



# ed

**early developments** Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

**Winter 2000** | Volume 4, Number 3

**OUTREACH**  
Bridges to  
Excellence

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

# ed

Winter 2000 | Volume 4 Number 3

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## CONTENTS

### From the Director 1

**Improving Outreach 2**  
Don Bailey discusses outreach history at FPG and changes for the future

**Committing Time 4**  
Examples of committing time to the public and professions

### FPG Outreach 7

**Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice 8**  
Case stories for professionals, training

**Parents Take the Lead 10**  
Interviews with participants in parent leadership initiative

### FPG Recent Publications 13

**Going the Extra Mile 14**  
Making research work more accessible

## NCEDL NEWS

**National Directory 16**  
Directory of early childhood teacher preparation programs

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### Errata

Editor's Note: It should be noted that in the article "Reaching for the Stars" in the last issue of *Early Developments*, the Rated License Assessment Project is administered by the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, with FPG one of seven subcontractors. The article focused on FPG's work.

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## Our Core Values

THE MISSION of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center is to cultivate and share the knowledge necessary to enhance child development and family well being. To accomplish this mission, we hold five central values:

1. All children have a right to a safe, healthy, and developmentally stimulating childhood.
2. Research is our primary mechanism for developing the knowledge to enhance child development and family well being.
3. Improving practices and policies are essential components of our work.
4. A high standard of integrity is the benchmark of our work.
5. A collegial, diverse, and supportive environment is essential to achieving our mission.

Earlier this year, we concluded the first phase of a major strategic planning effort for FPG. Among the outcomes of that planning was a statement of our core values, shown above in shortened form.

Another outcome of this planning was the crafting of a vision statement for the center's outreach mission. Here is a synopsis of that vision:

- We make our work accessible to the public, professions, the university and each other.
- We provide technical assistance and teaching in our areas of expertise to the public, professions, the university and each other.
- We commit time to the public, professions, the university and the center.
- We seek input from constituents, use this information to shape our work when we can, and respond to constituents' needs when possible.
- We evaluate our outreach efforts.

In this issue of *Early Developments*, we highlight projects that show the relationships between research and our outreach vision. Of course, outreach has been part of the center's history since it began in 1966. Over the years, many projects have had outreach components, providing technical assistance, model programs, materials for the field, and so forth. Many of these outreach efforts have been the work of one investigator or a group of investigators linked via a project.

Today, we begin a more holistic approach to outreach. How can we as a center better serve the needs of the field and the public? What broader partnerships can be created to help meet our outreach efforts? How can technology enhance our outreach mission? How can the center as a whole better support our investigators in outreach work?

Inside this issue, you will find not only some of our latest research, but also projects that are good examples of how we are fulfilling our outreach vision. | **ed** |

From the Director  
Don Bailey

# Improving Outreach

## Taking outreach to the next level of excellence

MANY PEOPLE THINK of FPG as primarily a research center. Certainly research is at the heart of our mission. One of our core values is to conduct the best research possible to develop the knowledge that we need to enhance child development and family well being.

But knowledge alone is not enough. Research organizations that focus on issues of fundamental human concern, such as the well being of children and families, have a responsibility to share that knowledge with others in order to improve practice. We also have a responsibility to learn from practitioners and parents so that our research efforts can be better informed.

Terms such as “outreach,” “consultation,” “technical assistance,” or just plain “TA” have become so much a part of the jargon and history at Frank Porter Graham that we often assume that everyone knows exactly what we are talking about. By these terms we refer to the processes by which our center helps individuals and organizations learn new information, improve practice, comply with regulations, or accomplish goals.

Fortunately, outreach became a core feature of the center’s activity early in its history. In 1968, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (now the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education) began to create a national network of projects designed to demonstrate how early intervention services could be provided for infants and preschoolers with disabilities.

As these projects emerged, it became apparent that many needed help in different aspects of their work. Some needed assistance with curriculum development, others with evaluation, and others with public awareness. As a result, in 1972 FPG was awarded a grant for TADS, the Technical Assistance Development System, under the direction of Dr. David Lillie. The mission of TADS was to provide support and assistance to these projects (130 at the time, now more than 700) in whatever aspect of help was needed.

This was quite a challenge. How can one organization possibly have the expertise to help any project with any need? In hindsight, however, this project set the stage for a new vision of outreach, one that still influences our work today.

The old view of outreach assumes that there is an EXPERT who knows the answer to lots of important questions. The EXPERT’S job is to make sure that people who need this information (the CLIENTS) get it and use it.

Unfortunately, the expert model didn’t work very well in many

cases. Often the expert really did not have the needed information. And when he or she did, that information might not have been conveyed in a way that was acceptable or useful to clients.

So TADS took a new approach, with several key components.

A needs assessment was essential to any outreach endeavor, with needs preferably being identified by the project staff themselves.

A plan followed, agreed upon by both the project and the technical assistance coordinator. Then it became the responsibility of both the local project and the TA project to locate the expertise or resources necessary to meet the identified needs.

This process has worked so well that the project has been continuously funded for 28 years. Now known as NECTAS (the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System), this project provides technical assistance to all 50 states and territories in implementing federal legislation for young children with disabilities.

Since then we have had many other examples of outreach efforts. Our child care program has served as a demonstration for high quality child care practices, and thousands of visitors and student trainees have visited or trained in the center since 1966.

A wide range of curriculum and assessment materials has been developed for use by teachers and program administrators. We have developed case study materials to help professionals deal with complex situations in uncertain environments.

We help university faculty change the ways they teach and the content of their coursework. For example, we recently received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to help university programs around the nation better prepare professionals to work with infants with vision impairments or blindness.

A parent leadership development project helps parents of children with disabilities gain the skills and confidence to take on leadership roles at the state and local level.

Our publications and dissemination office helps with the visual design side of dissemination, including the graphic design of print materials and slides. In recent years, the center has created a popular web site and has launched this national magazine, *Early Developments*.

All of this work has been important and we hope helpful to the field. However, almost all of this work thus far has relied on individual initiatives by center investigators.

Last year we began to think more broadly. We began by creating a strategic planning group that was primarily comprised of individuals outside the center. This group was positive about our outreach efforts,





by Don Bailey

but recommended that we consider establishing a central outreach office and to identify, as a center, what are the most important outreach needs of the field.

With funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, we have created a new position, director of outreach. We want the outreach director to look outside the center and examine the needs of the field, see who our potential audiences are, and analyze the various ways in which we could expand our outreach efforts.

One issue facing the new outreach director will be how to provide enduring support for the center's outreach activities. Most of our projects are time-limited in their funding or designed for specific audiences.

Once funding ends, we often don't have the resources to continue. We want the outreach director to help find ways to continue to support outreach efforts beyond the funding periods of specific projects. This will require working with our newly established development office in fund-raising related to outreach.

A recent report on the state of early childhood teaching says that even if we did not generate any new knowledge about children over the next decade, we would have a full agenda in just getting current knowledge to be applied in making policies and implementing programs.

Research and outreach are both essential functions of a center such as FPG. We are committed to expanding our outreach role and making it even more responsive to the needs of the field over the next 10 years. | **ed** |

[see page 7 for more about outreach at FPG]

# Committing Time to the Public and Professions

## Mary Ruth Coleman

SHE SETS ASIDE A DAY A WEEK FOR OUTREACH. She's president of The Association of the Gifted (a division of the Council for Exceptional Children). She's on the editorial/review boards of five national trade journals. She's on three national committees. She meets from time to time with staff members of congressional legislators to discuss pending educational issues. Her research includes directing a science-based model for recognizing and nurturing K-2 students with hidden potential in poor and diverse communities.

While the time that Mary Ruth Coleman commits to the public and the professions (it adds up to more than a day a week) may be unusually high for a researcher at the Frank Porter Graham Center, it is by no means rare.

Much of Coleman's national work involves teachers who work with gifted children and with children with exceptional learning needs. For example, she's on the Knowledge and Skills Committee that sets the professional standards used by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium to review and accredit institutes of higher education that prepare teachers to work with children with exceptionalities.

Another committee that she's on is revising the standards for gifted education. And she's on the National Association for the Gifted Legislative Committee. She said, "This year has been really exciting because for the first time ever, we have federal legislation addressing, identifying and serving gifted and talented students."

Her commitment to helping others is reflected in her research. One of her projects is U-STARS (Using Science Talents and Abilities to Recognize Students). "The search for hidden talent has become one of the most important educational objectives in the last decade. The limited number of children from economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse families found in programs for gifted students across the nation is proof that there is something seriously amiss in the identification and nurturing of exceptional talent," she said.

"SCIENCE IS AN IDEAL BASE TO RECOGNIZE AND CULTIVATE POTENTIAL BECAUSE THROUGH HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES CHILDREN CAN DEMONSTRATE THEIR THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES AND IT PROVIDES A HIGH-INTEREST BASE TO INTEGRATE READING, MATH, WRITING AND THE ARTS. SCIENCE IS IDEALLY SUITED FOR OBSERVING POTENTIAL BECAUSE IT IS NOT HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON EARLY LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES."

— MARY RUTH COLEMAN



## Jim Gallagher

"MUCH OF WHAT WE THINK OF NOW AS STANDARD ACCEPTABLE SYSTEMS OF SERVICES, PRACTICES, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND EDUCATION OF THE GIFTED HAVE THEIR ORIGIN IN RESEARCH, LEADERSHIP, AND ADVOCACY BY JAMES GALLAGHER."

— CITATION FROM  
THE WALKER AWARD

OVER THE YEARS, one of the most visible FPG researchers has been James Gallagher, who also directed the center for a decade. Recently he received the Razor Walker Award for service from the Watson School of Education at UNC-Wilmington.

The Walker Award is considered one of the state's most prestigious and unique service awards. It is presented to "those who have, through personal commitment and tenacity, made a significant impact on the lives of our young people." The awards are so named to honor individuals who have "walked the razor's edge" by taking risks to benefit children and youth in NC.

The citation for Gallagher reads, in part, "Much of what we think of now as standard acceptable systems of services, practices, and expectations for accomplishment in special education and education

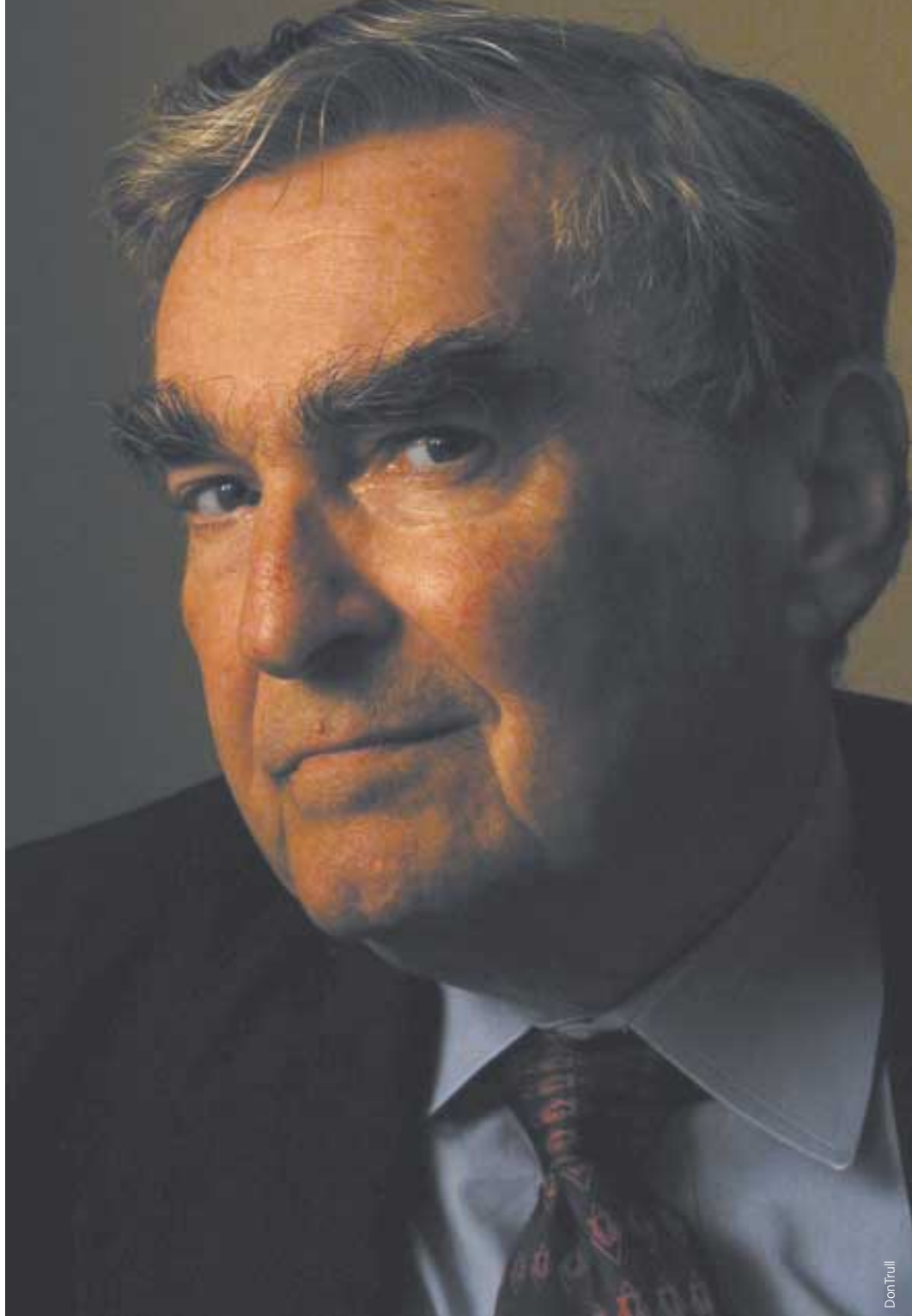
of the gifted have their origin in research, leadership, and advocacy by James Gallagher."

In the 1960s, he was the first director of the then Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and deputy assistant secretary for planning, research and evaluation in the US Office of Education.

The citation said that he "helped to establish a national agenda to grant special educational rights to gifted children and individuals with disabilities. With a three-pronged approach working directly with federal agencies and providing technical

assistance and training to states and local projects, he led efforts to adopt and implement policy and service initiatives at the national, state and local levels."

Gallagher recently received a "paper of the year" award from the Gifted Child Quarterly published by the National Association of Gifted Children, Washington, DC. He is also on a national advisory committee that is examining educational opportunities for gifted and talented youth in the US.



DonTrull



## Pam Winton

PAM WINTON SERVES on three local boards, five state boards and 12 national committees, councils, or boards related to her areas of interest, which are personnel preparation in early childhood intervention, family-professional collaboration and disability/inclusion.

She said, "The invitation to be on national boards comes because they want my professional expertise and help with their work. If it's a grant-funded effort, it helps them (and it helps us) to work together, sharing knowledge in the same areas of interest but reflecting different experiences and approaches."

Winton said that her membership on several of the local and state boards came about "because of relationships in the community around advocacy. These new joint ventures are valuable exchanges for both sides," she said. She organized and chairs the Constituents Advisory Board for the National Center for Early Development & Learning at FPG.

"As FPG moves into our new outreach mode whereby we invite more constituents to advise us, it is important to recognize the reciprocal nature of these relationships," she said.

About the many presentations she makes and other programs she participates in annually, Winton said, "I view these as part of my responsibilities to the field. Many of the invitations are from people with whom I have worked. I feel it is part of the dissemination and follow-up work associated with grants that fund my position." | **ed** |

### If you want to know more

USTARS [www.fpg.unc.edu/~USTARS](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~USTARS)

NCATE [www.ncate.org](http://www.ncate.org)

INTASC: [<http://education.uindy.edu/intasc.html](http://education.uindy.edu/intasc.html)

Constituents Advisory Board at NCEDL  
[www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/PAGES/constit.html](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/PAGES/constit.html)

"THE INVITATION TO BE ON  
NATIONAL BOARDS COMES  
BECAUSE THEY WANT MY  
PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE  
AND HELP WITH THEIR WORK.  
IF IT'S A GRANT-FUNDED EFFORT,  
IT HELPS THEM (AND IT HELPS US)  
TO WORK TOGETHER, SHARING  
KNOWLEDGE IN THE SAME AREAS  
OF INTEREST BUT REFLECTING  
DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES  
AND APPROACHES."

— PAM WINTON



DonTrull



# Outreach Publications and Projects at Frank Porter Graham

For more information on any of the publications shown on this page, please contact us at [www.pubs@mail.fpg.unc.edu](mailto:www.pubs@mail.fpg.unc.edu)



**Early Developments** (magazine)  
**Target Audience:** Administrators, Educators, Policymakers, Families, Researchers, Practitioners

## NECTAS

The largest outreach project at FPG is the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS), which provides responsive technical assistance to programs supported under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These include programs designed for infants and toddlers with disabilities (Part C of IDEA) and for preschoolers with disabilities (Section 619-Part B of IDEA) in all states and participating jurisdictions.

Last year, NECTAS delivered 7,500 client-centered services. The NECTAS consortium includes Zero to Three, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Georgetown University Child Development Center, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, and the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.



(PFI) provides a variety of technical assistance activities to NC communities to develop and improve inclusive services to young children with disabilities and their families. Services include training, product development, referral and resource linking, and consultation to local agencies.

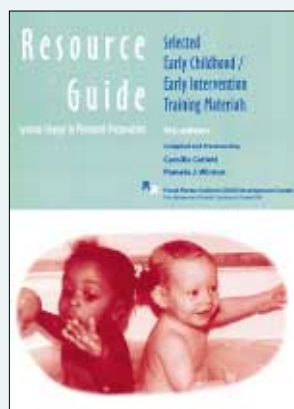
Last year, PFI held 162 events with about 4,000 parents and professional participants across North Carolina. Training ranged from bilingual child development workshops to on-site consultation.



**Spotlights** (research summaries)  
**Target Audience:** Administrators, Educators, Policymakers, Professionals



**All Together Now** (magazine)  
**Target Audience:** NC Early Childhood Educators, Interventionists, and Families



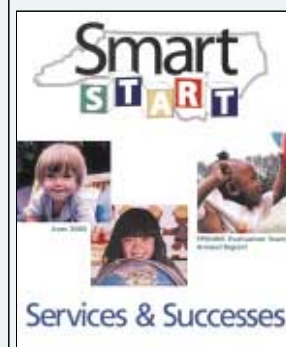
**Selected Early Intervention Training Materials** (Resource Guide)  
**Target Audience:** Legislators, Administrators, Funding Agencies



**ECERS-R, FDCRS** (assessment scales)  
**Target Audience:** Evaluators, Administrators, Consultants, Child Care Providers



**NEW SCRIPTS** is one in a series of projects aimed at producing long-lasting and meaningful changes in university training programs. Core values of the project include commitments to building on existing personnel resources and expertise, interprofessional participation, family-centered, and team-based ecological approaches that include administrators, faculty, families and practitioners in personnel development. NEW SCRIPTS has expanded the model developed in early projects by focusing on diversity and community college participation.



**Smart Start** (brochure)  
**Target Audience:** Administrators, Professionals, Faculty, Families

**ENewsletter** (on the web)  
**Target Audience:** Administrators, Media, Policymakers, Professionals

**Press releases**  
**Target Audience:** Public

# Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice

## How would you handle these?

A home-based interventionist arrives at an inner-city apartment and discovers that the young mother she was supposed to visit is out and has left her baby in the care of a 6-year-old girl.

An early interventionist is shocked when the mother of a 12-month-old with anencephaly announces that they have decided to institutionalize the baby and forfeit parental custody.

## What should these interventionists do next?

ANALYZING AND DISCUSSING dilemmas based on real life situations can be a powerful bridge between theory and practice, and this is what the Case Method of Instruction (CMI) is all about.

"It's important to know theory, facts and skills, but only insofar as someone can use those in problem-solving and decision-making when confronted with real-life situations," said P.J. McWilliam, co-director of the CMI-Outreach Project at FPG.

In CMI, trainees are presented with narrative descriptions of situations that practitioners are likely to encounter. These case stories present a dilemma from the point of view of a practitioner or group of practitioners and, in the end, the situation is left unresolved. Just like real life, the situations are complicated with many factors contributing to the dilemma. There's no one obvious solution but, rather, several alternative ones.

In disseminating their work, the CMI project team has gone beyond the expectations of its funding agencies to create a web site that includes more than two dozen case story narratives as well as role-plays and team simulation activities. The web site also offers tools for incorporating these stories into teaching and other aids such as general teaching tips for using CMI. Also, McWilliam has this year published *Lives in Progress: Case Stories in Early Intervention* with an accompanying instructor's manual.

Don Bailey, director of FPG, said the CMI project is an "excellent example of one of our projects that offers much more to instructors than just information. It's a way of helping people make the kinds of complicated decisions they face every day, for which there are no easy answers."

CMI trainees are taught to sort through the facts of a situation, identify the issues or problems, analyze various factors contributing to the problems, and to use sound judgment in deciding upon a course of action. During discussions, the instructor creates an atmosphere of suspended judgment, encourages independent problem-solving and keeps the discussion going without becoming involved in the actual problem-solving.

"IT'S VERY REWARDING TO WORK WITH INSTRUCTORS AND TO WATCH THEM TAKE THE RISK OF TRYING OUT THIS VERY DIFFERENT METHOD OF TEACHING. IT'S EVEN MORE REWARDING TO HEAR FROM THEM A FEW MONTHS AFTER THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE WORKSHOP AND HAVE TRIED THE METHOD WITH THEIR OWN STUDENTS OR TRAINEES. 'BECAUSE IT IS ONLY THEN THAT INSTRUCTORS COME TO TRULY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANT BENEFITS OF CMI.'"

- RESEARCHER P.J. MCWILLIAM



According to McWilliam, "CMI requires instructional skills and a philosophy of teaching that are quite different from traditional methods of teaching." Because of this, the project provides intensive three-day workshops for university faculty as well as individuals responsible for inservice education.

Instructors in Louisiana, Kentucky, Georgia, Iowa, Delaware, and West Virginia have already attended workshops or will do so over the coming year. Instructors include represent-

atives from early childhood special education, early childhood education, social work, psychology, nursing, and the allied health professions. After the training, ongoing support helps instructors incorporate CMI into their own training of early interventionists. Plus, a follow-up session is held about six months later.

"Our long-range plan," explained McWilliam, "is that project-trained instructors will teach other instructors in their home state about CMI and we will provide supports for their teaching."

She and co-director Pat Snyder of Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, who have worked together in promoting and evaluating the case method for nearly a decade now, conduct all of the project's workshops.

## One of the case stories on the CMI website

### Pink Slip (abridged)

"What is it about children's biting that pushes people's buttons so?" wonders Stacy, as she contemplates the current situation in her classroom of two-year-olds. One of the toddlers in her class, Carly, started biting the other children about two months ago. At one point, Stacy had thought the problem was resolved but, then, Carly started biting again. And yesterday, Carly bit the wrong child-Michael. Michael's mother was outraged.

She blames Stacy for not protecting her son from Carly's assaults and now she is out for blood. She has told Stacy that Carly should be dismissed from the child care and has threatened to sue Carly's parents if she ever bites Michael again. Michael's mother isn't the only parent who feels this way. Another mother has also voiced her concerns to Stacy and suggested that Carly be dismissed.

Stacy thinks the parents are overreacting and doesn't feel as though it's right that she, alone, be held responsible. After all, wasn't she already doing everything she could to stop Carly's biting? It just wasn't easy. Carly's



Among the other items on the CMI project web site are teaching tips. Here are excerpts:

- Use open-ended questions to guide the discussion
- Allow the audience to carry the discussion
- Encourage audience members to talk to one another
- Maintain a nonjudgmental stance
- Make good use of boards or flipcharts
- Encourage full audience participation



biting was simply too quick and too unpredictable to prevent it from happening completely.

Each case story has a series of questions to kick-start discussions. For example, here are several of the more advanced discussion questions about the "Pink Slip" story:

- In the story, Stacy asks herself why it is that parents react more emotionally to children's biting than to other forms of aggression. Is this true? If so, how would you answer her question?
- Not only are other parents complaining, some are also suggesting that Carly be dismissed from the child care. Is this a fair request? Could Stacy have done anything differently to avoid having the situation escalate to this point?
- The story includes a brief description of one incident involving Carly's biting. What clues does this incident have to offer about the reasons for Carly's biting?
- What additional or alternative strategies, if any, does Stacy have for handling Carly's biting? Which of these would you choose and why?
- Is there anything that Stacy could do to defuse the situation involving the parents of other children in the classroom?
- To what extent should Carly's mother be involved in developing and implementing plans to stop Carly's biting?

### Synopses of several case stories

#### Jack and Jill—and Sam?

Sam's mother, desperate for summer child care, enrolled him at Jack and Jill Child Care Center without explaining the extent of his special needs. His persistent misbehavior was infuriating to the staff, and serious consideration was being given to dismissing him from the program. This story describes the efforts of a consultant, Monica, to assist the child care staff and support Sam's inclusion in this less-than-perfect integrated setting.

#### Supermom

Wilson Jordan is a 10-month-old who has Down syndrome. With the exception of frequent ear infections and a mild heart defect, Wilson is doing quite well. Wilson's mother, Ellen Jordan, concerns the early intervention professional more than Wilson himself. Ellen seems so intent on making Wilson "normal" that she doesn't appear to enjoy the little boy behind the Down syndrome. Ellen knows everything there is to know about Down syndrome and all that goes with it. She has therapists coming to their home as often as possible and now, she is talking about cosmetic surgery, weight control, and computers.

#### Close to Home

The last few months have often seemed like a nightmare for Bill and Carla Johnson. Their five-month-old daughter, Elizabeth, was born

results in death before two. Elizabeth has severe developmental delays and has spent much of her short life in the hospital. The case describes a visit that therapist Linda Cummings makes the day before Elizabeth is due for another surgery. Linda is made aware that Carla's feelings about the child are not necessarily shared by her husband, Bill. This case also touches upon the sometimes-inevitable effects of the professionals' personal lives on their work with children and families and vice versa. |ed|

### If you want to know more

CMI web site:  
[www.cmiproject.net](http://www.cmiproject.net)

McWilliam, P.J. (2000). *Instructor's guide for lives in progress*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

McWilliam, P.J. (2000). *Lives in progress: Case stories in early intervention*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Snyder, P., & McWilliam, P. J. (1999). Evaluating the efficacy of case method instruction: Findings from preservice training in family-centered care. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 22, 114-125.





# Parents Take the Lead

seeking input from constituents



"ABSOLUTELY! WHY WOULD YOU MAKE POLICIES WITHOUT CONSULTING THE PEOPLE WHO ARE MOST AFFECTED BY IT? THAT JUST DOESN'T SEEM VERY LOGICAL!"

— TAMMY ARNOLD  
PLD PROJECT PARTICIPANT

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER in Pembroke, NC, said, "I joined the parent leadership program because I felt this type of information would be of value for me to share with service providers as well as with students."

Parents of a child with disabilities in Kings Mountain, NC, said, "We wanted to do more than what we had been doing, and we wanted to learn how to help others, too."

A woman who lives in Marion, NC, said, "I thought this would be a good opportunity to learn new ways to help me be a more effective voice in the community."

These are the voices of some of those taking part in one of the newest projects at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center (FPG) and one that is creating a model to increase family involvement and empowerment in early childhood arenas. The Parent Leadership Development Project (PLD) offers training and support to parents who want to develop their leadership skills. Many will go on to assume a variety of advocacy and advisory roles with state and local agencies and organizations in North Carolina.

The project builds on a growing body of research showing the benefits of involving parents and other family members in all aspects of planning, delivering, and evaluating early education and intervention services. "Developing strong parent-professional alliances is a critical first step in improving the quality and cultural responsiveness of services to children and families," explained FPG Researcher Pat Wesley, co-principal investigator of PLD.

FPG Director Don Bailey said, "This is one of our projects in which seeking input from constituents is more than just a byword; it is critical to the investigators' work. Our project staff interview parents about their leadership ideas and work with them to make sure the

"DEVELOPING STRONG PARENT-PROFESSIONAL ALLIANCES IS A CRITICAL FIRST STEP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS OF SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES."

— RESEARCHER PAT WESLEY



training they receive through the project meets their needs."

PLD has recruited 72 parents and other family members of children with disabilities interested in working with professionals to improve services to children and families. These parents are receiving intensive training, including follow-up activities to develop communication, collaboration, and presentation skills while they learn about the early care and intervention systems. Project participants represent diversity of culture, language, family constellations (single parents, teenage parents, foster parents, grandparents) and socioeconomic resources.

Parents will then be linked to institutions of higher learning and organizations and agencies that provide early education, early intervention, and family support services.

Tammy Arnold, who lives in Marion and has two children with disabilities, said that although she was already involved in community activities, she wanted to know even more. So she signed up for the parent leadership project. One of the particularly useful aspects of the training, she said, is that it is especially for parents. "Most of the things I had previously been involved in were directed at professionals, but parents were invited. It was really nice to have something specifically designed for parents."

Tammy is the community resource coordinator for a family resource program in Marion. It is staffed by employees of the Family Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP). "FIPP is the lead agency for providing the early intervention in the area, but our resource program is for ALL families."

### Features of the PLD model

- A series of leadership retreats for parents focusing on information about early care and intervention systems to increase parent leadership skills
- Follow-up activities with parents as they implement action plans to expand their partnerships with professionals
- Production of a **Parent Leadership Directory**, a **Facilitator's Guide to Parent Leadership Development**, and a videotape about parent leadership roles
- Support to professional organizations, programs, and agencies across North Carolina as they address their goals to increase parent representation and involvement
- A comprehensive program evaluation and dissemination of findings to a wide audience

## New study shows challenges of parental involvement

Smart Start provides children under age six access to high-quality and affordable childcare, health care and other family services. A new study reveals the challenge of involving parents in Smart Start board decision-making. Smart Start is a public-private initiative to help North Carolina children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

### Among the study findings were these

- The "interested public" views parents as important and qualified to make decisions about how Smart Start money is spent, but not involved and not having influence compared to other stakeholder groups.
- Challenges to parent involvement, cited by local Smart Start administrators, include:
  - Recruiting and retaining parents on local boards
  - Defining the role of parents on boards
- Three major factors affect how meaningfully parents are involved in board activities: structure, logistics, and climate. In terms of climate, a prominent theme in survey interviews was that some parents on boards feel intimidated.
- Boards are actively addressing some of these factors; however, factors such as climate are not defined in the same way by everyone.
- These factors (structure, logistics and climate) are more likely to be described as impediments rather than supports, which validates the fact that parent involvement on boards is a major challenge.
- Smart Start boards identified as being successful in involving parents on boards are
  - sensitive to power and equity issues and embed such considerations in all board activities, according to board members.
  - make board decision via a consensus decision-making process versus a more formal and structured majority rule (e.g., *Robert's Rules of Order*).
  - acknowledge that meaningfully involving parents on boards is a continual struggle.

This study is funded by the National Center for Early Development & Learning, also based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[Story continued on page 12]



"FAMILIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL ADVISORS IN PUBLIC POLICY, RESEARCH, PERSONNEL PREPARATION, AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS PARTNERS IN ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S CARE AND EDUCATION."

— RESEARCHER  
VIRGINIA BUYSSE



Tammy said she thinks there should be more family involvement in public policy, research, and program development.

Gwen Locklear, another program participant, works with child care providers in Robeson County and is also a part-time early childhood instructor at Robeson Community College. She said, "All of the [FPG] training that I have attended has been very informative, user-friendly, and productive."

She said, "I think that collaboration is a must in the child care industry with parents as advocates for quality child care. I hope more parents of children with disabilities will get involved and voice their concerns about issues that affect their child."

Locklear is also coordinator of the Robeson County Wage Enhancement Project, a salary supplement project for child care providers in the county who increase their educational background.

Although many professionals recognize the value of having families as consultants, advisors, and members of boards and

committees, there are a number of barriers, according to Virginia Buysse.

- Logistical problems such as lack of transportation or difficulty in making child care arrangements and balancing family needs
- Administrative constraints
- Lack of money for parent reimbursement
- Parents' lack of knowledge or experience with leadership roles
- Limited opportunities and support for parents in these positions
- Inadequate representation of the full spectrum of families who participate in early intervention.

"Our assumption is that most early intervention professionals already understand the importance of collaborating with families, but lack effective strategies for putting this philosophy into practice," explained Pat Wesley.

Charles and Lucy Plyler of Kings Mountain joined the Parent Leadership project and praised the training: "The course was set up in a way that gave us a chance to use what we were learning as we were learning it."

Even before their training was complete the Plylers became key figures in starting a parent council in the school that their daughter attends.

Don Bailey said that another center under FPG's wings -the National Center for Early Development & Learning - has used a strong and active constituents advisory board for more than four years. "This board, whose members include parents, professionals, teachers & administrators, gives us excellent feedback about our outreach products, and also offers opinions to our investigators even as they begin planning a research project. This kind of interactive, responsible, and educated input from constituents is one of our most valuable resources.

### Why involve families?

- Families are in the best position to judge how services are delivered and the extent to which services address their priorities and concerns.
- Families offer authentic experiences and fresh insights about their children, and may identify problems or inconsistencies in early care and intervention systems with which professionals have been accustomed.
- Family stories and perspectives help professionals make the connection between theory and practice.
- Families of young children with disabilities constantly are required to adapt, to find solutions among resources that are sometimes limited, and thus, their observations and ideas can be powerful tools for improving the quality of services.
- Families of young children envision an ideal system of early care and intervention services differently than professionals, and their view is not limited by bureaucratic tradition.

This Project is funded for three years by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, with additional funding from the divisions of Women's and Children's Health and Early Intervention, NC Department of Health and Human Services. |edi

### If you want to know more

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# Going the Extra Mile

making research work accessible

PARTICIPANTS IN MCWILLIAM'S STUDY INCLUDED SPECIAL EDUCATORS, REGULAR EDUCATORS, FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, AND FAMILIES OF TYPICALLY DEVELOPING CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADE FROM 93 SCHOOLS ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA. A TOTAL OF 93 SPECIAL EDUCATORS, 72 REGULAR EDUCATORS, 111 THERAPISTS (SPEECH LANGUAGE, OCCUPATIONAL, AND PHYSICAL THERAPISTS), 89 FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, AND 56 FAMILIES OF TYPICALLY DEVELOPING CHILDREN FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WERE INVOLVED.



ROBIN MCWILLIAM  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR  
SCHOOL PRACTICES PROJECT

AFTER STUDYING INTERVENTION PRACTICES in the early elementary grades in North Carolina, investigators at FPG have created checklists to help families, professionals, school administrators and teachers.

"Our School Practices Project looked at three specific areas: family-centered practices, integrated and coordinated services and individualized and developmentally appropriate practices," said Robin McWilliam, principal investigator of the School Practices Project of the Early Childhood Follow-Through Research Institute. "As lists of barriers to implementing good practices were developed, we saw a need for something practical that could be easily understood. That led to the checklists."

These lists are designed for use by families, school personnel, and professionals who work with children with disabilities and their families. Each checklist is focused on a particular area. For example, one of the lists is "Family-Centered Intervention Planning: Family Preparation."

"This research team did more than just present data and analysis from their study; they went the extra mile to help constituents. They prepared the information in a highly readable format and made it readily available by posting it on our website. Checklists were created to help families, professionals and school personnel begin to lower some of the barriers to more quality services," said Mark Wolery, director of the Early Childhood Follow-Through Research Institute at FPG. The School Practices Project is one of a number of projects under the institute.

FPG Director Don Bailey said work such as this helps the center fulfill one aspect of its overall mission. "A value held by this center is that our work be accessible to the public and the professions. One critical aspect of this is that the work also be readily understandable and available."

Participants in McWilliam's study included special educators, regular educators, families of children with disabilities, and families of typically developing children in kindergarten through third grade from 93 schools across North Carolina. A total of 93 special educators, 72 regular educators, 111 therapists (speech-language, occupational, and physical therapists), 89 families of children with disabilities, and 56 families of typically developing children from elementary schools were involved.

## Here are some of the study findings

### 1. Family-centered practices

- Families report less communication occurring than do school personnel.
- All four groups (special educators, regular educators, families of children with disabilities, and families of children without disabilities) thought ideally that families and school personnel should work together more than they currently do.

### 2. Integrated and coordinated services

- Regular educators, special educators and therapists agreed on their descriptions of current practices, reporting that services are moderately collaborative (average scores were around 3 on a 5-point scale).
- Special educators, regular educators and therapists thought ideally that school professionals should collaborate and communicate more than they currently do.
- Of the three disciplines surveyed, special educators had the highest ideals for how school personnel should work together.

### 3. Individualized and developmentally appropriate practices

- Regular education teachers and teacher assistants thought ideally that classroom practices should be more individualized and developmentally appropriate than they currently are.

McWilliam said, "Solutions to these kinds of problems are complex, of course. Participants in the study cited barriers and made recommendations. In addition to that, we broke out a few easy things that could be done."

He said that although this study involved North Carolina schools and reflects the regional nature of



School Practices Project Homepage  
[www.fpg.unc.edu/~schoolpractices](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~schoolpractices)

### A sample checklist: "Working Well With Families"

(Use this checklist to facilitate positive relationships among school personnel and families.)

When working with families, do you

- 1. Treat families with the same respect you show friends?
- 2. Ask families if they are happy with how things are going at school?
- 3. Listen to and acknowledge each person's concerns?
- 4. Ask what you can do to help address these concerns?
- 5. Put yourself in the family's shoes?
- 6. Use clear, simple words?
- 7. Give families choices about as many things as possible?
- 8. Communicate frequently with families?
- 9. Tell families the good things about their child (not just the bad)?
- 10. Refrain from complaining to the families?
- 11. Ask for families' input before making decisions that affect them (e.g., assigning homework that requires their help)?
- 12. Invite families to be involved in school-wide decision making?
- 13. Support families' decisions about their child?
- 14. Look for and support the things that parents do well?
- 15. Ask families to tell you about their child's strengths and needs? (This may be particularly useful at the beginning of the school year.)
- 16. Show an interest in the whole family, not just the child?
- 17. Respond to messages within a day?
- 18. Thank the person for talking with you?
- 19. Follow through with your assigned/volunteered tasks?
- 20. Convey to families a positive attitude about the parents?

the schools and services, checklists could still be used as general guidelines for other regions.

Checklists such as these created by the School Practices Project are some of dozens of products produced annually by FPG for many types of users. "When our investigators plan dissemination, they develop different products for different constituents," said Bailey. "For example, it would not be unusual for data from a study to be presented traditionally through an academic journal, but then also as one of our one-page *Spotlights* aimed at administrators and then perhaps included in an article in *All Together Now*, a FPG magazine that goes to upwards of 20,000 people involved in early intervention and education in North Carolina."

In addition, he said, dissemination through the public media, such as press conferences, is often used when data warrant it. An example is the national release of information last fall from the Carolina Abecedarian Study, one of the longest-running studies of its kind. A key finding from that study is that early childhood education significantly improves the scholastic success and educational attainments of poor children even into early adulthood, according to Investigator Frances Campbell.

One research project at FPG sends its findings to targeted constituents via an email-delivered newsletter.

Other partners in the School Practices Project are the University of Kentucky and the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute in North Carolina. **led**

### If you want to know more

School Practices Project  
[www.fpg.unc.edu/~schoolpractices](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~schoolpractices)

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## Brief description of checklists

### Getting Your Foot in the Door:

#### Strategies for Promoting Collaboration

Concrete ideas to promote more collaborative relationships between school professionals serving the same child.

### Collaborative Consultation Meetings

A guide to joint problem-solving meetings. Reading the checklist items can help prepare educators for these meetings. Completing the checklist after a meeting can provide useful feedback about how participants promoted collaborative consultation during the meeting.

### Family-Centered Intervention Planning: Routines-Based Interview

A guide to help school professionals through interviews with families and teachers and help identify strengths and needs of children within the home and school activities.

### Family-Centered Intervention Planning: Interviewing Tips

Useful "dos and don'ts" for leading a family-centered planning meeting and keeping everyone focused on the task at hand.

### Family-Centered Intervention Planning: Family Preparation

To help prepare families for family-centered intervention planning meetings.

### Family-Centered Intervention Planning: Staff Preparation

To help prepare teachers for family-centered intervention planning meetings.

### How to Recognize a Quality Classroom

An observation scale which emphasizes individualized and developmentally appropriate practices for use in kindergarten through third-grade general education classrooms that include children with special needs.

### Working Well With Families

Use this checklist to facilitate positive relationships among school personnel and families.



## Directory of early childhood teacher prep programs available

"THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER EDUCATION AS A KEY FACTOR IN HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING HAS BEEN WELL DOCUMENTED. STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS ARE SLOWLY STRENGTHENING THEIR STANDARDS FOR STAFF. HEAD START HAS MANDATED THAT 50 PERCENT OF TEACHING STAFF MUST HAVE AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE BY 2003. THE DIRECTORY IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT PROVIDES A WAY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS TO LOCATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO GET THEIR DEGREES."

- PAM WINTON



A NEW NATIONAL DIRECTORY of institutions that offer programs for early childhood teachers has been published by the National Center For Early Development & Learning (NCEDL), based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the Council for Professional Recognition (CDA), a nonprofit agency in Washington, DC. The data for the directory was gathered as part of a national survey conducted by NCEDL. This is the first such collaboration between NCEDL and CDA.

*The National Directory of Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Institutions*, which contains listings for nearly 1,400 two- and four-year colleges, is available on line at the CDA web site [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org) and in print from CDA.

The directory is organized alphabetically by state/jurisdiction, and then alphabetically by city. Each listing contains the name of the school, address, phone number, a contact person, email address (if provided), and the early childhood specialty area (i.e. infant/toddler, preschool, school-age, etc.). Information has been compiled also for institutions in Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Carol Brunson Day, director of the Council for Professional Recognition, said, "There has been a major increase in government attention to the needs of young children. At least 42 states have some sort of early childhood initiative underway, and schools are showing an increasing interest in serving children prior to kindergarten entry. Early childhood teacher preparation programs are playing an increasingly important role in ensuring that the stronger standards for early childhood teachers translate into a more competent, confident workforce, able to serve ALL young children."

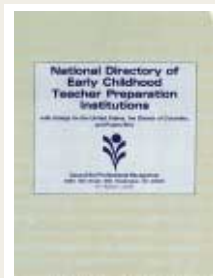
She said that the directory also identifies institutions offering CDA training and distance-learning programs. Institutions that offer a CDA training program develop their curriculum independent of the council's participation or endorsement.

Day said that individuals choosing to study in these programs should ensure that the training meets the educational requirements stated in the Child Development Associate Assessment System and Competency Standards book.

### Survey of Sample Programs

A phone survey of program chairs was also made of a sample of the early childhood teacher preparation programs. Pam Winton and Diane Early of NCEDL, who directed the survey, said highlights of the survey findings include these:

- Students graduating from bachelor's programs are most likely to teach in kindergarten and elementary settings, and students from associate's degree programs are most likely to work with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
- There are more early childhood programs offering associate's degrees (57 percent) than there are offering bachelor's degrees (40 percent.)
- The mission of most programs, whatever the degree, includes preparing future teachers to work with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, preparing early interventionists, and providing training to the existing early childhood workforce. **NCEDL**



Sample listing from  
North Carolina state section  
**ALBEMARLE**  
**Stanly Community College**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
141 COLLEGE DRIVE  
ALBEMARLE, NC 28001  
Contact: SARAH L. POTTER  
Title: PROGRAM HEAD  
Contact number: 704-982-0121x314  
ECE program: 1 AND 2-YEAR  
ECE Coursework:  
INFANT TODDLER

Sample listing from  
California state section  
**Santa Ana**  
**Santa Ana College**  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
1530 WEST 17TH STREET  
SANTA ANA, CA 93706  
Contact:  
GWEN MORGAN-BEAZELL  
Title: CHAIR  
Contact number:  
714-564-6000x6810  
Email Address:  
ECE program: 2-YEAR  
ECE Coursework:  
INFANT-TODDLER  
PRESCHOOL  
SCHOOL-AGE  
DISABILITIES  
FAMILY CHILD CARE  
DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

### If you want to know more

- The directory may be accessed at [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org)
- For information about buying printed copies which are \$8 each, call 1-800-424-4310.
- National Center for Early Development & Learning: [www.ncedl.org](http://www.ncedl.org)



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