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

**Spring 2002** | Volume 6, Issue 2

*Children with Special Needs*

For the Development and Well Being of All Children

Focusing on Vision

Fragile X

FPG Recent Publications

A Model of Inclusion

Cost, Quality and Outcomes of Preschool Inclusion

Connecting Research on Inclusion to Classroom Practices

NCEDL News

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The University of  
North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill

# earlydevelopments



Spring 2002 | Volume 6, Number 2

Children with Special Needs



Don Bailey  
Director of FPG

## Bailey appointed W.R. Kenan, Jr. Professor

The Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill approved the appointment of Don Bailey as W.R. Kenan, Jr. Professor effective July 1, 2002. This honor recognizes Don's leadership as a researcher and director of the FPG Child Development Institute during the past ten years.

## Bailey Receives AAMR Research award

Don Bailey, director of FPG, received an award for his research on mental retardation from the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) at the association's 126<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Orlando, FL.

AAMR presented its annual Research Award to Bailey "for formulations and investigations that have contributed significantly to the body of scientific knowledge in the field of mental retardation."

## Unexpected Journey wins Silver Reels award

*Unexpected Journey: The Earliest Days*, a 24-minute documentary produced by the Partnerships for Inclusion project at FPG, won a Silver Reels award January 12. The Silver Reels regional competition honors video, film and interactive communications from across North and South Carolina.

Produced by Pat Wesley in collaboration with Julie Dixon of Raleigh-based Words and Pictures, the video follows several families through the earliest days of parenting premature infants. *Unexpected Journey* also addresses ways to promote smooth transitions for the family and child as they prepare to leave the hospital and begin their lives together in their communities.



Pat Wesley  
Director of Partnerships for Inclusion

### To Learn More

Visit the PFI website at  
[www.fpg.unc.edu/~pfi](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~pfi)

## A New Name, a New Look

The Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center is now the FPG Child Development Institute. Our mission is the same as it was 30 years ago when we were founded...

to cultivate and share the knowledge necessary to enhance child development and family well-being.

Our modified name, new logo, and tagline (*advancing knowledge, enhancing lives*) are designed to help us communicate our mission more clearly with the consumers of our research, teaching, and outreach efforts.



**FPG**  
Child  
Development  
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North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill

advancing knowledge, enhancing lives

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## early developments

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# For the development and well

**N**ATIONAL REPORTS indicate that in a given year as many as 5.5 million children are identified as having a disability that interferes with school performance and requires special education services. Some disabilities are obvious at birth, occurring as a result of genetic disorders or birth trauma. Others can emerge later in life as a result of injuries, illness or environmental factors. Whatever the case, there is now widespread agreement that disabilities must be identified as early as possible and the appropriate services provided.

This issue of *Early Developments* highlights some of our current work with children with disabilities. Since our main focus is on the early childhood period, we are especially concerned about promoting earlier identification and improving early intervention and preschool services. Recent reports show that while 11-12% of school-age children are eligible for special education services, less than 2% of children receive early intervention services during the first three years of life and less than 5% during the preschool years. The peak enrollment of children in special education services occurs at age 10. This means that many children's disabilities are not identified until after they enter school and experience failure.



Our commitment to disability-related work goes back to the earliest days of our institute and the involvement of the Kennedy family in mental retardation programs and legislation. It is well known that President John F. Kennedy had a sister with mental retardation. One outgrowth of Kennedy's work was the establishment of a national network of mental retardation research centers. FPG was part of a consortium of organizations at UNC that was funded as one of the original 12 Mental Retardation Research Centers in 1966 and we continue this affiliation today.

Since the 1960s, we have been involved in a wide range of disability-related activities. These include basic research, the development of models for working with children and families, studies of disability policies, and training and technical assistance activities designed to help policy makers and practitioners develop and implement high-quality services. We have also focused much of our efforts on understanding how children with disabilities can be included in programs for children without disabilities. As a part of this work, the child care program at FPG has been a fully inclusive program and the staff have worked hard to model effective inclusionary practices since 1984. Examples of those practices at the FPG child care center are presented in an article in this issue.

# being of all children

By Don Bailey, Director of the FPG Child Development Institute



Some of our work focuses on specific disabilities. We have projects involving children with disorders such as vision impairment, autism and spina bifida. This issue features an article on our studies of one particular disorder—fragile X syndrome—and the challenges surrounding early identification and the provision of services. From projects such as this one, we hope to learn about the specific learning needs of children with identifiable conditions, trying to determine the needs that are unique to each disorder in comparison with the needs that are common to almost all children. This work draws heavily on the individual interests of investigators working at the center. Other research, however, is not so focused on a particular disorder, but on children with special needs as a group. From this perspective, the range of disabling conditions and needs is enormous. Our challenge is to discover ways that service systems can respond appropriately to this wide variation in needs and abilities.

Serving young children with special needs is a complicated endeavor. It requires coordinating the medical, educational, public health and mental health communities, and working in partnership with schools, child care programs and families to provide appropriate support for children and families. A comprehensive set

of national and state laws and regulations govern these activities, but as expected, the challenges often come in the appropriate implementation of policy.

We try to engage in work that helps us understand how policy affects practice, and how practice can be modified to be consistent with policy. In this issue, we look at one FPG project—the Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers Who Have Visual Impairment—and how it is helping colleges and universities prepare personnel to serve children with this disability.

At FPG, we believe strongly in conveying the results of our research not just to fellow academicians, but to a larger audience of policy makers, service providers, and parents, who can put the findings to use right away. In this regard, we are particularly proud of the work of the National Center for Early Development & Learning, whose information dissemination program is featured in this issue.

Our work on disability issues emphasizes our belief that we need to be concerned about the development and well being of *all* children. By focusing part of our effort on disability, we can reinforce the notion that every child needs to be viewed as an individual with his or her unique styles of learning and developmental growth.

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