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early developments Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

Summer 1997 | Volume 1, Issue 2

Inclusion in Child Care Centers

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Graham Child Development Center

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In Partnership with the Community

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Who we are

The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center was established in 1966 as a multidisciplinary center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill dedicated to improving the lives of young children and their families through research, teaching, and service. More than 30 investigators and 220 staff and students work on more than 70 funded projects.

Traditionally, the work of center investigators has focused on children from birth through eight years, and includes child development and family research, health research, policy analysis, curriculum development, personnel development, and technical assistance. The National Center for Early Development and Learning is housed at FPG. Financial support for FPG activities comes from a variety of public and private sources, including the state of North Carolina, the National Institutes of Health, and the U.S. Department of Education.

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Feel free to reprint articles from our newsletter; we ask that you credit *Early Developments*. If you have questions or need more information about our investigators and projects, check the FPG home page at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu> or contact Loyd Little, editor—phone: 919-966-0867, fax: 919-966-0862, email: loyd_little@unc.edu.

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From the director's office

Inclusion at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

THIS EDITION OF *Early Developments* focuses on the inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood settings. For nearly 15 years, the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center has conducted a variety of projects addressing various aspects of inclusion. Currently the Center has four major efforts:

The FPG Family and Child Care program, under the direction of Debby Cryer, is a fully inclusive child care center. Approximately 25% of the infants and toddlers served by the center have some type of disability.

A multi-site **Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion**, under the direction of Sam Odom, examines ways in which preschoolers with disabilities can be successfully included in child care and preschool programs.

A multi-site **Early Childhood Follow-Through Research Institute**, under the direction of Mark Wolery, examines school practices with children with disabilities in kindergarten through third grade.

Partnerships for Inclusion, under the direction of Pat Wesley, provides a statewide network of technical assistance to help communities and child care programs establish policies and practices to promote successful inclusion.

Over the years we have conducted research on the efficacy of inclusion, the effects of inclusion on families, the perspectives that families and practitioners have about inclusion, social interactions between children

with and without disabilities, how regular therapy and other special services can be provided in a regular preschool setting, and the policy issues underlying inclusion. Some of the publications that have resulted from this work appears on page 7 of this issue. We have tried to maintain a balance between advocating for inclusion as a desirable goal for all children with disabilities and studying inclusion to determine objectively how it works and when it doesn't work.

We recognize that inclusion is, in many respects, a value-driven goal. As such, different people hold different views about its appropriateness in various circumstances. Thus, while inclusion may be a desirable goal for all children, the issue is complicated by different opinions and by the fact that many programs have neither the resources nor the expertise to make inclusion work as it should.

These barriers should not prevent us from striving to make inclusion happen. But they point to the importance of continued research, model development, policy studies, and technical assistance efforts designed to help achieve what should be the ultimate goal: the inclusion of children with and without disabilities are of high quality for all children, meet the specialized learning needs of children with disabilities, and fulfill parent expectations for the kind of programs and experiences they want for their children.

—Don Bailey

Bailey is Director of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center and holds academic appointments in both the School of Education and the School of Medicine at UNC-Chapel Hill.

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