



**SCHOOL READINESS:
CHILDREN'S READINESS FOR SCHOOL
AND
SCHOOLS' READINESS FOR CHILDREN**

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A. Promising Practices And Model Programs

High/Scope (the Perry Preschool Project)

<http://www.highscope.org>

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, which was initiated in the early 1960s, is now widely regarded as a landmark study establishing the human and financial value of high-quality preschool education. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the High/Scope model, in which teachers help children plan, carry out, and review their own educational activities.

The High/Scope approach was first implemented in the Perry Preschool Project involving 123 African Americans born in poverty in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and at high risk of failing in school. From 1962-1967, at ages 3 and 4, the subjects were randomly divided into a program group who received a high-quality preschool program based on High/Scope's active learning approach and a comparison group who received no preschool program. In the study's most recent phase, original study participants were interviewed at age 40.

Evaluation of the Perry Preschool Project indicated sustained gains for participants into adulthood in the areas of social responsibility, earnings and economic status, and educational attainment. A cost benefit analysis (at age 40) found that for every dollar spent on preschool, there was a \$17 benefit to the participants and society at large.

The High/Scope Foundation now serves as a resource for early childhood educators. The Foundation operates a Ypsilanti demonstration school which serves 18 children, ages 3 to 5, from the local community and provides a model of "High/Scope in action" for visiting educators. A second High/Scope facility in Gretna, Louisiana, serves 157 children from ages 6 weeks through 5 years.

The High/Scope web site offers information on training schedules for preschool and elementary teachers and administrators; research findings on the effectiveness of educational programs; curricula for infant/toddler, preschool, elementary, and adolescent programs; and print/multimedia resources (books, videos, curriculum materials, and assessment tools) for educators and researchers.

Carolina Abecedarian Project

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/>

Started in 1972, the Abecedarian Project is a carefully controlled scientific study of the potential benefits of intensive early childhood education for poor children.

Fifty-seven (57) infants from low-income families were randomly assigned to receive early intervention in a high quality child care setting and 54 were in a non-treated control group. The Abecedarian Project differed from most other early childhood programs in that: 1) it began in early infancy whereas other programs began at age 2 or older, and 2) treated children had five years of exposure to early education in a high quality child care setting whereas most other programs were of shorter duration. The treated children received full-time educational intervention in a high-quality childcare setting from infancy through age 5. Each child had an individualized prescription of educational activities consisting of "games" that were incorporated into his or her day. These activities addressed social, emotional, and cognitive development but gave particular emphasis to language.

From the age of 18 months and through the completion of the child care program, children in the intervention group had significantly higher scores on mental tests than children in the control group. Follow-up cognitive assessments completed at ages 12 and 15 years showed that the intervention group continued to have higher average scores on mental tests. The treatment/control group gap narrowed but the trajectories did not converge. Effect sizes remained moderate. Follow-up assessments at age 21 indicated continued differences in cognitive skills and educational attainment between the intervention group and the control group.

Evaluation of the Abecedarian Project found that for every dollar spent on high-quality early education programs, taxpayers can expect four dollars in benefits. Stated differently, the internal rate of return for the Abecedarian intervention appears to be slightly greater than 7 percent. The complete benefit-cost analysis of the Abecedarian Project is available at <http://nieer.org/resources/research/AbecedarianStudy.pdf>

The Chicago Child-Parent Centers

The Child-Parent Center Program (CPC) was designed in 1967 to combat the negative impact of high absenteeism, truancy, and parental apathy on school performance. The comprehensive preschool program, which combines early intervention and parent participation, serves children, ages three, four, and five and their parents and at multiple sites extends into the primary grades.

This government-funded and publicly-administered program serves thousands of low-income children in Chicago and spends about the same amount of money per child as Head Start. A longitudinal study of participants in the CPC program indicates that it generates powerful benefits that stay with the children at least until age 20. In addition, CPC's preschool program returned \$7.14 for every \$1 invested.

Information on the program is available at:

<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cls/Program.htm>

Maryland Model for School Readiness

<http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/>
http://mdchildcare.org/mdcfc/for_providers/mmsr.html

MMSR is an assessment and instructional system for adults who work with children which incorporates best practices in various aspects of early childhood education – observation, assessment, individualized instruction, and communication with parents and kindergarten teachers. MMSR is not a curriculum. Rather, it is an approach that trains early childhood teachers and caregivers to observe children individually and objectively and to tailor their curriculum – whichever it is – to the school-readiness needs of each child. School-readiness goals are clearly elaborated within the MMSR framework. Further, the Work Sampling System promoted by MMSR allows early childhood teachers and caregivers to communicate clearly with parents and kindergarten teachers about each child’s school readiness. MMSR implementation in programs across Maryland increases the likelihood that children will be better and more consistently prepared for kindergarten.

Evaluations of pilot and follow-on programs found that participants improved their learning environments at statistically significant levels. In addition, experience with the pilot program confirmed that regardless of the level of education, experience, or background in training, child care providers of all types and abilities benefit from this model.

MMSR training has been provided to 200 child care providers from across Maryland, as well as more than 45 new MMSR trainers statewide. The MMSR project also offers on-site technical assistance to program participants.

Program components and concepts from MMSR are being incorporated into the work of many child-serving programs including home visiting programs, family support centers, Head Start programs and other early learning environments.

In addition, information is available to explain MMSR to parents and to guide them toward activities that will help their children achieve school readiness:
http://mdchildcare.org/mdcfc/for_parents/parents_mmsr.html

The Judith P. Hoyer Child Care and Education Enhancement Program (MD)

http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/readiness/judy_centers.html

An ambitious approach to providing quality early care, family support, and access to comprehensive services, Maryland’s Judith P. Hoyer Program is designed to enhance early care and education and improve school readiness.

The centerpiece of the program is the establishment of “Judy Centers” which provide a comprehensive set of services for at-risk children birth through age six and their families. Judy Centers are located in or affiliated with elementary schools and provide full-day, full-year services. Services were designed to foster a child's readiness for school.

Judy Centers incorporate existing community services, such as accredited child care facilities and family support programs, and fill gaps in service as necessary. Since its inception in 2000, the Judy Hoyer Program has provided state funding to 24 Judy Centers in 21 jurisdictions in Maryland.

Information on an independent evaluation of the Judy Hoyer Program components is available at <https://secure.mgtamer.com/mdjudy/home/overview.cfm?r=1>

Ready at Five (Maryland)

<http://www.readyatfive.org/flash.html>

In 1998, Ready At Five and its six partners, kicked off the Achieving School Readiness program. This unique and results-oriented model eases children’s transition to kindergarten and improves their success in school by focusing on communication, aligning curriculum, and providing professional development opportunities to the first three teachers: parents, early care and education professionals, and elementary school educators. Specifically, the program aims to:

- Improve children’s initial readiness for school.
- Foster effective practices that encourage collaboration among a young child’s first teachers—parents, early care and education professionals, and elementary school educators—to improve early learning.
- Create high quality early learning environments for young children.

Begun as a pilot program in 5 school communities, the program has expanded to 26 local communities in seven jurisdictions.

Ready at Five offers resources for strategic planning in local communities, tips for parents and caregivers, and a "how-to" guide on launching intergenerational activities at the community level. A new series of activity boxes is designed to help parents and caregivers promote a child’s healthy growth and development through *concrete, hands-on activities* that align with the seven Domains of Learning, the Maryland Model of School Readiness, and the Work Sampling System. Each Activity Box will contain *written materials* and *manipulatives*. Actual activity boxes will not be distributed to the public. Rather, detailed instructions for replication and specific activities for each Activity Box will be available on the Ready At Five Web site. Thus, educational institutions,

community organizations, child care providers, and parents can replicate and customize all seven boxes, as needed.

Success by 6, United Way

<http://national.unitedway.org/sb6/>

Success By 6 began in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1988 and can be found in more than 330 United Ways throughout the country. Success By 6 works to ensure that all children develop the emotional, social, cognitive and physical capacities and skills they need to achieve well-being and enter school ready to learn.

Success By 6 is the largest network of early care and education coalitions in the nation, which has made United Way of America and United Ways key players in local and national efforts to improve the lives of young children and their families. Success By 6 can be found in every state in the United States and parts of Canada. While each community's priorities are unique, key strategies usually include raising awareness, improving access to services and advocating for public policies that improve the lives of children and families.

In Baltimore, Success by 6 brings homevisiting services to pregnant and parenting families to link them to health care and community services and to support them in providing home environments that are safe and nurturing for young children. Success By 6 also supports a variety of services at neighborhood organizations including early learning classes, early child development, addiction treatment and parent support groups.

Baltimore's Success By 6 Partnership is active in six neighborhoods in Baltimore City and focuses on health, safety, and school readiness with outcome measurement indicators to decrease:

- Incidence of low and very low birth weights;
- Infant deaths;
- Pre-term births;
- Incidence of child abuse and neglect; and
- Accidents and injuries.

There are also Success by 6 initiatives in Maryland in Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County.

First 5 California Children and Families Commission's

- **School Readiness Initiative**
- **It's All About the Kids: Kit for New Parents**

<http://www.cafc.ca.gov>

First 5 California (formerly the California Children and Families Commission) runs the state's School Readiness Initiative aimed at improving the school readiness and later success in life of California's young children. First 5 California distributes to the 58 California counties tobacco tax funds raised by Proposition 10, a ballot initiative passed in 1998. (\$500 million was distributed in 2001-2002.) County Commissions allocate these funds to support local programs that serve children from before birth to age 5 and their families to improve child health, child development, family functioning, and systems of care. These goals are addressed through the establishment of School Readiness Centers/Programs which are locally tailored by and for communities. These Centers/Programs restructure and coordinate the delivery of quality early care and education, health and social services, parent education and support, plus improve schools' readiness for children. Gaps in services are filled, as necessary.

The School Readiness Initiative is supported by a campaign to educate parents about school readiness. The centerpiece of the parent education campaign is the Kit For New Parents, a box of resource materials that includes six videos on topics such as early learning, child safety, high-quality child care, and discipline; eight easy-to-read brochures that highlight the video topics; a sturdy picture book to read to an infant; and a Guide that contains state and national information for resource organizations, including toll-free phone numbers and websites for subjects that vary from breastfeeding to workers' compensation. A pilot evaluation of the Kit found that most parents read and/or viewed the materials and nearly half changed their thinking or behavior as a result. The Kit is available to every new parent in the state, who number about 500,000 annually.

To support more effective funding decisions, program planning, and policies, First 5 California is developing a results-based accountability (RBA) system, which promotes program improvement, good policies for young children and their families, and awareness about First 5 California programs. One portion of the evaluation process is a survey of school readiness conducted in 10 locations during school year 2002-2003. See <http://www.prop10evaluation.com>

Bright Beginnings (Colorado)

<http://www.brightbeginningsco.org/>

Bright Beginnings is a family support and education program designed to help all Colorado children reach their full potential to succeed in school and throughout life by educating parents with high quality, developmentally appropriate materials and tools.

Bright Beginnings' programs are offered at no cost to any interested family with a child prenatal to age three in Colorado without regard to income, age, or any other

eligibility criteria. Statewide programs are provided by 13 regional affiliates actively collaborating in local communities throughout Colorado.

Bright Beginnings consists of two components:

1. The Warm Welcome Program offers visits to parents of newborns in their home or community settings. These visits offer broad-based support to parents and caretakers, providing information on health, safety, childcare, community resources, health insurance, early brain development, and highlight the importance of reading to children from birth. The visit promotes positive parent-child interactions. Visits include specifics for parents on activities and games they can play with their child to stimulate healthy growth and development.
2. The Moving On Program offers visits to parents of children ages 12 – 24 months giving parents specific information, assessments, and tools to promote language development during the second year of life. Materials focus on the importance of talking with, encouraging, and playing with your child and include information on vocabulary development and positive interactions. The program was designed to help parents provide an enriched, supportive environment that promotes early literacy and teaches caregivers how they can become an encouraging partner in the “language dance.”

Program surveys indicate that the materials are being used by parents and that parents feel the programs have increased the amount they talk to their children in a supportive fashion and improved their child’s development.

Smart Start (North Carolina)

<http://www.smartstart-nc.org/>

Smart Start, a public-private partnership, was created in 1993 to provide comprehensive, affordable, quality child care, health care and family support to North Carolina's young children and their families. Today, 81 local partnerships, encompassing all of North Carolina's 100 counties, have now developed a plan and begun implementation to assure that all children in their communities begin school healthy and ready to succeed. North Carolina has received numerous awards for its innovations related to Smart Start and is recognized as a national leader in the development of comprehensive systems for the care and education of young children.

Smart Start funds are administered at the local level through local nonprofit organizations called Local Partnerships. The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) is the statewide nonprofit organization that provides oversight and technical assistance for local partnerships. Services at the local level range depending on local needs. Funding for Smart Start is currently \$200 million in state funds. Smart Start has raised nearly \$192 million in private donations since it began. Smart Start funds are used to improve the quality of child care, make child

care more affordable and accessible, provide access to health services and offer family support.

There are a number of studies and evaluations of the Smart Start initiative found through the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/%7Esmartstart/reports.html>

In 2001, the NCPC established a National Technical Assistance Center to assist other states with the development of an early education initiative. Information is available at <http://www.smartstart-nc.org/national/overview.htm>

First Steps (South Carolina)

<http://www.scfirststeps.org/>

This site contains information on South Carolina's First Steps to School Readiness program. First Steps is a comprehensive, results-oriented statewide education initiative to help prepare children to reach first grade healthy and ready to succeed. Signed into law in June 1999 by Governor Hodges, First Steps targets children in pre-first grade and their families. First Steps is a community-driven effort—public and private support are combined through county partnerships to enable individual communities to address the unmet needs of young children and their families. Each of the State's 46 counties has formed a partnership board, including representatives of the business, faith, education, health and nonprofit communities, and parents of young children. Those boards assess county needs and resources and develop strategic plans to address what their young children and their families most need—including such issues as lifelong learning, early education, health care, quality child care, and transportation. Since First Steps is a community-driven effort, each county has determined its greatest needs and is implementing or enhancing the necessary services to boost the school readiness of its children. For example, some communities are focusing efforts on parent education, while others are providing training opportunities for child care providers.

School Readiness Project—University of Wisconsin Extension

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/ready/>

The Division of Cooperative Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Extension has made an investment in school readiness. UWEX's School Readiness Project promotes school readiness by helping Wisconsin communities develop local coalitions linking people and organizations concerned about young children (prenatal through the early school years) and their families. Each community project begins with the creation of a diverse task force including parents and local representatives of health care, early education and child care, elementary education, family support services, business, religion, and government. With the

local UW-Extension Family Living Educator as a facilitator, the Project helps these coalitions assess local strengths and needs and carry out strategic planning. These collaborative processes serve as a catalyst for community-based programs that are preventive, integrated, and comprehensive.

SPARK: Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids

<http://www.wkkf.org/SPARK>

A program of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, SPARK: Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids will seek to create a seamless transition into school for vulnerable children ages 3 to 6 in select demonstration communities. The initiative will support partnerships among communities, schools, and state agencies to ensure children's early learning and readiness. With the initiative serving as a catalyst or "spark," the goal is to get vulnerable children ready for school and schools ready for the children. Outcomes envisioned by SPARK include: a preschool assessment at age three to identify potential delays and create an individualized plan for improvement; at least one learning advocate for every child to coach and coordinate resources among family, child care, school, and other agencies; and an effective transition to school so that every child is able to meet commonly accepted measures of readiness (for example, awareness of letters and sounds, number recognition, and ability to get along with others) and continues to exhibit cognitive, social, and emotional attributes and behavior for effective learning through first grade.

B. FEDERAL SCHOOL READINESS/PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Early Head Start

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/programs/ehs/ehs2.htm>

With the reauthorization of the Head Start Program in 1994, Congress established the Early Head Start Program for low- income families with infants and toddlers and pregnant women. In creating this program, the Congress acted upon evidence from research and practice which illustrates that early intervention through high quality programs enhances children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development; enables parents to be better caregivers and teachers to their children; and helps parents meet their own goals, including economic independence. The local programs funded through Early Head Start operate as a national laboratory to demonstrate the impact that can be gained when early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive services are provided to pregnant women and very young children and their families. This site provides a description of the program and information on the Early Head Start legislation.

Early Head Start National Resource Center

<http://www.ehsnrc.org/>

The Early Head Start National Resource Center was created in 1995 by the Head Start Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families. The EHS NRC works in partnership with Infant/Toddler Specialists to ensure that Early Head Start programs have information and training on "best practices" in the following areas: (1) developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive services for infants/toddlers and their families; (2) building effective relationships with families; (3) creating developmentally appropriate environments; (4) effective networking, collaboration, and community building skills; (5) inclusive services for children with special needs; (6) comprehensive services for pregnant women; (7) program and professional development; and (8) program evaluation and continuous improvement. This site provides information on Early Head Start legislation, family literacy programs, publications, and an Early Head Start Information Kit.

Head Start

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/>

The Head Start Program provides preschool children (ages 3–5) from low-income families with activities that help them grow mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically. Grants are awarded by the Administration for Children and Families' Regional Offices and the Head Start Bureau's American Indian and Migrant Program Branches directly to about 1,400 local public agencies, private organizations, Indian Tribes, and school systems for the purpose of operating Head Start programs at the community level. Head Start includes the following four program components: (1) Education—every child receives a variety of learning experiences to foster intellectual, social, and emotional growth. (2) Health—every child is involved in a comprehensive health program, which includes immunizations, medical, dental, mental health, and nutritional services. (3) Parent Involvement—parents are involved in parent education, program planning, and operating activities. (4) Social Services—specific services are geared to each family after its needs are determined, including community outreach; referrals; family need assessments; recruitment and enrollment of children; and emergency assistance and/or crisis intervention. In Maryland, Head Start serves over 11,000 children annually. This site provides information on Head Start services, legislation, and programs.

Head Start Standards

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/performance/index.htm>

The Head Start Program Performance Standards are the mandatory regulations that grantees and delegate agencies must implement in order to operate a Head Start program. The standards define the objectives and features of a quality Head Start program in concrete terms; they articulate a vision of service delivery to young children and families; and they provide a regulatory structure for the monitoring and enforcement of quality standards.

Head Start Statistical Fact Sheets

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/research/index.htm>

The Head Start program is administered by the Head Start Bureau, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This site provides statistics and facts about the program.

Title I, Part A: Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet Challenging Standards—Using Title I, Part A Funds for Preschool

http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/Title_I/preschoo.html

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet Challenging Standards—Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994, http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/Title_I/intro.html, supports all of the National Education Goals, including Goal Number 1 related to school readiness. Title I funds may be used to fund preschools for eligible preschool children. To be eligible, preschool children—like school-aged children—must be failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the State’s challenging student performance standards. Beginning in the 1997-98 school year, Title I preschool programs were required to comply with performance standards established under the Head Start Act. Schools/districts operating preschools using Title funds must include strategies for the transition of children in those programs to elementary school programs.

Getting Ready

<http://www.gettingready.org>

The School Readiness Indicators Initiative is a multi-state initiative that uses child well-being indicators to build a change agenda in states and local communities in order to improve school readiness and ensure early school success. The task of participating states is to develop a set of child outcome and systems indicators for children from birth through the fourth-grade reading test, an important red flag for children most at-risk for poor long-term outcomes, such as dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, and juvenile crime.

President Bush's Early Childhood Education Initiative

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/>

In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President Bush stressed the need to prepare children to read and succeed in school with improved Head Start and early childhood development programs. The early childhood initiative announced by President Bush seeks to improve the state of early childhood education, where too many children come to school unprepared to learn.

Good Start, Grow Smart: The Bush Administration's Early Childhood Initiative

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/earlychildhood.html>

President Bush believes that all children must begin school with an equal chance at achievement so that no child is left behind. The Bush Administration has proposed a new early childhood initiative *Good Start, Grow Smart* to help States and local communities strengthen early learning for young children. This will ensure that young children are equipped with the skills they will need to start school ready to learn.

C. RESEARCH AND REPORTS ON SCHOOL READINESS

PROGRAM EVALUATION: OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

“Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40” (2005)

<http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm>

This study—perhaps the most well-known of all High/Scope research efforts—examines the lives of 123 African Americans born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school. From 1962-1967, at ages 3 and 4, the subjects were randomly divided into a program group who received a high-quality preschool program based on High/Scope's active learning approach and a comparison group who received no preschool program. In the study's most recent phase, original study participants were interviewed at age 40. Additional data were gathered from the subjects' school, social services, and arrest records. In analyzing the data collected at age 40, research staff found major differences favoring the 40-year-olds who had been enrolled in High/Scope's active learning preschool program in terms of fewer instances of criminal activity, higher earnings, and higher rates of graduation from high school. A cost benefit analysis found that for every dollar spent on preschool, there was a \$17 benefit to the participants and society at large.

“Preschool Curriculum Comparison Project”

http://www.highscope.org/Research/high_scope_curriculum/curric_comp.htm

This study compares the High/Scope active learning preschool model with two other preschool models. In the study, 69 children, ages 3 and 4 years, were randomly assigned to one of three preschool groups, each receiving a preschool program based on a different curriculum model. (Children in all three groups were living in poverty and at high risk of school failure). The three models represented were the Direct Instruction model, a traditional Nursery School model, and the High/Scope model.

Findings at age 23 continue to support the conclusion that the High/Scope and Nursery School groups are better off than the Direct Instruction group in a variety of ways. Either the High/Scope group, the Nursery School group, or both, show

statistically significant advantages over the Direct Instruction group on 17 variables. Most important, compared with the Direct Instruction Group, the High/Scope and Nursery School groups have had significantly fewer felony arrests of various kinds and fewer years of special education for emotional impairment. In addition, compared with the Direct Instruction group, the High/Scope group aspires to complete a higher level of schooling, and has more members living with their spouses. It thus appears that preschool programs that promote child-initiated activities (such as the High/Scope and Nursery School programs) seem to contribute to the development of an individual's sense of personal and social responsibility.

“Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Study”

The Abecedarian Project was a carefully controlled study in which 57 infants from low-income families were randomly assigned to receive early intervention in a high quality child care setting and 54 were in a non-treated control group. Treated children scored significantly higher on tests of reading and math from the primary grades through middle adolescence. Young adults who received early educational intervention had significantly higher mental test scores from toddlerhood through age 21 than did untreated controls.

Evaluation of the Abecedarian Project found that for every dollar spent on high-quality early education programs, taxpayers can expect four dollars in benefits. The complete benefit-cost analysis of the Abecedarian Project is available at <http://nieer.org/resources/research/AbecedarianStudy.pdf>

“Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centers”

The cost-benefit analysis of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers is particularly important because it demonstrated that benefits could be achieved by a preschool program administered by a public entity (Chicago Public School System). The Child-Parent Centers (CPC) in Chicago’s Title I schools serve thousands of inner-city children and spend about the same amount of money per child as Head Start. A longitudinal study of participants in the CPC program indicates that it generates powerful benefits that stay with the children at least until age 20. A cost/benefit analysis concluded that CPC’s preschool program returned \$7.14 for every \$1 invested.

Additional comment and information on the program is available at two web sites: <http://www.aecf.org/publications/advocasey/spring2002/chicago.htm>
<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu:8000/cls/Program.htm>

“The Children of the Cost, Quality & Outcomes Study Go to School”

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/ncedl/PDFs/CQO-es.pdf#search=%22%22The%20Children%20of%20the%20Cost%2C%20quality%22%22>

One of the landmark studies, the original Cost, Quality and Outcomes study was initiated in 1993, in part, to examine the influence of typical center-based child care on children’s development during their preschool years and then subsequently as they moved into elementary school. Researchers had, by 1999, followed these children to the end of second grade. They concluded that high-quality child care contributed to school readiness in both cognitive and social domains and that children at risk of school failure were more affected by the quality of child care than other children.

“The Effects of Investing in Early Education on Economic Growth” (2006)

<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb153.pdf>

This policy brief analyzes the impact of a high-quality universal preschool policy on economic growth, concluding that such a policy could add \$2 trillion to annual U.S. GDP by 2080. By 2080, a national program would cost the federal government approximately \$59 billion, but generate enough additional growth in federal revenue to cover the costs of the program several times over.

“Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return” (2003)

<http://minneapolisfed.org/pubs/fedgaz/03-03/earlychild.cfm>

Federal Reserve Board economists Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald took as a starting point the cost/benefit analysis of the Perry Preschool Project and converted the findings to show the internal rate of return on the preschool investments. They estimated the real internal rate of return for the Perry School program at 16 percent (with 80% of the benefit going to the general public). They conclude that, “Compared with other public investments, and even those in the private sector, an ECDP [Early Childhood Development Program] seems like a good buy. This analysis suggests that early childhood development is underfunded; otherwise, the internal rate of return on an ECDP would be comparable to other public investments.”

“Smart Start and Preschool Child Care Quality in NC: Change Over Time and Relation to Children’s Readiness” (2003)

http://www.fpg.unc.edu/smartstart/reports/Child_Care_Quality_2003.pdf

In this analysis by the FPG-UNC Smart Start Evaluation Team, three main conclusions are drawn about the Smart Start program that provides technical assistance to North Carolina child care programs to improve quality: (1) Between 1993 and 2002, child care quality in this sample steadily and significantly increased, (2) Participation in Smart Start-funded activities was significantly positively related to child care quality, and (3) Children who attended higher quality centers score significantly higher on measures of skills and abilities deemed important for success in kindergarten than children from lower-quality centers.

“Multi-State Pre-Kindergarten Study”

The National Center for Early Development and Learning, housed at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, conducted a multi-state study of U.S. pre-kindergarten (pre-k) programs. Several other surveys of state pre-k programs had been conducted, but this effort was the first multi-state study to include extensive classroom observations, child assessments, and kindergarten follow-up.

The NCEDL Multi-State Pre-Kindergarten Study had two primary purposes:

- to describe the variations of experiences for children in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs in school-related settings, and
- to examine the relations between variations in pre-kindergarten/kindergarten experiences and children's outcomes in early elementary school.

Reports on the findings of the Pre-Kindergarten Study are being published as they become available. The first major reporting appears in the Spring 2005 issue (Volume 9, #1) of *Early Developments* found at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/ncedl/pages/ED9.cfm>

Another brief statement by principle researchers, “Preschool: Its Benefits, and Who Should Teach” is found at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/%7ENCEDL/pdfs/NCEDLPreschoolStatement.pdf>

“Longer Term Effects of Head Start” (2000)

<http://www.rand.org/organization/drd/labor/DRU/DRU2439.pdf>

Little is known about the long-term effects of participation in Head Start. This paper draws on unique non-experimental data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics to provide new evidence on the effects of participation in Head Start on schooling attainment, earnings, and criminal behavior. Among whites, participation in Head Start is associated with a significantly increased probability of completing high school and attending college, and there is some evidence of elevated earnings in one's early twenties. African Americans who participated in

Head Start are significantly less likely to have been charged or convicted of a crime. The evidence also suggests that there are positive spillovers from older children who attended Head Start to their younger siblings.

“Even Start: National Evaluation of The Even Start Family Literacy Program–1998”

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EvenStart/ch3families.html>

This report, funded by the US Department of Education, summarizes what has been learned about the Even Start Family Literacy Program after 10 years of demonstration and evaluation activities. The evaluation sought to determine whether Even Start can provide a boost, change the trajectory, or alter the developmental pathway of families in three major areas: (1) increased participation of families in early childhood education, adult education, parenting education; (2) integrated services designed to build on each other; and (3) increased parenting skills to enhance child development through programs of parenting education and adult basic skills education. Results indicate that Even Start families participate in core educational services at higher rates had they not been in the program; Even Start children learned school readiness skills significantly faster than expected; and, children in Even Start programs get a “boost” in cognitive development at an earlier age by exposure to an organized learning environment. Even Start seems able to improve the home learning environment for low-income families. But, while positive gains were made on income and employment, Even Start families made few changes on measures of improved adult self-efficacy, social support, and family resources.

“Preschool: The Most Important Grade” (2003)

http://www.ascd.org/authors/ed_lead/e1200304_barnett.html

W. Steven Barnett, a leading researcher, provides an overview of the major longitudinal studies that demonstrate the positive impact of high-quality preschool. This article, published in April 2003, confirms that research findings confirm the long-term benefits of early education and offers some options for integrating the existing patchwork of U.S. public and private preK programs into a uniform system that provides a high-quality early education to all young children.

“Investing in Our Children: What We Know and Don't Know About the Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Interventions” (1998)

<http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR898/>

This 1998 study by the RAND Corporation concludes that greater investments in early childhood would not only benefit children but also save the government money in the form of lower welfare payments, higher tax revenues, and lower criminal justice system costs. The study cautions, however, that more research is needed to maximize the effectiveness of public investments.

“Title I Preschool Education: More Children Served, but Gauging Effect on School Readiness Difficult—United States General Accounting Office” (2000)

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/he00171.pdf>

The GAO surveyed a stratified, nationally representative sample drawn from the approximately 16,000 school districts nationwide. Specifically, GAO surveyed all of the 111 largest school districts—those with 40,000 or more students. In addition, GAO randomly selected about 400 of the smaller school districts—those with fewer than 40,000 students. The overall response rate was 95 percent. During the 1999- 2000 school year, an estimated 17 percent of the school districts that received Title I funds spent an estimated \$407 million on preschool services, making Title I second only to Head Start in its level of federal preschool education funding. School districts used their funds to serve an estimated 313,000 preschool children—equal to about 8 percent of the children who will eventually enter kindergarten. Almost all of these children were between the ages of 3 and 5. Children were served in every State, with Texas serving the largest number of children. Currently, the US Department of Education lacks the information to measure Title I's effect on children's school readiness. GAO recommends that USDE, as part of its planned Title I preschool study, explore the feasibility of isolating and measuring Title I's effect on school readiness.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EARLY YEARS: BRAIN RESEARCH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL THEORY

From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development (2000)

<http://www.nap.edu/openbook/0309069882/html/>

Issued by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, this meticulous research review, the work of an interdisciplinary committee of experts, documents the explosion of research in the neurobiological, behavioral, and social sciences that has led to major advances in understanding the conditions that

influence whether children get off to a promising or a worrisome start in life. These scientific gains have generated a much deeper appreciation of: (1) the importance of early life experiences, as well as the inseparable and highly interactive influences of genetics and environment, on the development of the brain and the unfolding of human behavior; (2) the central role of early relationships as a source of either support and adaptation or risk and dysfunction; (3) the powerful capabilities, complex emotions, and essential social skills that develop during the earliest years of life, and (4) the capacity to increase the odds of favorable developmental outcomes through planned interventions. The authors note, however, that the capacity to use this knowledge constructively has been constrained by a number of dramatic transformations in the social and economic circumstances under which families with young children are living in the United States.

Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers (2000)

<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9745.html>

What will it take to provide better early education and care for our children between the ages of two and five? *Eager to Learn* explores this crucial question, synthesizing the newest research findings on how young children learn and the impact of early learning. Key discoveries in how young children learn are reviewed in language accessible to parents as well as educators: findings about the interplay of biology and environment, variations in learning among individuals and children from different social and economic groups, and the importance of health, safety, nutrition and interpersonal warmth to early learning. Perhaps most significant, the book documents how very early in life learning really begins. Valuable conclusions and recommendations are presented in the areas of the teacher-child relationship, the organization and content of curriculum, meeting the needs of those children most at risk of school failure, teacher preparation, assessment of teaching and learning, and more.

“Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children” (1994)

<http://www.carnegie.org/startingpoints>

“Starting Points” highlights the critical importance of the first three years of life for subsequent healthy development. It documents the "quiet crisis" that young children face today--including low prenatal care and immunization rates, the rising incidence of child abuse and neglect, and disturbing trends in family stability. The report concludes with a list of recommendations.

SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENT

“Maryland Model for School Readiness/Work Sampling System”

<http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/mmsr/index.html>

The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) is an assessment and instructional system designed to provide parents, teachers, and early childhood providers with a common understanding of what children know and are able to do upon entering school. The MMSR is important because it provides a common goal and language of how parents, teachers, and providers can support young children’s learning.

The Work Sampling System (WSS) is the assessment tool used as a component of MMSR. WSS is based on observing, recording, and evaluating everyday classroom-based experiences. All entering kindergarten children in Maryland are assessed in November using the WSS. Readiness data based on the November assessments are published each spring. The “School Readiness Report” for each of the past five years can be found on the website of the Maryland State Department of Education (listed above), along with information on implementation of the assessment.

Each annual school readiness report provides data by jurisdiction and also disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, prior early care, special education, limited English proficiency, and enrollment in the Free and Reduced-Price Meals Program. In addition, this website provides documents that explain, in detail, what skills and competencies are being assessed in seven areas of development.

Information on WSS is also available from Pearson Early Learning at <http://dev.pearsonearlylearning.com/quickTour/proto4k.html>.

“Accountability in Early Childhood: No Easy Answers” (2006)

<http://www.erikson.edu/files/nonimages/opmeisels2006.pdf>

In this paper published by the Erikson Institute in March 2006, Samuel J. Meisels examines the genesis of accountability testing in preschool and refutes the quality-assurance, production-model assumptions that underlie its use with young children. Citing the best available research, he summarizes the arguments against such testing in early childhood: the practical problems of measuring the developmentally unreliable; unintended but real consequences for teaching and learning; the failure of such tests to account for tremendous differences across the preschool population in prior opportunities to learn; and the demonstrably weak association between academic/cognitive measures in preschool and like measures in first and second grade. Meisels goes on to examine how each of these facts or

circumstances contributed to the failure of Head Start’s National Reporting System, one of the largest-scale examples of early childhood accountability testing to date.

Finally, Meisels takes up the question of how to measure program effectiveness and program quality. He argues for program evaluation: collecting data on structural and dynamic characteristics of programs (child-staff ratios, staff training, developmentally appropriate practice, positive interaction between children and staff, parental involvement, etc.), key demographic variables, and finally, programs’ impact on children. To measure the latter, Meisels proposes creating an assessment based on item response theory (IRT), using a metric that describes children’s’ relative position on a developmental path. Such an assessment will not only indicate whether children are learning. It will enable the analysis of program elements, pedagogical techniques, and child outcomes to determine whether particular aspects of a program or child and family background are more or less strongly associated with child outcomes.

“Child Assessment at the Preprimary Level: Expert Opinion and State Trends” (2002)

<http://www.erikson.edu/files/nonimages/horton-bowman.pdf>

In this paper released in 2002, research associate Carol Horton and Professor Barbara Bowman report on the results of two Erikson Institute surveys on the current state of expert opinion and public practice with regard to the assessment of prekindergarten children. While they found encouraging similarities between what experts consider important and what state prekindergarten programs actually do, they also found troubling gaps. Released in winter 2002.

“Assessing Young Children’s Progress Appropriately”

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlycl/ea500.htm>

Determining young children’s achievement demands special consideration. Assessment of the progress and attainment of young children, 3 to 8 years of age, requires understanding that they grow and change rapidly—particularly in their social and emotional development; that they can be easily distracted by assessment procedures; and that they have little or no personal interest in being assessed. The article discusses pitfalls educators should avoid in determining what the youngest children know and can do, and suggests ways to use that information to carry out the aims of early childhood programs.

“Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments” (1998)

<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/Reports/prinrec.pdf>

This report was submitted to the National Education Goals Panel by the Goal 1 Early Childhood Assessment Group (Lorrie Shepard, Sharon Lynn Kagan, and Emily Wurtz, Editors). It examines how states, schools, and communities can gather good information about children from birth to 8, while recognizing the difficulty and potential inaccuracies of testing them. This report identifies the technical requirements for four assessment purposes and suggests specific ways to gather and use assessment data well.

GUIDES TO BUILDING HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

“Building Strong Foundations for Early Learning: Guide to High Quality Early Childhood Programs” (2000)

http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/early_learning

This guide was funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide information to local, district, and State educators about the hallmarks of high-quality early childhood programs. The target audiences for this document are public school educators and policymakers who are planning or providing educational programs for children ages three to five and wish to ensure that children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The guide includes short syntheses of research about the characteristics of early education programs that have the most influence on the development of cognition and learning. Then, indicators are provided to assess the quality of preschool programs. The indicators are based on research and guidelines developed by States and early childhood professional associations. If a school or district currently operates a preschool program, the guide can be used as a self-assessment tool to judge the program’s quality and make plans for improvements. If the district is considering starting a preschool program, the guide offers quality standards to be used during planning. States may find the quality indicators and outcomes useful as they prepare guidance for the operation of early childhood programs.

First School (2006)

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~firstschool/newvision.cfm>

FirstSchool is a new vision for early schooling of 3- to 8-year-old children that is being developed through a partnership among families, schools, the community, the FPG Child Development Institute, and The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. FirstSchool plans to develop, implement, and evaluate a local FirstSchool model in order to inform a national framework for other communities to use to guide them toward providing a successful early school experience for all children and families.

FirstSchool leaders concluded that a new vision for early schooling was needed based on factors including the importance of early learning, the increasing diversity of the American population, the increasing public school involvement with young children, the need for smooth transition from early care and education to school, and the variety of public agencies responsible for the care and education of 3- and 4-year olds.

“Health Care, Nutrition, and Goal One” (1993)

<http://ericeece.org/pubs/digests/1993/cesaro93.html>

Research has shown that poor health affects children’s learning. The effects include cognitive and socio-emotional deficits, low scores on developmental and achievement tests, and inattentiveness. The article provides information on how programs that provide children with access to good nutrition, health care, and education about health and nutrition can lessen or eliminate detrimental effects and foster the school readiness of preschool children.

“Readiness: Children and Schools” (1991)

<http://ericeece.org/pubs/digests/1991/katz91.html>

The premise of this digest is that reaching the school readiness goal will require a twofold strategy: one part focused on supporting families in their efforts to help their children get ready for school, and the second on helping the schools to be responsive to the wide range of developmental levels, backgrounds, experiences, and needs children bring to school with them. The document provides numerous examples of strategies to get children ready for school and schools ready for children. The collaboration of parents, teachers, administrators, and everyone in the community who has a stake in the welfare of its children is regarded as a key factor in addressing the issue of school readiness.

“Readiness for School or for School Culture?” (1995)

<http://readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/library/1995/cooney95.html>

This article questions the meaning of school readiness as defined by the National Education Goals Panel. The premise is that school culture operates on a deficit model of education, in which children and their families are blamed for having deficient skills upon school entry. Ways for teachers to bring about cultural change within schools, include: (1) pointing out bias in statements made by colleagues, administrators, and others about children; (2) capitalizing on opportunities to model an attitude of acceptance and celebrate diversity; (3) affirming the students’ cultural diversity; (4) incorporating social skills into the curriculum; and (5) observing and listening to the children in order to design a

responsive curriculum that meets their needs.

“Organizing for Effective Early Childhood Programs and Practices”

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlycld/ea100.htm>

The premise of this compendium of resources is that the overall effectiveness of an early childhood program is dependent upon several factors: quality staff, suitable environment, appropriate grouping practices, consistent schedules, and parent involvement. The article examines how decisions about these factors often are made early in the process of planning and organizing an early childhood program.

“Public Factors That Contribute to School Readiness” (1999)

<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v1n2/edwards.html>

Noting that school readiness—the preparedness of children to learn what is taught in schools—is the cornerstone of today’s education reform, this article presents a brief overview of the key public factors that contribute to school readiness. These factors include both historical and contemporary American views of early learning as reflected by government funding, early learning and teacher education field practices, and teacher certification and accountability. With the hindsight gained from historical knowledge and a clear understanding of the factors that contribute to school readiness, we are better equipped to make the first goal of today’s educational reform a reality—that all children in America start school ready to learn.

DISABILITIES, DIVERSITY, AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE

“Working with Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Families” (2001)

<http://ericece.org/pubs/digests/2001/bruns01.html>

This digest of current best practices presents strategies supported by the research literature to enhance interactions with families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Various Resources at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

FPG has two relevant initiatives:

- The FPG Multicultural Initiative
- The FPG Disability Initiative

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/main/about.cfm#initiative>

FPG research “Snapshots” provides a list of many research papers on both multicultural and disability issues.

http://www.fpg.unc.edu/news/fpg_snapshots.cfm

“Selecting Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Materials: Suggestions for Service Providers” (1999)

<http://ericece.org/pubs/digests/1999/santos99.html>

In many cases, educators’ and other service providers’ lack of experience with and knowledge of diverse families makes the development of relationships with them difficult and may contribute to families’ underutilization of services. Even among interculturally competent service providers and teachers, however, choosing materials to distribute to families is sometimes difficult. This digest focuses on how to identify and select culturally and linguistically appropriate materials (e.g., books, brochures, pamphlets, fact sheets, and multimedia) for parents and family members.

“Developmentally Appropriate and Culturally Responsive Education: Theory in Practice” (1996)

<http://www.nwrel.org/cfc/publications/dap2.html>

This article relates many of the issues surrounding developmentally appropriate practices, culturally responsive teaching, establishing parent/school relationships, and other topics.

“Meeting the Diverse Needs of Young Children”

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlyclde/ea400.htm>

This website provides a variety of sources – interviews, links to research – on topics related to disabilities, language differences, and related teaching practices.

“Developmental Disabilities and the Concept of School Readiness” (1994)

<http://readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/library/1994/farran.html>

In this paper the concept of school readiness as it applies to children with disabilities is discussed. Children with disabilities are described as falling into two primary types: normative and non-normative. The majority of children in special education are in the non-normative category, based on failures in children’s early encounters with the educational system. The premise is that classification of such children as “not-ready for school” is a bureaucratic definition driven largely by variability in teachers’ perceptions and the child’s ethnicity and social class. The article suggests that children in both disability categories should be considered appropriate for regular general education.

“Preparing Children With Disabilities for School” (1992)

<http://readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/library/1992/pinkerto.html>

This research synthesis from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding the school readiness of children with disabilities. The document addresses issues such as legal protections and special challenges faced by disabled children as they make the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

RESEARCH AND RESOURCE CENTERS

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG)

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/main/about.cfm>

FPG is a multidisciplinary institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. FPG’s work encompasses child development and family well being. Most of the institute’s work addresses young children ages birth to 8 years, with special focus on children who experience biological or environmental factors that challenge early development and learning.

One of FPG’s oldest and most significant longitudinal studies, the Abecedarian Project, began with a group of preschoolers who entered FPG in 1972. This project continues to gather information on the positive influences of early intervention that can still be measured in these now 34-year-olds.

FPG researchers developed the Early Childhood (ECERS), Infant/Toddler (ITERS), Family Day Care (FDCRS), and School-Age Care (SACRS) Environment Rating Scales.

National Institute for Early Education Research

www.nieer.org

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) supports early childhood education initiatives by providing objective, nonpartisan information based on research. NIEER publishes an annual report on state preschool initiatives. NIEER's website provides a resource section with Hot Topics, recent research, and upcoming events.

National Center for Early Development and Learning

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~NCEDL/>

This is a national early childhood research project supported by the US Dept. of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and operated by The FPG Child Development Center, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting

<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/>

The Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting (CEEP) is part of the Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. CEEP is the successor to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE), which was part of the national information system in education, called ERIC, from 1967 through December 2003.

CEEP publishes *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, a peer-reviewed online journal. Research articles discuss topics such as language and literacy in early childhood settings, social and emotional development in early childhood, musical programs to promote vocabulary development, picture book reading, and storytelling techniques. Available in English and Spanish.

Digests published by the former ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE) between 1990 and 2003 are archived on this Web site, above. Most digests are available in Spanish as well as English. Some digests are available in Chinese and Korean. See the [Archive of ERIC/EECE Digests](#) section.

In addition, CEEP maintains a website that features a virtual library of documents and articles on various topics related to school readiness, including

- tips for parents,
- research, statistics, and definitions,
- getting schools ready for children, and

- public policy issues and initiatives.
<http://readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/library.html>

The Erikson Institute

http://www.erikson.edu/research.asp?file=research_projects

Erikson Institute conducts applied research—research that responds directly to the needs of young children and the people who serve them. It focuses on outcomes—what works, and how—and on models that can be replicated. It contributes to the understanding of issues facing families across age, race, and ethnic lines, with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities.

Child Trends

http://www.childtrends.org/_portalcat.cfm?LID=F322B918-A5A1-4325-8EE3A0091318A0F3&CID=D662C83D-BEEE-4E8E-A926F89515009A78

Researchers at Child Trends have conducted innovative new analyses of the naturally occurring patterns of school readiness in young children and have recently initiated several studies of health among young children. In addition, researchers are investigating aspects of children's early environments that contribute to positive development in the early years of life, including families, child care, neighborhoods, and preschool settings. Recent research has focused on the relationship of child care quality to child outcomes, for example, staff training and reimbursement strategies that can contribute to children's development.

National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.naeyc.org

Through its publication program, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provides a forum for discussion of major issues and ideas in the early childhood field, with the hope of provoking thought and promoting professional growth.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Early Childhood Research Institute

<http://clas.uiuc.edu/>

The Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services is a federally- funded collaborative effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, The Council for Exceptional Children, the

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. The CLAS Institute is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education. The CLAS Institute identifies, evaluates, and promotes effective and appropriate early intervention practices and preschool practices that are sensitive and respectful to children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The CLAS web site collects and describes early childhood/early intervention resources that have been developed across the U.S. for children with disabilities and their families and the service providers who work with them. The materials and resources available on the site reflect the intersection of culture and language, disabilities and child development. Through the site practitioners, families, and researchers are informed about available materials, practices, and the contexts in which they might select a given material or practice. Parts of the site can also be reviewed in Spanish.

Early Childhood Research & Practice

<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v1n2/index.html>

Early Childhood Research & Practice, an Internet journal, features articles related to the development, care, and education of children from birth to approximately age eight. ECRP emphasizes articles on research and development related to parent participation and emerging practices and issues. Early Childhood Research & Practice is intended for researchers, teacher educators, program planners, policy- and decision- makers, administrators, practitioners, and parents. Each issue typically contains at least one article by an early childhood practitioner. Published twice annually, Early Childhood Research & Practice is available on the Internet without charge. ECRP articles on school readiness include “What Should Children Learn? Making Choices and Taking Chances” and “Public Factors that Contribute to School Readiness.”

School Readiness Resource Directory

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlycld/ealk1.htm>

This web site provides a directory of organizations and agencies that address school readiness issues. It includes contact information for numerous agencies, including those that address the needs of diverse linguistic, ethnic, and cultural groups.