

# ed

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

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*OUTREACH Bridges to Excellence*

From the Director

Improving Outreach

Committing Time

FPG Outreach

Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice

Parents Take the Lead

FPG Recent Publications

Going the Extra Mile

NCEDL News

# 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. **ledl**

### If you want to know more

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

McWilliam, R.A. (Ed.). (1996). *Rethinking pull-out services in early intervention: A professional resource*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Bailey, D.B., & Winton, P.J. (1997). Family-centered care: The revolution continues. *Exceptional Parent*, 27, 16-29.

McWilliam, R.A., Young, H.J., & Harville, K. (1996). Therapy services in early intervention: Current status, barriers, and recommendations. *Topics in Early Special Education*, 16, 348-374.

### 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.

“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.”

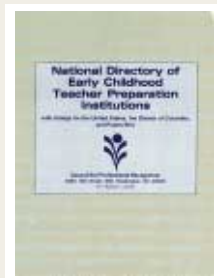
She said that the directory also identifies institutions offering CDA training and distance-learning programs. Institutions that offer a CDA training program develop their curriculum independent of the council’s participation or endorsement.

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. **INCEdl**



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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