


erikson

children

fall 2011



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About Erikson

Erikson is a hub of complex, creative thinking about how young children learn and grow and how adults can help them do so. We bring the newest scientific knowledge and theories of children's development and learning into graduate education, professional training, community programs, and policymaking. Our goal is to improve the lives of children and families.

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Cover: Margret Nickels, Ph.D., director of Erikson's Center for Children and Families, has worked with parents and children for more than 20 years.

Photo by Loren Santow

From the President

The field of early care and education continues to capture the attention and imagination of policymakers—most recently at the federal level. Last spring the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services announced a \$500 million grant program called Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, designed to encourage states to create unified and high-quality programs for young children. Erikson is helping the state of Illinois apply for \$70 million in this competition. In September, senior U.S. Department of Education officials, including Secretary Arne Duncan, toured schools in the Midwest to promote cradle-to-college education. Included was a stop at Erikson by senior advisor for early childhood Jacqueline Jones. She spent a morning learning about our Early Mathematics Education Project, which won a \$5 million grant last year through the highly competitive federal Investing in Innovation (i3) program.

But some of our biggest news concerns our capital campaign, *Fulfilling the Promise*. We are deeply gratified to announce the success of this campaign, which strengthens our ability to reach children, families, and the professionals who work with them. At the back of this issue, you'll find our campaign honor roll—it's a small sign of our gratitude to you, our generous donors and volunteers.

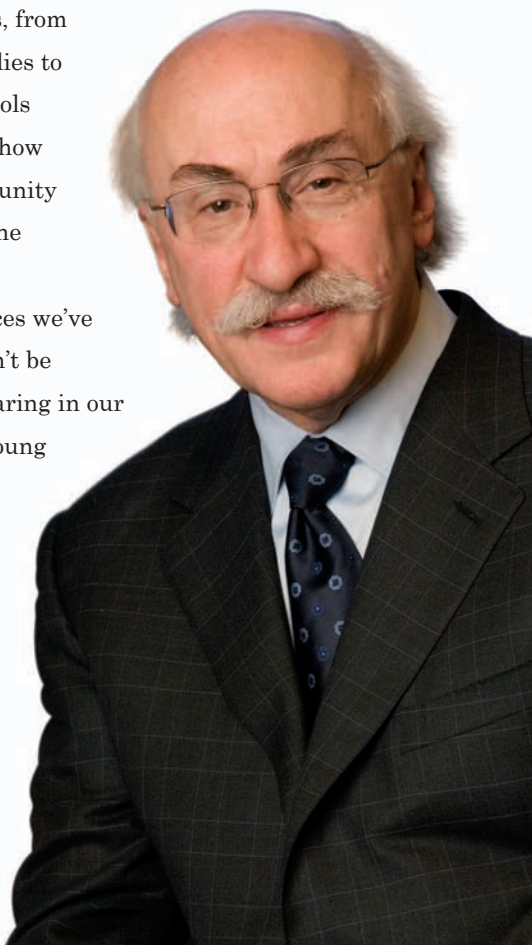
Your gifts support the work of our students and faculty and help expand our community initiatives, from creating the Center for Children and Families to beginning an endowment for the New Schools Project. Articles in this newsletter explore how the campaign has enabled these two community efforts to make a significant difference in the lives of children and families.

The growth of our field—and the advances we've made in our work together—simply wouldn't be possible without your support and your sharing in our vision of creating a world in which every young child has the opportunity to realize his or her potential.

With sincere gratitude,



Samuel J. Meisels
President





Behavioral and social-emotional issues in young children are often complex and multifaceted.

Push me, pull you

Dropping Megan off at preschool had become a dreaded routine for her mother, Jillian. Both physically and emotionally exhausting, it usually ended with Megan clutching her mother's legs and sobbing.

Note: To protect the privacy of the family, names have been changed.

Megan's strange behavior leading up to those moments was even more troubling—and eventually led her school to make a referral to Erikson's Center for Children and Families.

Each morning began pleasantly with Jillian getting Megan settled in her classroom with a book or activity. But things would fall apart when she let Megan know she was leaving. At first Megan would seem okay, but then she would follow Jillian to the door, making odd squeaking noises and kicking her feet side to side. Sometimes she would wildly flap her arms. When they reached the door, Megan would grab her mother's legs and hang on her.

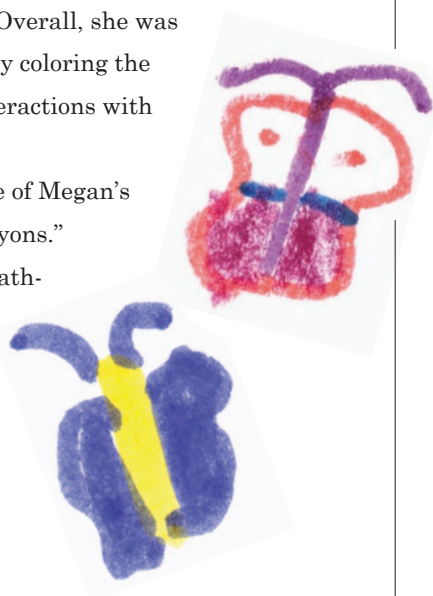
Gently trying to free herself, Jillian would say, "Megan, you have to let mommy go or she'll be late for work."

Megan's reply would be to let her head loll back with a roaring laugh. Then her laughter turned into a crying jag as she clung tighter. It usually took help from one of her teachers to pry her off, and then she would fall to the floor in absolute hysterics. It could take more than an hour to calm her down.

This routine was puzzling to Megan's teachers. Overall, she was a good student who loved her art projects, especially coloring the speckles and swirls on butterfly wings. But her interactions with classmates were also problematic.

"You could see her trying to connect," recalls one of Megan's teachers. "But she would do it by stealing their crayons."

At night, Megan would fight getting out of the bathtub by going limp and becoming dead weight. Because Jillian's husband, Ted, worked nights, it was up to Jillian to heave the girl out of the water, get her dry enough to dress her, and tuck her into bed. And it was the last interaction Jillian



would have with her daughter before getting up the next day and rushing off to their morning break-up.

Jillian knew she needed help and not just with Megan's behavior.

"A certain amount of resentment began to build on both sides," says Jillian. "I realized we really needed to work on our relationship, because it had come to be defined as a struggle."

Getting (re)acquainted

"That first session is about getting an understanding of the general situation," says Margret Nickels, Ph.D., director of Erikson's Center for Children and Families and a clinical psychologist. "I discuss the main concerns with

the parents, their daily routines and struggles, and their goals for therapy."

In Megan's case, the conversation with the parents and Nickels's subsequent observation of Megan in her classroom led to recommending a comprehensive assessment. On her first visit, Megan saw an occupational therapist and developmental pediatrician. Their priority was to rule out any physiological disorders that might be causing Megan's outbursts. For example, sensory integration issues could lead her to crave intense physical sensations, or at the opposite end of the spectrum, feel overwhelmed by stimuli in her environment.

But all the evaluations suggested that Megan was a bright and healthy girl. The consensus was that she needed therapy to help her and her parents understand the reasons for Megan's behavior and what to do about it. Because the mother-daughter relationship was most strained, Jillian and Megan began attending weekly sessions, which Megan called play dates with mom and Dr. Nickels. She quickly began to look forward to them.

Sometimes Megan and Jillian spent their sessions cozied under a blanket, leaving Nickels to hunt for the hedgehog alone.

Nickels used the first several sessions to simply observe Megan and Jillian's interactions during play.

"Play is a young child's most direct communication of her needs, wishes, and hopes," says Nickels.





Conflict was a frequent theme in Megan's play, sometimes emerging in arguments between stuffed animals.

Megan was given total freedom in deciding what to play, and bit by bit, she revealed glimpses of her perspective. “Hide the hedgehog” soon emerged as one of Megan’s favorite games. Giving Jillian the mommy hedgehog, Megan would cram the baby into some small space and watch as her mother and Nickels stooped, crawled, and peered to find it.

“It was a way for her to vicariously feel wanted and pursued by her mother, regardless of how insurmountable the wall between them seemed at times,” explains Nickels. “So we dragged out our searches and she would be absolutely delighted.”

Jillian, Ted, and Nickels regularly met to discuss what was happening during sessions and at home. This gave the parents the benefit of Nickels’s explanation of Megan’s behavior, a perspective that helped them better read their daughter’s cues and respond more effectively. They brainstormed solutions to managing Megan’s challenging behaviors while they worked to understand the deeper issues.

“I could see that Megan had a very intense temperament and she expressed it physically,” says Nickels. “I recommended that Jillian enroll her in ballet classes to give her an outlet for her energy and help her develop a sense of control over her body.”

Megan loved her ballet classes, but after being at odds for so long, Jillian and Megan still had an underlying tension between them.

Breakthroughs big and small

Once, after a particularly bad bedtime routine the night before, Megan got upset in session when it was time to clean up and leave. Her initial grumbling flashed into an all-out tantrum. She began throwing pillows across

the room with surprising strength for a girl not yet in kindergarten. As the pillows thudded against the walls, Jillian moved to stop her daughter, but a subtle cue from Nickels invited her to wait and see where this was going.

Megan screeched at the top of her lungs—a noise that pierced through the center’s offices. When it was over, Nickels encouraged Jillian to gently ask Megan what was wrong. Megan explained that she was angry because she wanted to keep playing with her mother.

“In that moment, mom was just super,” said Nickels. “She put aside her embarrassment and worry for the sake of getting to know her little girl. She listened and acknowledged Megan’s feelings. And rather than just trying to

calm her down and quickly move on, she told her it was okay to feel upset. That was really brave.”

At their one-on-one follow-up session, Jillian expressed how enlightening the moment had been. Suddenly, she saw all Megan’s trying behaviors in an entirely new light: her daughter desperately wanted to be closer to her mother and was fighting for it the only way she knew how.

Nickels assured her that the episode was equally important for Megan, because she learned that there was

nothing she could do to make her mother leave her or stop loving her.

“Megan had a lot of conflicting thoughts and feelings,” says Nickels. “She wanted to be with her mother, but she was angry with her for not having enough time for her. And the negative responses she received for expressing her upset feelings were only making her feel worse. She was starting to think of herself as a bad person, so getting all that out was tremendously important for her.”

Not every session included such big breakthroughs. Often progress was incremental and required Nickels’s trained eye to see it.

A fresh start

As the months passed, Jillian and Megan formed a stronger bond, and Megan’s behavior became more even-keeled. At that point, Nickels brought up the possibility of ending their sessions.



“Transitioning out of therapy is very important, as relationships have formed on all sides,” says Nickels. “It is important to give everyone time to express their many feelings about this step, feelings of growth and accomplishment, but also of sadness and apprehension. It is yet another opportunity to learn that difficult steps can be mastered and even cherished.”

They agreed to six final play dates. On the last, Megan and Nickels exchanged gifts. Nickels gave her a favorite blanket from the sessions. Megan gave Nickels a drawing.

“See, it’s an angry face on one side and a happy face on the other side. So, when you feel angry, you know there is also a happy face, and when you’re happy, you know there can also be anger.”

Nickels gushed about the artwork, but secretly felt far more impressed with the young girl’s emotional growth. She had made incredible progress with identifying, accepting, and coping with the whole gamut of her feelings.

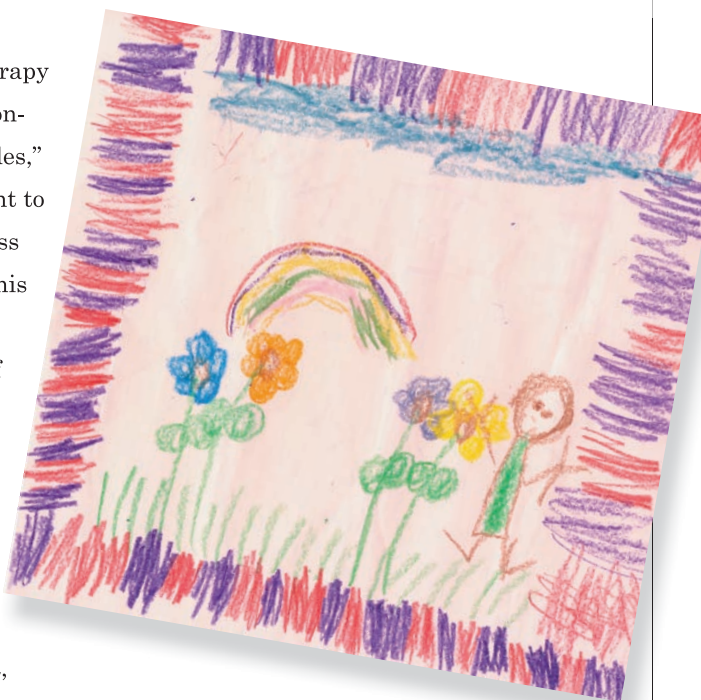
Now, when it comes time for Jillian to leave Megan at school and go to

work, her daughter walks her to the door, gives her a big hug, and then immediately runs back to her friends.

“She’s absolutely amazing,” says Jillian. “She loves her ballet lessons. I think they brought out some athletic ability, because she’s a monkey-bar champion, always finding new ways to climb. And

she’s a walking encyclopedia on butterflies.”

Happy to educate her friends, Megan gathers them around her favorite book to point out the different species of butterflies and explain the profound process of metamorphosis. **ii**



The Center for Children and Families provides family-centered assessment and treatment for children birth through eight. Learn more at www.erikson.edu/ccf.

Creating stronger classrooms, one teacher at a time

Erikson’s New Schools Project is partnering with seven schools throughout Chicago, providing professional development and teacher coaching that is helping transform the educational experiences of young children, pre-k through third grade.

We talked with two principals who have partnered with the project for several years about their experiences in urban education and with the New Schools Project. **Cherie Novak** is principal of Robert Fulton Elementary School, a public school in the Back of the Yards neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side. **John Price** is principal of John Audubon Elementary School, which is located in Roscoe Village on Chicago’s North Side.

**What are the primary challenges you face as a principal in an urban school?
What keeps you up at night?**



Cherie Novak: The primary challenge I face as a principal is to build capacity that dramatically increases student achievement. At Fulton, all of our students are receiving free and reduced lunch. Our students deal with poverty, violence, foreclosures, and other challenges every day, yet we do not have the clinically trained resources like a full-time psychologist or social workers to support our students’ social-emotional needs. Our students

deserve the best and the brightest teachers who recognize the children’s intellectual capabilities, but not all teachers are willing to work in a high-stakes environment.

John Price: Our biggest challenge is also our biggest strength: the diversity of our students and the range of needs. To name a few, we work with kids who are bilingual, who have had a strong academic start and those who haven’t, who are working above or below or at grade level, and who fall on the autism spectrum. We need to meet the needs of all kids and do it well.

What is your approach to addressing these challenges?

Novak: My logic model is simple: smart teachers equal smart kids. If I can improve the capacity of my staff, I can dramatically change student learning. I, as the principal, have to be a true instructional leader to build the capacity of my staff by providing appropriate coaching and professional development. This is in line with the professional development Erikson provides, which is why Fulton decided to collaborate with them. Getting the staff and community on board helps build a culture of shared responsibility for high student achievement. I cannot do this alone.



Price: We work to balance continuous improvement on our testing results and other measures with developmentally appropriate practice. We are a high-achieving school, and we've done very well on testing, but we also understand that working with children is complex. We cannot reduce our students to simple data points; we must teach to them and their needs. At the end of the day, we need to remember that we are talking about children.

You have worked with Erikson's New Schools Project for several years. Describe for me what your partnership entails.

Novak: Erikson is helping us close the learning and achievement gap by working with us to align standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment from pre-k through third grade. A partnership with Erikson means that we build knowledge, skills, and consistency because the Erikson coaches are intentional about presenting our teachers with high-quality, developmentally informed, research-based practices. Students reap the benefits of both the social-emotional and academic learning that is taking place.

Price: Our work with Erikson has helped us make significant instructional reforms, including a new reading curriculum designed with an Erikson facilitator. This was a huge change for us and was created in response to teacher feedback. Previously, there was little vertical alignment of instruction, only horizontal alignment. Teachers didn't know what students had learned or not learned the previous year or what they were going to learn the next year. Now we can plan each grade and build on instruction grade after grade.

Erikson focuses on micro professional development: instead of conducting professional development in a lecture hall with 500 other teachers, professional development takes place on a one-on-one basis and as close to the kids

as possible. This style of teacher development is differentiated for different kinds of learners, just like a strong classroom, and can be easily applied by teachers to their classes.

How has the partnership helped your teachers and your students? Are you seeing any outcomes?

Novak: Erikson and our teachers improve the quality of children’s lives. On average, third graders in schools like ours gained more than seven percentage points in reading on the ISAT compared with a CPS district average of two points, and gained 11 percentage points in math on the ISAT compared with a CPS district average of four points. We have the highest attendance average out of any school in our area—over 95 percent—which is also higher than the district average. In addition, our misconducts are down by 50 percent, and we have over 50 parental engagement activities every year.

Price: Our teachers are reporting a significant difference in student preparation and that they can start teaching new material sooner in the school year, as students don’t have to catch up. The data support our efforts: our third grade ISAT scores continue to increase. This year, Audubon ranked third for increasing test scores in reading and first in math in the district among Autonomous Management and Performance Schools with less than 500 students.

The new school year has started. What are your goals for the coming year?

Novak: Long term, we want to become a 90/90/90 school: a school where even though 90 percent of the students are free or reduced lunch eligible and 90 percent of the students are an ethnic minority, 90 percent are achieving in the top 10 percent of the district and state standards. This year, we want to maintain our 95 percent attendance average. We strive to reduce misconducts by 50 percent. We want all primary students to be on or above grade level in reading and math by the end of the school year. Last, we want all of our third through eighth grade students to be ACT/college ready by the end of the school year as indicated on the ISAT.

Price: Our main goals for the next year are fully implementing the new reading curriculum and building on this cohesive approach to pre-k through third grade education. We want to show that there is no dichotomy between developmental appropriateness, including attention to social-emotional development, and academic and intellectual “rigor.” We also continue to support our teachers’ development. The challenges never stop. We have to continue to improve. **ii**

Learn more about the New Schools Project at www.erikson.edu/newschools.

Inventing the systems for success

As governments tighten their belts, line items for programs and services that support young children and families are disappearing. Yet the needs of those children and families aren't.

In this environment, **Candace Williams**, M.S. '08, M.S.W. (Loyola) '09, is working to develop the systems and networks that will enable early childhood organizations to reach more children and families.



She began her career as a teacher and youth specialist, switching to the policy side when she was chosen from among 200 candidates to receive an Illinois Early Childhood Fellowship. The program, created by six leading Illinois funders in the field of early childhood, was established to develop emerging leaders who can shape and extend effective public policy for children.

Williams served her fellowship at Positive Parenting DuPage, working to support collaboration among organizations, agencies, and resources serving parents and young children. She joined Positive Parenting DuPage as director of special initiatives following the fellowship.

We talked with Williams about her experiences and her perspective on the early childhood field.

When you talk about “systems development” as it relates to social services, what do you mean?

It's about creating networks. The goal is to move beyond silos, where individual agencies provide specific services, to developing an awareness of a larger, more comprehensive picture of serving young children and their families. At the heart of this work is relationship building in an effort to cultivate and sustain partnerships while reducing duplication and gaps in services. This can be done by developing support systems and structures to meet local agencies' needs, including technical assistance. I have been active in this work as a member of the Illinois Early Learning Council's



Community Systems Development Work Group, helping shape common language around community partnerships, as well as providing statewide capacity building trainings.

What prevents agencies from collaborating?

In short, silos, competing for scarce funding, and lack of communication. The system was not necessarily designed with the collaborative process in mind. However, that is beginning to change—you have to be involved in

some form of collaborative process to be considered as a candidate for certain grants and initiatives. It will be interesting in five or ten years to see the impact of this on systems.

We need to increase resources, and we also need to get creative about collaboration. If you do what I do, and there are 1,500 families to serve, there's no reason that both of us should be serving the same 500 families when collectively we could serve all of them with the same amount of funding.

What else could we do to improve services for children and families?

We never want to lose sight of what families need and want. We've been doing the work so long that we may feel like we *know* what's needed. For example, we've always fought to improve education and early childhood services, so that's where we continue to focus our efforts. But it is vital that, along with our current efforts, we also are intentional about going into communities and talking to families. Ask them, what's going on? Building relationships of trust and empowerment is key to our mission.

You seem to see communities as the essential matrix of change. Is that true?

Yes and no. By community, I mean not only a specific community but the collective, what we believe and what we value as Americans. We say it takes a village, meaning the community, to raise a child. But just looking at it "bottom up" is not enough. We don't talk enough about the broader aspects of community, that is to say our institutions, society itself.

People who work in the field can sound almost apologetic when we talk about the social reality in this country. We need to have a stronger voice. We have to say, "Yes, there are people who are undereducated, who are not working, who need help. But this country's problems are not centered on one group, one race, one socioeconomic class. Americans in general are suffering." We need to say, out loud and all together, "This is not okay." Other interests can do it, and they are not representing the well-being of people. Why can't we?

How do we rebuild and strengthen communities, then?

It has to be a comprehensive effort for the collective good. If we do not work on the issues from all angles, we are just spinning our wheels. Ultimately, everyone has to be invested in the thought that there is value to all people, especially the most vulnerable—very young children and their families. **ii**

A promise fulfilled

In 2006, Erikson made a promise. A promise to give children, all children, a better start in life and a better chance for a healthy, productive future.

Erikson launched Fulfilling the Promise, an ambitious fundraising campaign, to help reach more children and families and the professionals who work with them. This summer, the five-year campaign surpassed its \$30 million goal.

“Through their gifts of unprecedented generosity, Erikson’s donors are making our vision of unwavering excellence in early care and education a

reality,” says Kate Neisser, chair of Erikson’s board of trustees. “The successful campaign also is a testament to the tireless efforts of campaign chairs Virginia (’90) and Norman Bobins and former board chair Dick Kiphart. Together, we are brightening horizons for young children and families nationwide.”

More than \$17 million in unrestricted donations helped Erikson purchase a permanent home in Chicago’s River North neighborhood. In 2008, after an extensive planning process, Erikson moved into a new building with double the number of classrooms to accommodate growing enrollment in the graduate program and twice the square footage. The new campus

enables Erikson to offer varied learning opportunities for many more early childhood professionals from master’s degree students to those attending professional development courses.

The campaign also helped Erikson lower the barriers for students who want to improve the work they do with the most vulnerable children and families. Donors gave nearly \$3.9 million in support of student fellowships. Eighty percent of students, many of whom work with bilingual populations and in high-need areas, receive some form of financial aid. Some \$1.6 million raised through the campaign supports faculty as they develop innovative new ideas and projects addressing critical issues such as curriculum development, diversity, math education, assessment, and more.



Photos of children by longtime trustee Kathy Richland Pick fill Erikson’s campus. The mural above welcomes visitors to the Irving B. Harris Commons.



(Left) The Fulfilling the Promise campaign helped Erikson purchase its campus at 451 North LaSalle.

(Right) Erikson's library was dedicated in 1996 to the memory of longtime trustee Edward Neisser. Space for the library's holdings doubled on the new campus.

The Center for Children and Families, launched with \$2 million in campaign gifts, extends clinical services to children and families throughout the Chicago area. Since 1999, more than 700 families have received counseling and other services from the center. Of those families, nearly 20 percent lived at or below the poverty level and received services at reduced or no charge. (See story on page 4.)

The New Schools Project, which was partially endowed with campaign gifts, partners with public and charter schools to build positive and powerful early education experiences for children in pre-kindergarten through third

grade and helps close achievement gaps. Since 2005, the project has worked with 75 teachers and principals and improved the education of the 1,500 students in their classrooms. (See story on page 10.)

Campaign donors also supported initiatives within the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy, the Edward Neisser Library, and professional development.

While Erikson has moved closer to its promise of giving all children a better start, much more needs

to be done. The Institute is planning to build on its groundbreaking work in early childhood math by expanding to science, engineering, and technology and to improve children's developmental and educational outcomes by linking schools and communities. With the help of Erikson's donors and volunteers, we will continue to work with children and their families where the pattern of success—or failure—is set. **ii**

Campaign Steering Committee

Virginia ('90) and Norman Bobins, chairs
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Erikson ongoing

Whatever their job title, Erikson faculty, alumni, and students are united in a single, ongoing enterprise: to make life significantly better for children and their families. Their work takes them across the nation and throughout the world, but it is always rooted in the Erikson ethos: practical, thoughtful, inclusive, and effective.



From left: Samuel J. Meisels, Susan Buffett, and Eugene García

Pomp and circumstance

At Erikson's 44th annual commencement ceremony, held in May at The Field Museum, 73 graduates received master's degrees in child development or early childhood education and four received doctoral degrees.

Eugene García, Ph.D., vice president for education partnerships at Arizona State University and one of the nation's most eminent researchers in the teaching of language and bilingual language development, delivered a rousing commencement address. As García shared stories of his family and childhood, he emphasized passion and wisdom as essential qualities for early childhood

professionals. Echoing one of his father's lessons, García reminded the graduates that an education "is something no one can take away."

Susan Buffett, philanthropist and chair of the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, also was honored for her national advocacy for quality care in early childhood. Commending her work, Erikson president Samuel J. Meisels said, "She understands that improving education is an effort that involves the entire community. This includes gaining local support for new programs, giving teachers opportunities to better their practice, and helping children and families both in and out of the classroom."

A model for online education

The results are in—an independent evaluation of the online master's in early childhood education finds that Erikson is a model for online education. In the evaluation, students stated that the program creates a close-knit community of early childhood professionals with the knowledge and practical skills they need to serve children and families.

The evaluation was commissioned by **The Boeing Company**, which also provided funding to develop the online master's program, and conducted by Simone C.O. Conceição, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and an independent researcher with expertise in online teaching.

Read a summary of the evaluation and download the final report at www.erikson.edu/model.

Good work

Angela Searcy, M.S. '02, recently received a fellowship through the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois program. The fellowship supports her doctor of education studies at Argosy University. She also is an adjunct faculty member at Rasmussen College, national literacy consultant with The Multisensory Training Institute in Needham, Massachusetts, and owner and founder of the professional development company Simple Solutions Educational Services.

Amy Dolan, '04, is the director of What Matters Now in Children's Ministry and authored the electronic book "What Matters Now in Children's Ministry: 33 Perspectives on How to Influence Children's Faith Now." She writes a regular blog at lemonlimekids.com on teaching and leadership for directors of children's ministry. She also recently released her fifth curriculum project with the series "What's in the Bible?" This series is led and developed by Phil Vischer, a VeggieTales creator.

Robin Frisch, M.S. '07, is entering her seventh year as director and head teacher of the Gan Yeladim Early Learning Center in Naperville, Illinois. She writes, "I love every minute of working with the children and their families. We are all growing together!" She also is a children's museum consultant for MindSplash.

Laura Tolbert, M.S. '07, moved to Lexington, Kentucky, and is working in the Early Start program at Wellington Elementary. The school, which serves students through fifth grade, has green features including solar energy panels, a rainwater capture and reuse system, a solar hot water system, permeable pavers, and automatic electric lighting controls.

Jennifer Douglas Whorf, M.S. '09, is the child and family development specialist for the Jewish Council for Youth Services Lutz Family Center in Highland Park, Illinois. She also is the Operations Director for Camp STAR, a summer treatment program for children with ADHD and high-functioning autism. The camp is a collaboration between the Jewish Council for Youth Services

and University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Juvenile Research.

Two Erikson alumni, **TeeNeka Jones, '10**, and **Melanie Garrett, '05**, were among the six early childhood professionals named 2011–13 Illinois Early Childhood Fellows. The fellows program prepares emerging leaders to strengthen the field of early childhood policy and systems building in Illinois. As fellows, Jones and Garrett will work full time for two years at a local organization; participate in bimonthly seminars exploring early childhood research, policy, and practice; and pursue their own professional development. Jones, who holds an infant specialist certificate from Erikson, will serve her fellowship at Health & Disability Advocates. Garrett will be at HealthConnect One. She studied in Erikson's infant mental health certificate program.

Katie Reinesto, M.S. '10, is an at-risk preschool teacher in Berwyn, Illinois. She says, "I am truly excited to have my first classroom and to be working with a diverse group of students."

A seat at the table

Erikson president **Samuel J. Meisels** was named to Chicago's Early Learning Executive Council by Mayor Rahm Emanuel. The 10-person council will oversee reforms to Chicago's early childhood education programs—including launching an Early Childhood Web Portal—in an effort to serve the most at-risk children in high-quality programs and increase transparency and accountability. The council members are

Jean-Claude Brizard, CEO, Chicago Public Schools

Bechara Choucair, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Public Health

Evelyn Diaz, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services

Ricardo Estrada, President and CEO, Metropolitan Family Services

Janine Hill Lewis, Executive Director, Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition (IMCHC)

Samuel J. Meisels, President, Erikson Institute

Diana Rauner, President, Ounce of Prevention Fund

Jesse Ruiz, Vice President, Chicago Board of Education

Elizabeth Swanson, Deputy Chief of Staff for Education, Chicago Mayor's Office

Maria Whelan, President and CEO, Illinois Action for Children

Board welcomes new members, officers

Over the summer, Erikson's board of trustees appointed a new chair and vice chair and welcomed three new members.



Kate Neisser, formerly the board's vice chair, is now chair. She succeeds Gery Chico, who stepped down to chair the Illinois State Board of Education. An active civic leader, Neisser has served on Erikson's board for more than 15 years.



Michelle L. Collins, who also has served on Erikson's board for 15 years, replaced Neisser as vice chair. Collins is president of Cambium LLC, a business and financial advisory firm serving small and medium-sized companies.



New board member **JaCee Burnes** is vice president, treasury operations, and assistant treasurer of Exelon Corporation. In this role, she helps set the overall strategic direction for Exelon's finance organization.



Linda F. Morris, executive vice president of PNC, manages the retail distribution network of 165 branches located in Chicagoland and Wisconsin. She served previously as the retail bank market manager of PNC's western Pennsylvania market, including the city of Pittsburgh, home of PNC's headquarters.



Scott Steffens is a partner in Grant Thornton's Midwest audit practice. He is a member of the Illinois CPA Society's Endowment Board and chairs the Diversity Initiatives Task Force.

Be a student again

Erikson is preparing early childhood professionals to work with diverse learners through two new programs.

The new **early childhood special education specialization** prepares teachers to meet the needs of students with varying learning abilities, developmental delays, and/or disabilities. It also prepares them for a letter of approval from the Illinois State Board of Education to educate young children (birth through five) with special needs.

Early childhood teachers, including Erikson alumni, who hold a Type 04 teaching certificate can earn the Early Childhood Special Education letter of approval by completing the four specialization courses. For more information, visit www.erikson.edu/specialeducation.

The **online bilingual/English as a second language certificate**, which previously was an on-campus program, helps early childhood professionals increase their effectiveness in multicultural, multilingual classrooms. It also prepares students for bilingual and/or ESL approval by the Illinois State Board of Education. Learn more at www.erikson.edu/bilingual.



New faculty

Assistant professor **Mark Nagasawa** earned his doctorate at Arizona State University, where he coordinated a five-year statewide evaluation of Arizona’s efforts to develop a more coherent health and child development system of services for young children and their families.

His broad research interests focus on the cultural and historical factors involved in education policy-making and how these, and related social policies, affect people in local communities.

McCormick Math Minute

*Discover foundational mathematics
for young children—in 60 seconds or less*

Seeking treasure—and the foundational ideas of geometry

Sharon Hogan and her pre-school class at Mary Gage Peterson Elementary School in Chicago had all kinds of fun with the way Eric Carle’s *The Secret Birthday Message* plays with the two main faces of geometry—shapes and spatial sense. The class made up its own treasure map to

correspond with the one in the story and then brought the map to life as they set up an obstacle course.

Throughout the process, the children were surrounded by two- and three-dimensional shapes and involved in recognizing, naming, drawing, and building with them. They also practiced using directional language such as “down the

stairs” or “through the opening” and relative words like “near to.”

Hogan knew that both first- and second-language learners need many repetitions of these terms to understand them. This is especially important as these words can describe a relationship between two objects that shift. For example, one person pointing left looks as if they are pointing right to someone facing them, or a bush that is in front of a group of students is soon behind them as they continue along a path.

The Erikson Early Mathematics Education Project, launched with the support of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, works with teachers to bring foundational mathematics to the early childhood classroom. More than 250 teachers have participated in the program to date.



Fulfilling the Promise

The Campaign for Erikson Institute

Honor roll of donors
FY2007–11



From the Campaign Chairs



A child's first years may seem to pass in a blink of an eye, especially for parents, but those years are filled with new experiences that will shape that child forever. Likewise, our time as chairs of Erikson's fundraising campaign, Fulfilling the Promise, has sped by, enriched by our work to ensure that all children receive the best education and care.

Over the five-year lifetime of the campaign, 2,182 individuals, families, foundations, and corporations gave more than \$50 million to Erikson. More than \$30 million of that was earmarked for specific campaign initiatives.

Your gifts enable Erikson to prepare early childhood professionals to work with children of all backgrounds and abilities and to conduct research that responds directly to the needs of young children. They have helped Erikson deepen and expand its successful work with teachers and school administrators, underresourced and underserved communities, and a variety of programs and agencies working with children and families. With your support, Erikson is providing children in Chicago, its suburbs, and beyond a better chance at life.

On behalf of the campaign steering committee and the many children and families served by Erikson, we thank you for your support.

Virginia ('90) and Norm Bobins

Fulfilling the Promise, Campaign Chairs

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Erikson on Children
Fall 2011

Erikson on Children is published for the donors, alumni, and friends of Erikson Institute by the Office of Communications. Send comments, suggestions, or changes of address to adivita kopacz@erikson.edu or to Office of Communications, Erikson Institute, 451 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60654-4510.

Writers: Jeffrey Brennan, Anne Divita Kopacz, Patricia Nedeau
Editor: Anne Divita Kopacz
Design: Gerta Sorensen, Sorensen London Design
Photography: Mike Paulucci and Loren Santow
Illustrations: Pablo Bernasconi

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11-719/7M/ADK/1011

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