and the Targeted Reading Intervention—as well as many other initiatives—continue to harness their projects to new technologies in order to deliver PD in multiple forms and by multiple vehicles. Through a partnership with Quality Assist, Inc., FPG began offering its newest form of instruction this past summer.

"We received lots of inquiries about offering CEUs for CONNECT material," says Pamela J. Winton, CONNECT's principal investigator. As a result, faculty and professional development providers now can direct early childhood teachers to new material based on the CONNECT modules: self-guided, self-paced, online continuing education courses—yet another vehicle for opening eyes.

To Learn More

TRI
http://www.targetedreadingintervention.org/

SCRIPT-NC
http://scriptnc.fpg.unc.edu/

CONNECT
http://connect.fpg.unc.edu/

CONNECT Modules
The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge

CONNECT is a partnership between FPG and the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

UNC | FRANK PORTER GRAHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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FPG's New Center

The PDC@FPG

As schools resumed this fall, FPG opened a new cross-disciplinary professional development center to provide a wide array of resources 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 sold out even before the official opening. "The new Professional Development Center will help us to meet that demand."

The PDC@FPG's Institutes and Intensive

Workshops provide short-term intensive educational experiences on a variety of topics related to child development and learning. Offerings for 2014 include a series of independent workshops focused on research methodology and observation tools, including "Using the Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP) with Proficiency" and "Using the Autism Program Environment Rating Scale (APERS) with Proficiency."

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, and 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. Upcoming conferences include the annual return of FPG's National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute May 20-22 in Chapel Hill, the premier national conference during which people from all early childhood sectors come together to meet, learn, share, and problem-solve about inclusion for young children. (See "Registration Opens for the 2014 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute.")

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

PDC@FPG

Putting Knowledge to Work

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.

In addition to the PDC@FPG's online modules and lessons, teachers now can take online, continuing education courses on inclusion with CEU credit, thanks to Project CONNECT's new partnership with Quality Assist, Inc.

Through the PDC@FPG visitors also can access the Active Implementation Hub, a gathering of modules, lessons, and resources. FPG's State Implementation & 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 CROSS-WALKS Model: Infusing Diversity in Preservice Education, an evidence-based model for supporting preservice programs in responding to specific constructs in early childhood, early intervention, and/or early childhood special education. The model focuses on diversity and on alignment with state and national standards in coursework, practica, and overall program practices.

The PDC@FPG's TA Services also include the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion's Developing Cross-Sector PD Systems.
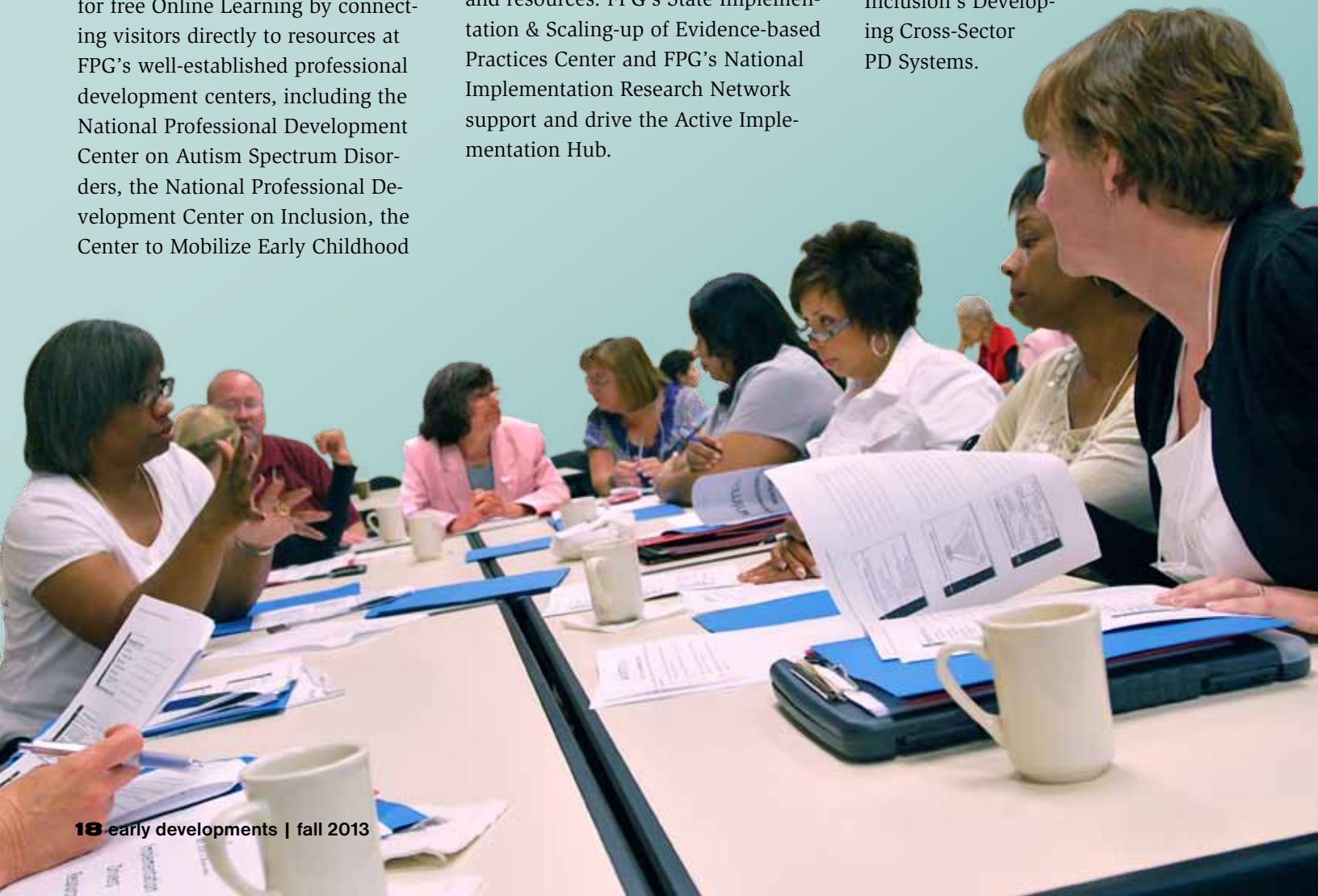
Registration Opens for the 2014 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute

Registration is open now for FPG's popular National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute. Dwayne Ballen, an award-winning television journalist, will deliver the keynote address at the 2014 Institute. Ballen's recently published *Journey with Julian* has drawn praise for its portrayal of family life with Ballen's oldest son, who has autism. A review in the New York *Journal of Books* says the book will "enlighten and educate" the reader as it "conveys the importance of family, the necessity of acceptance, and the pure joy of unconditional love."

For 13 years, the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute has drawn people from around the country and the globe to learn about the latest research findings, models, and resources that guide inclusive policy, professional development, and practice. Attendees develop collaborative relationships and cross-agency systems to support early childhood inclusion. For three days each May, the Institute provides administrators, researchers, practitioners, and families a chance to meet, learn from, and problem-solve with peers.

In 2013, 10 national technical assistance projects committed time and resources to planning and implementing the sold-out Institute, and the programming was the most extensive in Institute history. Offerings opened with three pre-institute half-day workshops, and a keynote address followed from disability rights pioneer Micah Fialka-Feldman. A plenary session then convened with a panel of top federal policy leaders, who offered emerging information on federal early childhood policies. Over the next three days the Inclusion Institute's 90-plus presenters offered 11 reflection sessions and 41 concurrent sessions for 435 attendees.

The Institute convenes again May 20–22, 2014 in Chapel Hill, and participants will experience another extensive array of programming. Because the three-day conference typically sells out, registration is open now: **http://inclusioninstitute.fpg.unc.edu/**

What attendees said about the last National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute:

> "The presenters were passionate about their topics."
> "I felt like we were learning from the masters."
> "The diverse workshop topics were wonderful. For each session, there were several tough choices about which to attend."
> "Loved the interactiveness of each session."
> "After attending the institute I came back to work with a stronger belief in what we are doing for ALL children and my expectations have grown even greater for what I know my children can accomplish. This was a great experience that I hope will never leave me."

SAVE THE DATE
2014 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute

Sponsored by

UNC
FRANK PORTER GRAHAM
CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

May 20—22, 2014
The William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education
Chapel Hill, NC

Under the guidance of the NPDCI, an integrated set of tools and resources were developed and piloted for providing TA to states for developing cross-sector professional development plans to support inclusion. The staff of NPDCI will facilitate the use of these resources and provide services to support planning efforts.

In addition, TA for Using an RTI Approach in Early Childhood is available. Recognition and Response (R&R), a research-based early childhood model based on Response to Intervention (RTI) principles, was developed, implemented and evaluated by FPG in school districts. The developers of the R&R model are available to provide TA services for implementing RTI for preschool, as well as for using the specific research-based R&R model.

The fourth of the PDC@FPG's TA Services is Teaching Approaches for Dual-Language Learners, which provides technical assistance to early childhood teachers and administrators who would like to improve their services and adapt their teaching strategies for the growing group of DLLs under age 6.

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 wide 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."

FPG also continues to provide many other project-based professional development resources and services, some of which we highlight in this issue's New Resources. In addition, our review of the 2012–2013 fiscal year, *New Stories From the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute,* describes much more of our multifaceted work in professional development and other areas.

new resources

New Multimedia Guide
Helps Teachers Facing a Spike in Student Autism Rate

FPG and the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) have released a multimedia manual that provides strategies for secondary school teachers whose classrooms now include students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

"Today, middle and high school teachers educate far more students diagnosed with ASD than ever before, although many do not feel prepared for this challenge," says Samuel L. Odom, FPG's director and principal investigator of the institute's Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (CSESA). "This toolbox is a valuable resource."

"Understanding Autism: A Guide for Secondary School Teachers" offers research-based practices that not only enhance learning opportunities for ASD adolescents but also improve the environment of the entire classroom. FPG investigator Jessica Dykstra and scientist Kara Hume developed the print and web instructional resource as a practical, hands-on complement to a series of training videos that OAR has released online and on DVD.

"The outcomes for students with ASD after graduation are troubling," says Hume, co-principal investigator of CSESA. "Unemployment rates are high, college experiences can be challenging, and many people with ASD report that they aren't hopeful. We need to maximize classroom experiences for kids with ASD, especially in middle and high school."

Hume says middle and high school settings can be especially challenging for students with autism. "The social and academic environments within the school can be complicated for them."

"We know it helps when teachers understand and use key support strategies, such as a safe 'home base' in the classroom or visual supports like step-by-step schedules," says Dykstra.

Teachers, families, and administrators can access the multimedia manual by visiting:
http://csesa.fpg.unc.edu/resources/understanding-autism-guide-secondary-school-teachers
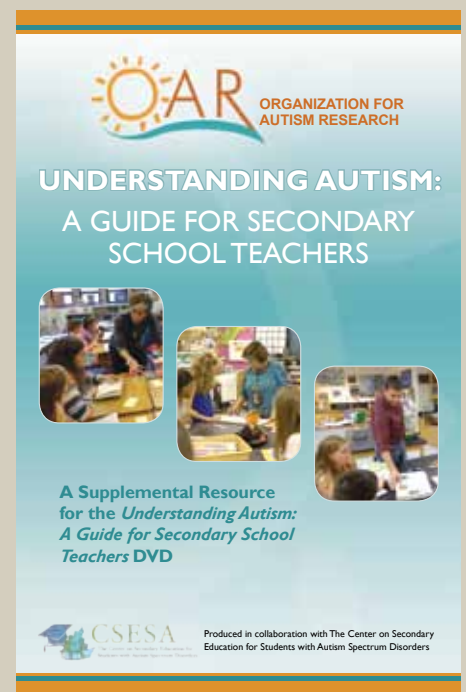
FPG Transforms Early School Life for African American, Latino, and Low-Income Children

The FPG research team behind the "FirstSchool" project has been helping schools close the achievement gap for African American, Latino, and low-income children and their families—and now a new book will reveal how FirstSchool and its partners have used education research and data to support these students.

During FirstSchool's partnerships with eight elementary schools, the FPG team learned important lessons that continue to serve as a foundation for their work. The leadership and staff in these partner schools made difficult but sustainable changes in their professional culture, relationships with families and children, instructional practices, and curricular choices. In doing so, these schools strengthened and enriched the learning, development, and early school experiences of African American, Latino, and low-income children and their families, which in turn helped these children to be successful in environments from pre-kindergarten through grade 3.

FirstSchool: Transforming PreK-3RD Grade for African American, Latino, and Low-Income Children provides a framework for school and district leaders, professional development personnel, and teacher educators to transform education through collaboration with teachers and other school community members. In addition to the book-length resource, FirstSchool will be providing an introductory professional development session for educational organizations purchasing the publication at a bulk rate. Each customized session will vary according to audience and requested topic and can provide an overview of the FirstSchool approach or focus on particular areas of interest.

FPG senior scientist Sharon Ritchie and co-editor Laura Gutmann designed their book to be relevant for leaders on all levels, from state agencies to pre-k to 3RD-grade classrooms. The subjects include "Using Data to Create a Culture of Collaborative Inquiry," "Designing High-Quality Curriculum and Instruction," establishing meaningful "Home-School Partnerships," and much more. In addition to Ritchie and Gutmann, contributors include Cindy Bagwell, Dick Clifford, Carolyn Cobb, Gisele Crawford, Diane Early, Adam Holland, Sandra Garcia, Cristina Gillanders, Iheoma Iruka, Jenille Morgan, and Sam Oertwig.

Order it: **http://store.tcpress.com/0807754811.shtml**
Read about FirstSchool: **http://firstschool.fpg.unc.edu**

new resources

FPG Offers Online Courses for Continuing Education Units

Faculty and professional development providers now can send learners to self-guided, self-paced, online FPG courses designed for CEUs for early childhood teachers. Through a new partnership between FPG's Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge (CONNECT) and Quality Assist, Inc., these eight courses integrate Project CONNECT's subject matter with QA's interactive online learning platform.

The QA-CONNECT course topics complement FPG's CONNECT modules for university faculty and professional development providers. "We received lots of inquiries about offering CEUs for CONNECT material," says Pamela J. Winton, FPG senior scientist and principal investigator of Project CONNECT. "The Quality Assist-CONNECT courses make this possible at a time when many administrators are looking for efficient ways of delivering high quality professional development in the areas we cover."

CONNECT
The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge

The new QA-CONNECT course topics include: "Foundations of Inclusion," "All, Some and Few: Tiered Instruction," "Storybook Conversations," "Weaving Inclusion into Everyday Activities," "Adaptations that Work," "Communication for Professional Collaboration," "Powerful Family Partnerships," and "Smooth Moves: Program Transitions." FPG's Project CONNECT will continue to update its modules to support and complement the new courses.

By emphasizing problem solving and the importance of multiple perspectives and sources of evidence, the courses and the modules focus on building early childhood teachers' capacities to make evidence-based decisions—a hallmark of teacher excellence.

http://pdc.fpg.unc.edu/courses-continuing-education-units