



early developments Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center

Fall 2002 | Volume 6, Issue 3

Child & Family Policy

ED News

Informing Public Policy

Jim Gallagher - Legend & Legacy in Special Education

The Impact of Welfare Reform

Supporting IDEA

A Seamless System of Services

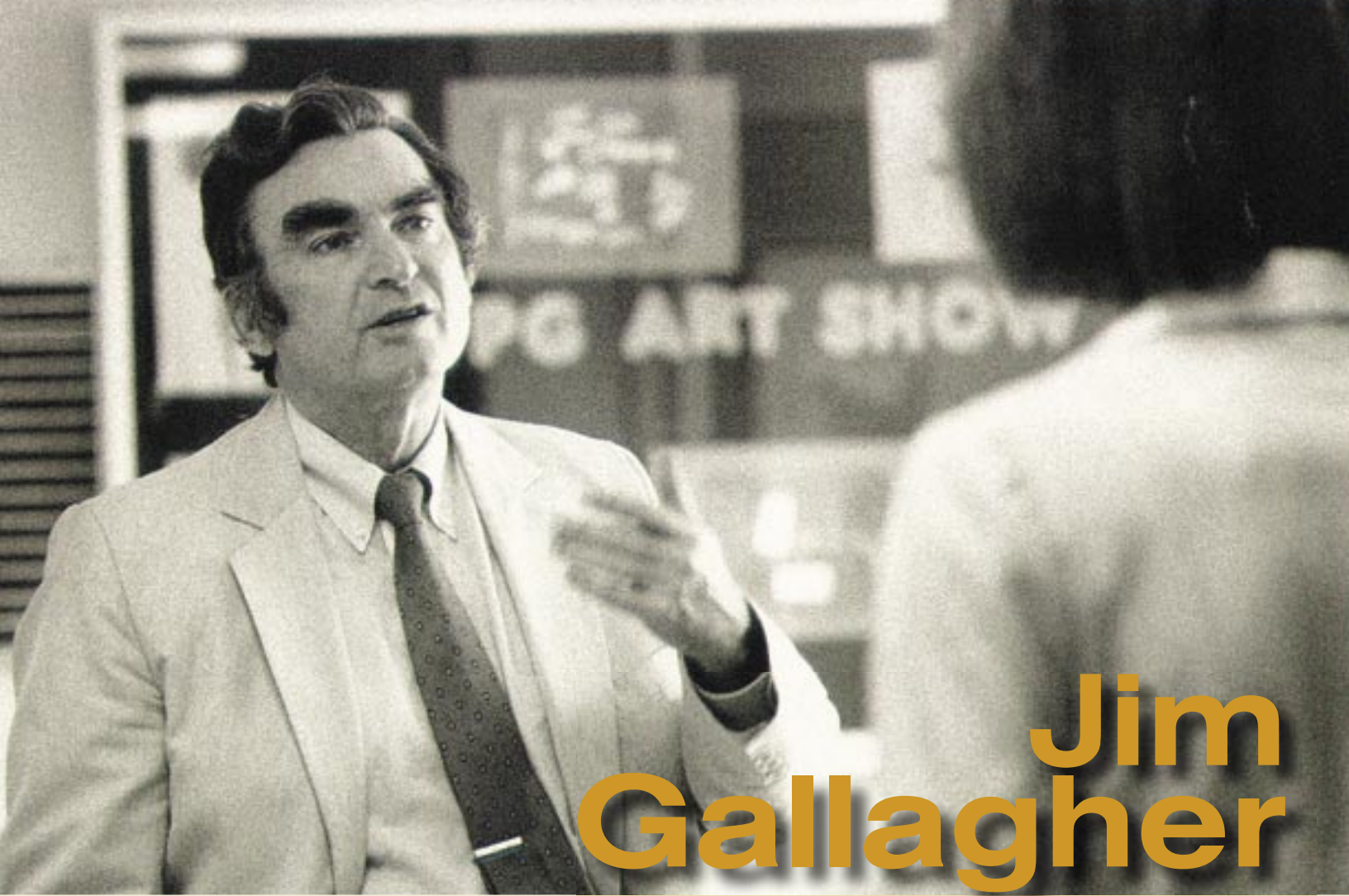
FPG Recent Publications

Prekindergarten Education in the US

NCEDL Publications

ed

early developments



Jim Gallagher

Legend & Legacy in Special Education

IF THERE WERE A SPECIAL EDUCATION HALL OF FAME, Jim Gallagher surely would be an inductee. A number of people have earned renown in special education for their research, teaching, or policy-making, but few have made significant contributions in all three fields. Jim Gallagher, FPG Senior Scientist and Kenan Professor Emeritus of Education, is that rare exception.

“Jim Gallagher is a protean source of ideas, enthusiasm and collegiality,” says Rud Turnbull, co-director of the Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas. “His ideas began with his seminal concept of an individualized education contract and have carried through to his most recent work-in-progress, his treatise on special education policy. His enthusiasm has never waned; that is because it is undergirded by a deep commitment to students with

disabilities and their families and professional providers, and because he brings an infectious buoyancy to his work.”

On September 26, FPG will sponsor a symposium to honor Gallagher for his nearly five decades of contributions on behalf of the education of gifted children and children with disabilities. Such events are usually reserved for an individual about to enter retirement. In Gallagher’s case, the energetic Irishman will accept his accolades and return to the field.

Nationally and internationally, Gallagher may be best known for his research and writing, if for no other reason than he has produced so much of both. The articles, monologues and books that he has authored or co-authored number well over 200. It is rare to discover a student of special education who is not familiar with at least one of his textbooks. *Teaching the Gifted Child* (Allyn & Bacon),

now in its fourth edition, has been called the Bible on the subject of educating gifted children. *Educating Exceptional Children* (Houghton Mifflin), coauthored with Sam Kirk and Nick Anastasiow, has been through 10 editions and serves as the introductory text to many courses on special education for children.

As long as he has been a researcher, Gallagher has been a teacher. He began in 1954 as an assistant professor at the University of Illinois, eventually rising to Associate Director of the university’s Institute for Research on Exceptional Children. In 1970, he was named Kenan Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Over his 30 years of teaching at that institution, he trained many graduate students who went on to become leading professionals in the field, including Ron Haskins, former senior staff person for the House Ways and Means Committee and now a welfare reform specialist in the Bush administration.

As a teacher, Gallagher sought to bridge what he perceived as a gap between academicians and politicians in communicating and understanding early childhood education issues. In the mid-70s, he secured funding from the Bush Foundation (part of 3M Company) to put together a program of biweekly seminars on policy making for doctoral students in early childhood education. Many of his former students who are now practicing professionals fondly remember Gallagher’s instruction on how to translate knowledge into political action.

“Because he’d worked on Capitol Hill, Jim knew as much about the politics of special education as he did about research,” says Pam Winton, a former student at UNC and now Senior Scientist at FPG. “He taught us how to use research findings in a way to impact policy, how to think about problems in a way that could translate into results.

“Jim was the person who introduced me to the term ‘RFP’,” Winton laughs. “He taught us how to get money

from the federal government to actually fund programs benefiting children with special needs.”

As well as being a world-class researcher and educator, Gallagher became a heavy hitter in the field of public policy. In 1967, John Gardener, then head of the US Department of Education under President Lyndon Johnson, tapped Gallagher to head the newly formed Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. Key members of Congress had indicated support for a program supporting preschool age children with special needs. Gallagher and his team responded by devising a demonstration program directing federal funds to 20 exemplary programs supporting young children with disabilities.

“Few in America recognized the importance of linking child development research to social policy as early as Jim Gallagher did,” says Lynn Kagan, Professor of Early Childhood and Family Policy at Columbia University Teachers College. “Even fewer had a keen sense of how it could and should be done.”

Later, as Director of FPG, Gallagher proposed to the Bureau to develop a system of technical assistance for these demonstration programs. FPG later won a contract to do just that and proceeded to develop a national system of technical assistance now known as NECTAC (see page 11).

“This support system of technical assistance strengthened already good programs and brought credibility to the demonstration center program,” Gallagher says. “The program gradually increased its membership and became a visible example of what could be done to help young children with disabilities.”



FPG Photo Archives

Career Highlights

1954

appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana. Later named Associate Director of the Institute for Research on Exceptional Children

1967

named Associate Commissioner of Education at the U.S. Office of Education and Chief of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped

1967

J.E. Wallace Wallin Award for Contributions to Special Education, Council for Exceptional Children

1970

hired as Director of Frank Porter Graham Center and Kenan Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

1972

John Fogarty Award for Distinguished Government Service

1986

Distinguished Scholar Award, National Association of Gifted Children

A longtime acquaintance of the Kennedy family, Gallagher was asked in 1970 to participate in a series of meetings they were sponsoring on mental retardation. In his paper entitled “A Special Education Contract,” Gallagher argued that schools should develop an individualized education contract with each child with special needs, one that specifies what services are being provided for the child and who will provide them. These elements were eventually included in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that is now part of the federal IDEA law.

A few years after his presentation at the Kennedy symposium, Gallagher was called upon to testify on behalf of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) in a suit it had filed against the State of Pennsylvania. Despite having a line in its constitution saying all children were entitled to a public education, Pennsylvania had a policy of excluding children from public school who were deemed not ready for kindergarten. “The relevant question was, can these children learn something useful?” Gallagher says. “I was one of four expert witnesses who asserted the answer was ‘yes.’”

The court subsequently ruled that Pennsylvania had to admit those students into the public schools. That case is now looked upon as a landmark in the special education field and helped lead to the formulation and passage of the federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the predecessor of IDEA. “It was Jim Gallagher who, as expert witness for the then-excluded students in the landmark PARC case, brought his knowledge to bear to lay the foundation of IDEA,” Turnbull says.

At FPG, Gallagher developed a special interest in the educational needs of gifted children. Though some states like North Carolina included gifted children in their definition of exceptional children,

programs to help such children were not widespread, and those that did exist tended to serve kids who needed the least help. Working with the State of North Carolina, Gallagher set up nine model centers that helped school districts plan programs to identify and serve gifted children, particularly those from poor backgrounds. On the basis of this work, North Carolina revised its laws for dealing with gifted children. Now, all local school districts must have a broad-based plan for identifying and serving gifted children.

Recently, Gallagher has turned his attention to what he describes as the missing support infrastructure for teachers dealing with children with special needs. “The teacher is the point person in providing services for these children, but there is no systematic support program behind them,” he says. “The shortage of special education teachers is widespread. Many are retiring. If teachers had more of a support system, they would feel part of a team. You would attract more teachers to the profession and retain more of them for longer periods of time.”

Gallagher is now writing a book entitled *Decision-making on Special Education*, addressing such issues as how much to spend on special education and how to integrate it into general education. Asked why he continues to work, Gallagher cites a quote from anthropologist Loren Eisely:

We cannot know all that has happened in the past or the reason for all these events, any more than we can with surety discern what lies ahead. We have joined the caravan...at a certain point. We will travel as far as we can, but we cannot in one lifetime see all that we would like to see or learn all that we hunger to know.

Says Gallagher, “I still hunger to know and teach what I know.” |ed|



FPG Photo Archives



1987

appointed as Director of the Gifted Policy Studies Program and Director of the Carolina Institute for Child and Family Policy at the University of North Carolina

1994

named co-director of the Statewide Technical Assistance for Gifted Education Program at the University of North Carolina

1995

Distinguished Service to the Field of Gifted Education and Leadership as President of the National Association of Gifted Children

1997

Distinguished Service Award, World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

2000

Lifetime Service for Exceptional Children, North Carolina Department of Public Education; Eighth Annual Razor Walker Award, UNC-Wilmington

Welfare Reform

The Impact on

Emily, welfare recipient and caregiver of a 3-year-old daughter with severe visual impairments and developmental delays, has been informed by her caseworker that she needs to find a job. Emily says she would like to work, but needs to be at home to meet with the various therapists who come during the day to work with her child. Emily also has to take her daughter to three other sites for educational and therapeutic services. On top of this, Emily is worried about losing Medicaid for her daughter if she goes back to work. She is certain no private insurance company would cover her daughter in light of her pre-existing conditions. Emily lives in Illinois, one of the 28 states that do not exempt caregivers of persons with disabilities from time limits for welfare benefits. Seeking to enforce the time limit, Emily's caseworker insists that Emily must be creative in finding child care and getting a job. This mandate is adding another layer of stress to Emily's already fragile existence, and threatens to undermine her family's ability to function.



James Carroll, Artville, A Kid's World

Families with Members with Disabilities

THE MAJOR GOAL OF WELFARE REFORMS instituted in 1996 is to move welfare recipients to work. For many caregivers of children with disabilities, this transition can be especially challenging. Exactly how the new work requirements and time limits affect the lives of these families is revealed through a project entitled “The Impact of Welfare Reform on Families with Members with Disabilities.”

Headed by FPG Scientist Debra Skinner with funding from the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation/USDHHS, the project is part of a larger study, “Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three City Study,” being conducted in the cities of Boston, Chicago and San Antonio. The Three-City Study monitors the consequences of welfare reform on the well being of children and families through surveys of approximately 2,400 low-income families, video-taped assessments of 630 children and their caregivers and ethnographic observations and interviews with 256 families.

Skinner’s study focuses primarily on the experiences of 42 families of young children with disabilities. Interviews and observations with these families over a three-year period provide a rich picture of how disability, poverty and welfare reform converge to impact their lives and well-being. With the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, a new program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), limits the time that families can receive cash assistance. It also requires beneficiaries to participate in work-related activities.

Skinner’s research shows that for low-income persons who must care for a child with disabilities, finding full-time or even part-time work that doesn’t put the child at risk is difficult. “All caregivers in the study expressed the desire to work, but some of them are unwilling to leave their young child who may need round-the-clock care,” Skinner says. “Lack of child care slots for children with moderate or severe disabilities and lack of flexibility in the workplace are major barriers. Also, many jobs that these caregivers qualify for do not offer health coverage at all, or policies will not cover a child with preexisting conditions. Caregivers fear the loss of Medicaid coverage if they go back to work, and fear that their children’s health and access to services will suffer.”

Skinner found that a significant portion of the caregivers of children with disabilities had physical or mental health conditions themselves that limited their ability to work and carry out daily routines. “We were surprised at the high rate of poor health of mothers and other family members,” Skinner says. “For the most part, these families do a tremendous job of piecing together services for their children and garnering the emotional and physical resources needed to support their families. However, these efforts take a physical and emotional toll.”

Given these barriers, Skinner says it may not be feasible for some caregivers of young children with disabilities to enter the workforce. If not exempted from time limits, the loss of TANF benefits may pose further hardships for them and their children. “If they are to work, these families require a range of supports including appropriate child care and flexible workplaces,” Skinner says. “Supports that would aid these families

... a significant portion of the caregivers of children with disabilities had physical or mental health conditions themselves...



Abraham Menashe, *Challenging Perceptions*, digitalvision

include extending transitional Medicaid until other health care coverage could be obtained. For parents or other caregivers of children with disabilities who are required to work, work participation could become more broadly defined to include caring for the child with disabilities, or participation in training programs for specialized care, service coordination and parent advocacy for children with disabilities. In the workplace, employees need to become aware of the difference disability may make for families, and offer some flexibility to allow caregivers to deal with their children's special health care needs. For caregivers with disabilities, targeted and appropriate job training and placement should be offered."

Skinner found that agencies that work with families in poverty are rarely aware of disability issues and the programs that serve persons with disabilities. Conversely, agencies that work with persons with disabilities are often not familiar with poverty programs. "What would help support low-income families with members with disabilities is for each type of agency to become aware of the other, and to collaborate in referring families to appropriate programs and services for those in poverty or with disabilities," she says.

PRWORA is up for reauthorization this year. So far in the debate, little attention has focused on the needs of low-income families of children with disabilities. "In the reauthorization of welfare reform, it is important that the more vulnerable members of our society not be disproportionately impacted," Skinner says. "I hope our study and others like it will raise state and federal policy-makers' awareness of the impact of welfare reform on families of children with disabilities and will lead to instituting the necessary supports to help families care for their children and obtain economic security." | **ed** |

For more information

Disability, Health Coverage, and Welfare Reform. Skinner, D., Slattery, E., Lachicotte, W., Cherlin, A., & Burton, L. (in press). The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, Washington, DC. The report can be found on the following web site www.kff.org/sections.cgi?section=kcmu

The web site for the larger project for which this is a component is www.jhu.edu/~welfare