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early developments Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

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Improving Early Child Care and Education

From the Director's Office:

Targeting the Right Stuff

Focused Use of Money, Activities Can Improve Child
Care Quality

Reaching for the Stars

Safe Haven

NCEDL News: Transition Connections

NCEDL News: Barriers

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Improving
Early Child Care
and Education

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

From the Director



Don Bailey


Nearly four years ago, our initial issue of **Early Developments** dealt with quality care. Since then, communities and states have begun implementing higher standards and more families have become aware of and are looking for higher quality. Attempts to improve quality take many forms and equally diverse is the research into the nature of care and outcomes for children and families.

Our research at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center (FPG) keeps pace with the times, and in this issue, we offer an update on our first issue. In an article beginning on page 6, we focus on how our own state – North Carolina – is making major changes in rating child care centers. The impact of these changes is examined at several levels: centers, the training of assessors, and state policy.

In a study discussed on page 4, FPG researchers found that a comprehensive community initiative can improve child care quality if significant funds and activities are focused on the issue. Quality was significantly related to the number of local quality improvement activities in which the child care centers participated.

Researchers also looked at one nationally recognized program – North Carolina’s Smart Start – and found that assistance to child care centers helps young children come to school ready to succeed if the assistance is directly related to quality improvement. This story begins on page 2.

We have also analyzed the relationship between state regulations and child care in four states. In an article on page 10, research indicates that policies set higher standards for child protection than for enhancement of development and learning. Analysts said, “Such regulations support the image of child care programs being a safe haven rather than for development enhancement. The limited requirements for child care personnel and for community interaction also encourage that image. These minimum standards departed substantially from professional judgements about what is needed in child care settings.”

In a survey, described in an article beginning on page 14, teachers of preschoolers report that they are able, generally, to engage in the practices they endorse. Some barriers were found: the most common were “children with behavior problems interfere” and a “lack of planning time.” This article is in our special section devoted to the National Center for Early Development & Learning. 

Contents

From the Director	1
Targeting the Right Stuff	2
Targeting activities directly related to quality improvement in child care	
Focused Use of Money, Activities Can Improve Child Care Quality	4
FPG Recent Publications	5
Reaching for the Stars	6
Attaining quality in child care	
Safe Haven	10
The view of early child care is changing from a “safe haven” to “developmental enhancement”	
NCEDL NEWS	
Transition Connections	12
Collaboration of families & schools	
Barriers	14
Preschool teachers indicate barriers they encounter in their work	
New Book Review	16