



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

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*Diversity*

Director's Notes

Nuestros Niños

Taking Up the Challenge

Bringing Diversity to Early Childhood Workforce

Secrets to Success

Social Identity in Diverse Schools

Finding the Stars in a Multi-Colored Sky

FPG Publications

Afterward: From Different Worlds



# Higher Ed Brings Diversity to Early Childhood Workforce

**E**ARLY EDUCATION AND INTERVENTION PROFESSIONALS increasingly are encountering children and families from a variety of cultures, yet early childhood programs are largely unprepared to address these diverse educational and linguistic needs. One of the key challenges in meeting the needs of our rapidly diversifying population is to increase the diversity of teachers and other early childhood specialists and administrators. While children and adolescents of color will make up as much as 40% of the US youth population by 2005, the majority of our early childhood educators are white and female. Colleges and universities train our educators, yet they have not succeeded in recruiting, retaining and supporting large numbers of racial and ethnic minorities into their early childhood personnel preparation programs. FPG's Walking the Walk program seeks to break this impasse by forging campus-community partnerships across North Carolina dedicated to increasing the number of culturally and linguistically diverse people entering the early childhood profession and supporting faculty who prepare those individuals.

Over the past three years, Walking the Walk has provided training and technical assistance to six teams of university and community college faculty, community providers, parents and state agency leaders. Five of the teams are community based and one is statewide. Several of the former have gone on to develop their own impressive programs.

In Raleigh, team members Patsy Pierce, professor of Child Development at predominantly white Meredith College, and Ida Bailey, former professor at predominantly black Shaw University, developed a collaborative effort known as the Early Intervention Seedlings program. Enacted in 2002, the program brought together Meredith and Shaw students pursuing early childhood teaching degrees to learn how to work with ethnically diverse young children with special needs and their families. The program included classroom instruction by Pierce and Bailey, observation of children with special needs at a Raleigh child care center, and home visits with the children's families. Former students, most of whom are now working as early childhood professionals, give the program uniformly high praise.

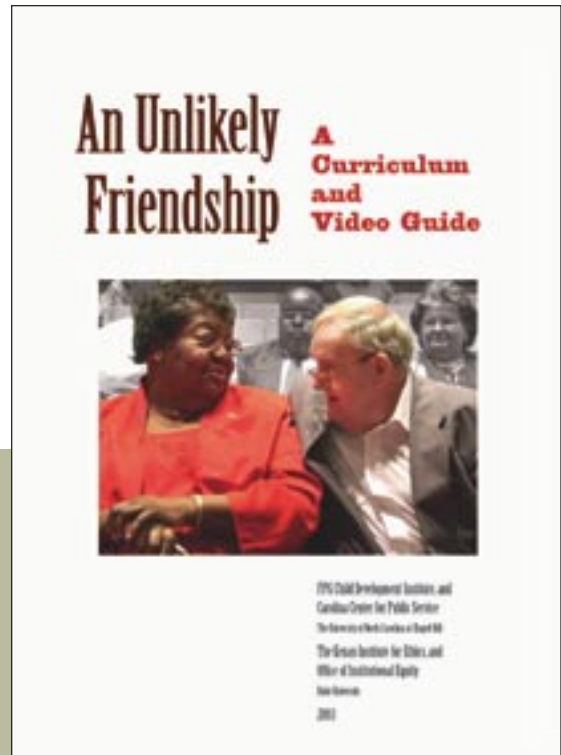
"It was one of my best experiences in college," says Amanda Austin, a former Meredith student and now a preschool teacher at Hillburn Drive Elementary School in Raleigh. "We did a lot of activities both in and out of classrooms. I especially enjoyed the home visits. We worked with a diverse group of families, including an

Hispanic family whose child is now in my class.”

Meredith alumna Tulia Pascht, who now works for Project Enlightenment at the Wake County Public Schools System, also praised the hands-on nature of the experience. “I enjoyed the mixture of classes at Meredith and visits to the Jordan Family Center,” she says. “We were able to work with little children and immediately apply the things we learned in class.”

Gladys Carter is a former Shaw student who now teaches at Carver Elementary School. She valued the  
*(continued on page 14)*

## Video and Curriculum Boosts Race Relations



During the racially divisive decade of the 1970s, an embittered Ku Klux Klansman and an outspoken black woman activist managed to overcome their hatred for one another and form a lifelong mutual friendship. That story, and the film on which it was based, are the subject of a training curriculum developed by FPG and three other Triangle institutions for use in middle school, secondary school, and college audiences.

The 2001 video documentary *An Unlikely Friendship* tells the story of how white supremacist C.P. Ellis and black activist Ann Atwater developed a close friendship despite deeply-held racial prejudices. Producer Diane Bloom says the film is not just about black-white relations in the US, but about all forms of group hatred. “It is a hopeful and optimistic film, because if two people as different as Ann and C.P. could transcend stereotypes and form such a strong and loving bond, so can the rest of us,” Bloom says.

FPG researchers, along with members of the Kenan Institute for Ethics and the Office of Institutional Equity at Duke University, saw the potential for using this film as an educational tool to promote race relations.

“The film was first shown several years ago and audience response was extremely positive, especially in regard to its capacity for educating the general public and students about civil rights and race relations,” says Pam Winton, a senior scientist at FPG. “Based on that, we decided to produce a curriculum and video guide to support its use in the classroom.” Faculty grants from the Carolina Center for Public Service at UNC funded the development of the video and the curriculum. Area teachers and students were involved with the development of the material.

The project was co-directed by Pam Winton and Camille Catlett. The 20-page curriculum and video guide includes objectives, activities, role-plays, and discussion questions for various age levels. The curriculum is free online at [www.fpg.unc.edu/~walkingthewalk/pdfs/unlikely\\_friendship.pdf](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~walkingthewalk/pdfs/unlikely_friendship.pdf). An *Unlikely Friendship* kit, which includes the video and printed curriculum, is \$69.95 and can be ordered by mailing Character Development Group, PO Box 9211, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-9211, or emailing [respect96@aol.com](mailto:respect96@aol.com), or calling 919.967.2110.

assessment tools as well as the practical experience provided through the training. “We learned about assessment tools to check children for developmental delays and then how to help the parent help the child,” Carter says. “We’d visit the child’s home and track their progress from prior visits. The parents were so receptive. When they saw that their child had developmental delays, they wanted help.”

As much as they valued the work with diverse children and their families, the students marveled at how well they bonded with each other.

“I’m a relatively older person and most of the other students were in their twenties,” Carter says. “I didn’t know how well I would be received. But the first day, we did an exercise called ‘Bump’ where we all shared some difficulty about our lives. When you heard these experiences, you couldn’t help but embrace the other people in the group. All of a sudden, age, race, and economic background didn’t matter.”

“I really enjoyed the richness of the group,” Pascht says. “There were Latinos, African Americans, northerners, southerners, Asian Americans...I learned a lot about how all these different groups are treated and how hard they had to work to overcome this.”

“The sharing of experiences was incredible,” Austin says. “It has helped me relate to my own students. I have an Hispanic child who has some severe learning disabilities. I’ve done three home visits with the family and we’ve learned some ways to help him deal with these problems. The grandmother said to me in Spanish, ‘You’re an angel to our family. Nobody has believed in him before. Now, he loves school.’”

Another Walking the Walk team is located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Team member Ellen Wenner has followed up on her FPG training by applying for and receiving funds to translate materials into Spanish for her Early Childhood Credentials class at Forsyth Tech Community College. This past summer, Wenner contracted with Nelly Blanco, a *More at Four* teacher’s assistant, to instruct the classes in Spanish. “We had ten students who were Limited English Proficient, and this prepared them to either work in a child care program or assist the lead teachers,” Wenner says.

This year, Wenner has contracted with Rafael Perez, Director of Customized Spanish Programs at Forsyth Tech, to instruct the Early Childhood Credential classes in Spanish. “The program has been very successful,” Perez says. “I had sixteen Hispanic students in October who wanted to get their license. Some are now working at child

care centers; others will have programs in their own homes. There is a tremendous need for Spanish-speaking child care professionals in this area. The Hispanic community is huge and growing constantly.”

Forsyth Tech has received an additional grant of \$10,000 to translate their Early Childhood Certificate program into Spanish. The school is also looking for college instructors who can teach the courses.

Asked how Walking the Walk has helped her promote diversity in the early childhood workforce, Wenner says, “Quite simply, it was the [FPG] institute that brought a new focus to the issue of diversity for me and my staff. It was the spark to help me rethink what we do in our community and how I, through my position, help others become more aware of the needs of the Latino community and diversity issues in general.”

The state Walking the Walk team identified the challenge that there were multiple diversity initiatives or training opportunities within different state and local agencies, but efforts were fragmented and information about these opportunities was not widely available. The team set the goal of conducting a statewide survey to identify agencies and programs currently providing diversity training. After conducting the survey, the team made the results available online, so others can find out about diversity training resources, programs and agencies, organized by North Carolina county.

Walking the Walk is an outreach project funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and co-directed by Pam Winton and Camille Catlett. | **ed** |

## **To Learn More**

### **Walking the Walk**

[www.fpg.unc.edu/~walkingthewalk](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~walkingthewalk)

### **Diversity Resource Guide**

[www.fpg.unc.edu/whatsnew/pub\\_summary.cfm?apubid=321](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/whatsnew/pub_summary.cfm?apubid=321)

### **Moving Towards Cross-Cultural Competence in Lifelong Personnel Development - A Review of the Literature**

#### **Technical Report #3**

October 2000

by Ann H. Hains, Eleanor W. Lynch, & Pamela J. Winton

[www.clas.uiuc.edu/techreport/tech3.html](http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/techreport/tech3.html)

### **Database of diversity training opportunities in North Carolina**

[www.fpg.unc.edu/~walkingthewalk/diversity\\_survey/trainings\\_avail.cfm](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~walkingthewalk/diversity_survey/trainings_avail.cfm)

# NIH Aids Scientists at FPG

As part of its efforts to increase diversity among early childhood professionals, FPG seeks grants to support research being conducted by its own staff through a special program offered by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Launched in 1989, NIH's Research Supplements for Underrepresented Minorities program was established to address the shortage of minority scientists participating in biomedical research and the health related sciences. The program offers grants in the form of administrative supplements to support research activities and career development from high school to the faculty level. The funds are available only to principal investigators already holding NIH grants.

For 2003, NIH awarded administrative supplements to two grants under the direction of FPG director Don Bailey. These supplements will be used to enhance the work of two African American staff members—Lynette Aytch and Blair Edwards. Aytch holds a doctorate in school psychology and has completed a post-doctorate fellowship in early intervention at FPG. She is lead author of the *Early Intervention Services Assessment Scale (EISAS)* and is principal investigator for the Quality Care for Children initiative (QCCI) grant funded by the District of Columbia's Office of Early Childhood Development. As PI of the QCCI project, Aytch trains a corps of early childhood professionals to provide consultation and technical assistance to child care providers to improve the quality of infant-toddler care.



**Aytch**

The NIH supplement will support her participation in the Fragile X Center research team. Her research will focus on parent adaptation and well-being in caring for a child with Fragile X syndrome (FXS), the most common genetic disorder of mental retardation syndrome.

“At FPG, my work has principally focused on instrument development and outreach projects,” Aytch says. “At this point

**Edwards**



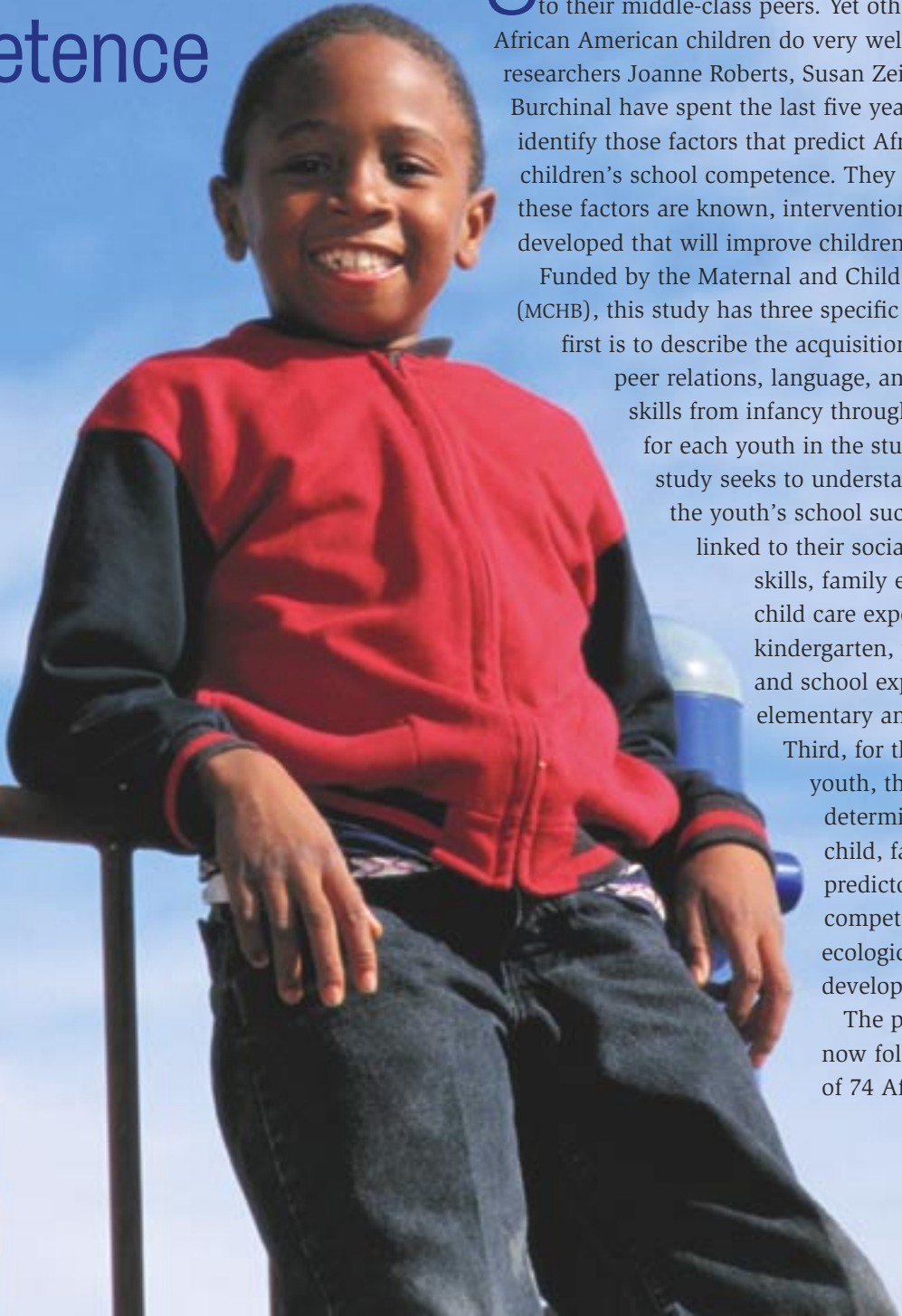
in my career, my goal is to further enhance my research skills through collaboration with a multidisciplinary research team. I am particularly interested in understanding cultural-ethnic influences on adaptation and well-being in families of color with a child with FXS. This supplement offers a wonderful opportunity to develop as a research scientist and be part of a cutting-edge project.”

Edwards holds a Bachelor of Science degree with a focus in psychology from UNC-Chapel Hill. She began work with FPG in an administrative support position, and with the help of the NIH supplement, has advanced to a research assistant position working on two longitudinal cognitive studies. She is currently receiving training in the use of assessment tools for FXS and collecting data related to academic achievement, attention, memory, and executive function abilities in children with this condition.

“I am interested in all aspects of child development, but especially in working with special populations in longitudinal research design,” Edwards says. “My particular interest in school psychology will be especially helpful to the project, since many aspects of the protocol concern cognitive development and neuropsychological performance. This project will be very beneficial to my future goals, such as graduate school. Furthermore, this supplement provides greater insight into the field of research.” ■

# Secrets to Success

## African American Children's School Competence

A young African American boy is sitting on a playground structure, smiling broadly. He is wearing a red and black zip-up jacket and blue jeans. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The playground structure has a wooden railing and blue and white posts.

SOME AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN from low-income families do not succeed as well in school compared to their middle-class peers. Yet other low-income African American children do very well in school. FPG researchers Joanne Roberts, Susan Zeisel, and Peg Burchinal have spent the last five years seeking to identify those factors that predict African American children's school competence. They hope that once these factors are known, intervention efforts can be developed that will improve children's school success.

Funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), this study has three specific objectives. The first is to describe the acquisition of social skills, peer relations, language, and academic skills from infancy through adolescence for each youth in the study. Second, the study seeks to understand the extent the youth's school success can be linked to their social skills, language skills, family environment, child care experiences prior to kindergarten, peer relations, and school experiences in elementary and middle schools.

Third, for the same group of youth, the study seeks to determine the multiple child, family, and school predictors of school competence within an ecological model of child development.

The project leaders are now following a group of 74 African American

children primarily from low-income families, whose development, family, and school environments they have prospectively documented since infancy.

“What’s really unique about this project is the length of time we’ve been able to follow these children,” Roberts says. “There are few studies that have followed a large group of African American children from infancy through elementary school.”

In terms of child measures, researchers have assessed the children’s language, cognitive development, Afro-cultural beliefs and practices, social behavior, peer adjustment, and school competence. Family measures have included such factors as maternal education, parental involvement, and monitoring. For school measures, researchers have assessed such factors as classroom quality, teachers’ perceptions of relationships with students, and classroom demographics.

Data collection has been completed for the first two phases of the project through fifth grade and is now being analyzed. The findings reaffirm the importance of the early childhood environment. Research has found that the responsiveness and support of the home environment predicted children’s language development and academic achievement from infancy through the first three years of elementary school. Additionally, findings revealed the importance of quality child care on children’s language development.

“This stresses the importance of the home environment in a child’s language development, which has important implications for families,” Burchinal says. “It also stresses the importance of a high quality child care environment. These factors are going to impact children’s chances for success for years to come.”

Roberts, Zeisel, and Burchinal are now into the third phase of the project, which will follow the youth from sixth through eighth grade. This phase of the project will look

more closely at peer relations by adding to the sample a best friend for each of the study youth.

“Essentially, we want to know who the youth in our project socialize with and how that impacts their school competence,” Zeisel says.

This year, researchers will be submitting a grant to study the youths’ use of African American vernacular English and how that impacts their school success. |ed|

### To Learn More

Preschool to School Project

[www.fpg.unc.edu/~aaschool/](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~aaschool/)

Parents’ report of vocabulary and grammatical development of African American preschoolers: Child and environmental associations. Roberts, J. E., Burchinal, M., & Durham, M. (1999). *Child Development*, 70(1), 92-106.