

erikson

children

summer 2012

ella

4

Dual language, dual learning

10

A balancing act—
Education in the age
of Common Core

14

Healing through art

18

Taking the story out
of the book

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.

In this issue

Dual language, dual learning

Many schools aren't meeting the unique needs of young children learning two languages simultaneously. Erikson is working to change this.

4

A balancing act

Balancing academic rigor with social-emotional supports is a must in pre-kindergarten through third-grade classrooms, say presenters at an Erikson forum.

10

Healing through art

Children and families will find healing in the new Lurie Children's Hospital, thanks in part to Lisa Morgan Mulvaney, M.Ed. '95.

14

Taking the story out of the book

Senior Instructor Mary Hynes-Berry explains her secrets. Hint: she encourages wonder and serious play.

18

Erikson ongoing

Read how Erikson faculty, staff, and alumni are making life significantly better for children and their families.

21

Investing in our future

The CEO of the Stranahan Foundation explains why the foundation supports Erikson.

29

Cover: A student at Erie Elementary Charter School in Chicago practices writing the Spanish word for "she."

Photo by Loren Santow

From the President

School's out for the summer in many districts, but for parents, teachers, and other early childhood professionals, the hard—and critically important—work of caring for and educating young children doesn't stop. It's the same at Erikson.

In Chicago and around the world, Erikson's faculty and staff are striving to solve the pressing issues in early childhood. In New Zealand, we're discussing the role of technology in programs for young children. In Brazil, we're helping adolescent mothers develop strong parenting skills. In China and Korea, we are partnering with teachers to improve early education. In cities across the United States (Boston, Indianapolis, San Antonio, Minneapolis, Washington, DC, and more), our faculty and staff are building a commitment to high-quality care for young children.

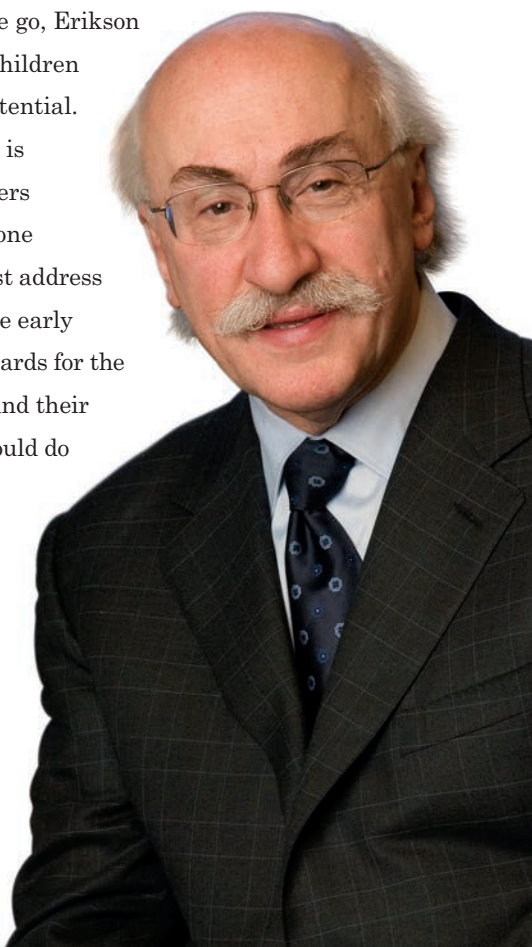
Back home in Chicago, we are making strides toward improving education for dual language learners, those learning both English and a home language. Erikson is helping teachers and schools sort through what the new Common Core State Standards mean for education from pre-kindergarten to third grade. We are also beginning an initiative that will reshape early education and care in Chicago's Austin neighborhood. Turn to page 30 to read about how you can help this effort.

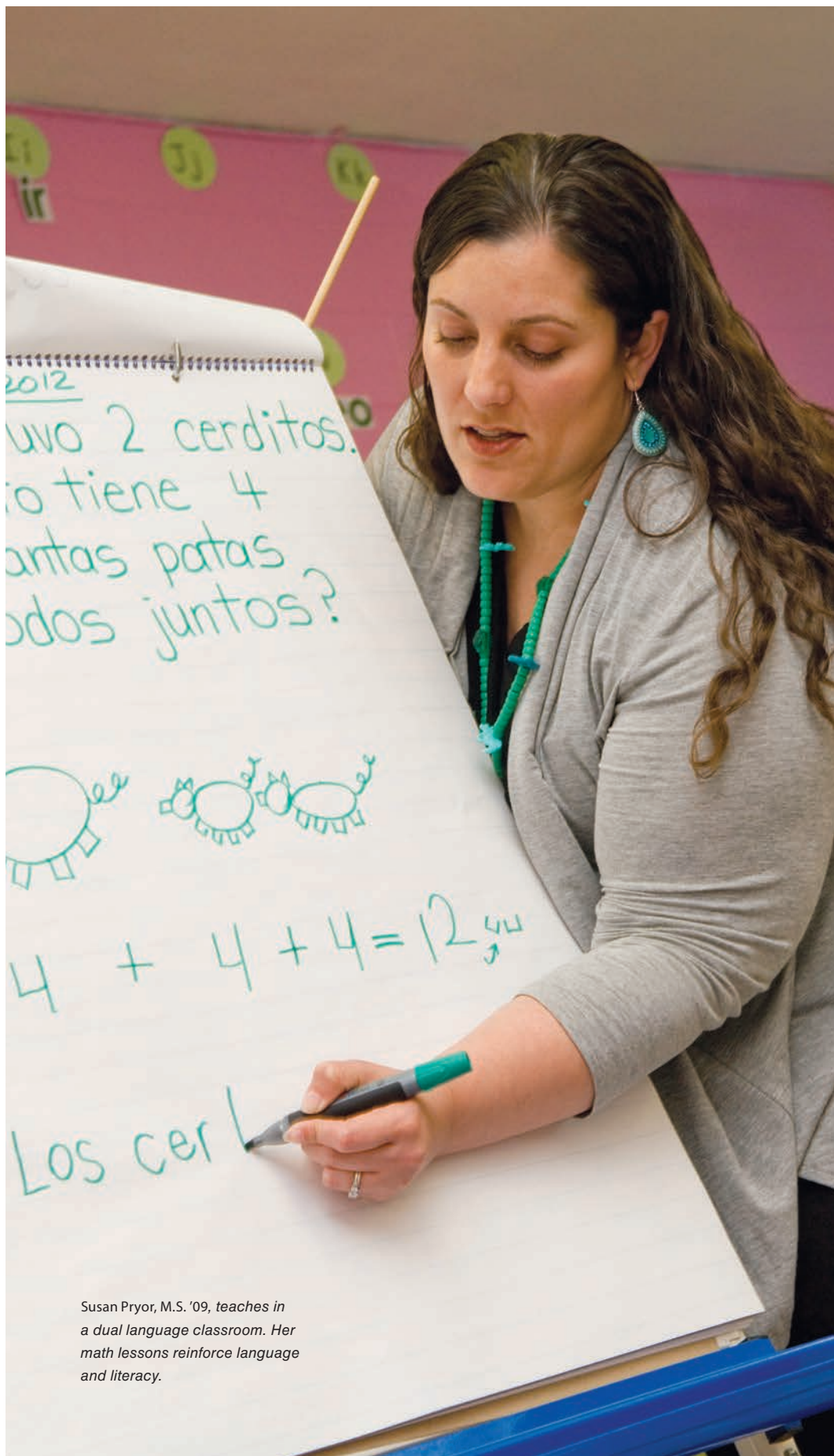
Throughout all we do and everywhere we go, Erikson seeks to create a world in which all young children have the opportunity to realize their full potential. In this time of economic difficulty, our work is more important than ever. Erikson and others in the field remind policymakers and everyone working toward a better society that we must address disparities; support coherent, comprehensive early childhood systems; and maintain high standards for the services that we provide to young children and their families. Our children are our future; we should do everything we can to support them.

We thank you for your help in realizing our shared vision for children and families everywhere.



Samuel J. Meisels
President





Susan Pryor, M.S. '09, teaches in a dual language classroom. Her math lessons reinforce language and literacy.

Dual language, dual learning

Every Friday morning, students from kindergarten to sixth grade gather in the Erie Elementary Charter School gym and, class by class, perform a cheer boasting of their commitment to learning.

Susan Pryor, M.S. '09, a kindergarten teacher at Erie, leads her class's chant:

*Donde quiera que vamos
Todos nos preguntan
¿Quien somos?
Y decimos
Somos Loyola, los niños de Loyola.
¡Hola!*

Erie is a bilingual charter school predominantly serving Latino students in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. The kindergarteners call themselves "children of Loyola," because every classroom at Erie is named after a different university—a nod to the school's goal of putting all students on the path to higher education.

"The commitment to graduating college-bound, bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural students is held by everyone, the teachers, the administration, the board," says Pryor. "Everyone is on the same page."

Erie, which partners with Erikson's New Schools Project, is a model of bilingual education. However, there is no school system-wide commitment to high-quality biliteracy. Erikson seeks to change this by developing policies, practices, and teacher preparation programs to help meet these students' unique needs.

DLL education in Illinois

In Illinois, nearly 8 percent of students are dual language learners (DLL), learning a home language and English simultaneously. The default program for educating them is a transitional bilingual program, which is designed to make non-English-speaking students proficient in English by third grade, when they first take the ISAT, or Illinois Standard Achievement Test. In this approach, the student's native language is not supported beyond the transitional period.

In comparison, Erie offers two program options, both with the goal of educating bilingual children: dual language and general education in English with a daily period of Spanish.

Pryor’s kindergarten class is in the dual language program, an immersive approach in which her students spend 80 percent of their day speaking Spanish. When the students move to second grade, the Spanish to English ratio will go to 70/30, and in fourth grade, 60/40. When they reach fifth grade, the ratio will be 50/50 and remain so for all additional grade levels.

After children are accepted into the charter school by lottery, their parents voice their preference between the two program options. Regardless of which

track is selected, Erie’s administration and teachers are committed to fostering positive, enthusiastic attitudes about learning and encouraging parental involvement, says Pryor.

Too few schools match Erie’s commitment to teaching dual language learners, says **Luisiana Meléndez**, clinical assistant professor and director of Erikson’s online Bilingual/ESL Certificate Program.

“There’s a lot of misinformation out there,” she says. “People think that if students don’t learn English by preschool, then they never will. Or they think that it’s too confusing to learn two languages at once.

“The biggest thing teachers and administrators need to understand is the better a

child learns his first language, the better he’ll learn his second language.”

Children are often rushed into learning English in the classroom, according to Meléndez, and parents are sometimes encouraged by teachers to speak English at home—even when they themselves have a limited command of the language.

“This causes many problems. The children start picking up their parents’ limited use of English, which isn’t accepted at school, but much worse is that their limited vocabulary keeps conversations to superficial exchanges. Their ability to have rich discussions and express abstract ideas is greatly diminished—a huge loss at that age.”

Perhaps most damaging, children whose native language is not supported may lose their ability to speak it. For immigrants, this may disconnect them





[Top] Pryor encourages students with different strengths to learn from one another. This reinforces the value of their experience and helps them feel like they belong in school.
[Bottom] Pryor helps her students sound out a phrase.

from their family and their culture. In a short time, children could find that they are unable to communicate with their grandparents or interact when they visit their native country. This also wastes students' bilingualism, which is something many English-speaking students strive to gain in their education.

At Erikson, the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy is tackling this issue head on through a study of preschools in the Chicago Public Schools that serve dual language learners. Teachers and administrators from more than 150 schools have completed surveys on how their schools serve dual language learners and the challenges the schools face. Erikson researchers also visited seven schools to observe classroom practices in action. The two-year study, which is funded by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, will result in a comprehensive and practical set of policy



Erie students join in a class cheer boasting of their commitment to learning.

recommendations related to issues including assessment, teacher preparation, and family-school engagement.

“This is our first chance to find out what is actually happening in Chicago’s classrooms,” says Center director **Jana Fleming**. “It’s an important step in helping CPS understand how they’re working with dual language learners and to adjust to better serve these students in the future.”

[Alumni in action](#)

Erikson’s policy work and research are not the only ways the Institute improves the education of dual language learners. Erikson launched its Bilingual/ESL Certificate Program in 2002 and a specialization within the Master of Science in Early Childhood Education in 2003. These programs reflect one of Erikson’s founding tenets: children should always be viewed in the context of their culture and families.

Erikson challenges all of its alumni to share what they know about educating dual language learners with their colleagues and with families. “We rely on our graduates not only to be great teachers but to be leaders as well,” says Meléndez.

Erikson alumni are working in schools throughout the Chicago area to improve the education of dual language learners. **Saskia Rombouts, BESL ’07**, is building the Academy for Global Citizenship’s first dual language program. The Academy is a Chicago Public School in the Archer Heights neighborhood. After working in transitional bilingual programs in New York and Illinois, Rombouts is critical of the transitional bilingual approach’s implicit goal of monolingualism.

“It basically uses the student’s native language as a tool to help them learn English and then abandons it.”

She also expressed concern about some schools’ inconsistent—or even negative—teaching practices and attitudes toward students’ home language and culture, which she thinks result from the transitional bilingual approach.

“I was in a school where I saw staff yell at parents, because they couldn’t speak English,” says Rombouts. “But mostly I saw that schools just weren’t thinking about it or were ignoring it.”

In contrast, Rombouts hosts parent workshops at the Academy for Global Citizenship to explain the dual language program and the research that supports its methodology. She also meets with families individually to discuss the program’s process and benefits.

Dawn Hursh, BESL ’11, graduated from Erikson’s certificate program and now teaches kindergarten in the Chicago suburb of Bloomingdale, where 25% of students are dual language learners. They speak 22 different languages.

“I’m always on my soapbox about dual language learners,” she admits, laughing. She recounts debating a teacher who had asked her students

to count to 20. When one girl recited her numbers in Spanish, the teacher marked the response as incorrect.

“Later, I asked her, ‘What’s the point of the question? Were you testing her ability to count or speak English?’”

Hursh helped the teacher see that she was ignoring the knowledge the child did have. Still, Hursh understands that teacher’s perspective.

“Before coming to Erikson, I would have thought the same thing: I have to get these children speaking English. Now, I’m confident that they’ll pick it up. In the meantime, I want to support them in what they are able to do.”

Meléndez agrees with this balanced perspective.

“Of course, dual language learners need to learn English if they are to succeed in school and life, but the acquisition of their second language does not have to mean the loss of their first.” [ii](#)

Learn more about Erikson’s online Bilingual/ESL Certificate Program at www.erikson.edu/bilingual.

A balancing act

Illinois school districts are adopting the Common Core State Standards. But what does this mean for pre-kindergarten to third-grade classrooms?

Some 90 researchers and teachers grappled with this and other questions at a February forum hosted by Erikson’s New Schools Project and Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy.

“Education reforms are increasingly emphasizing the need for rigorous academic programs,” says **Chris Maxwell**, director of the New Schools Project and conference organizer. “Far less attention has been paid to the appropriate meaning of rigor in early childhood classrooms or to the importance of supporting and promoting children’s social and emotional development.”

The Common Core State Standards are intended to improve children’s academic performance and readiness for college and career by setting new standards for English/language arts and mathematics. Forty-five states, including Illinois, and the District of Columbia have adopted the standards, with Chicago Public Schools phasing them in beginning in the 2012–13 school

Forum speakers

Watch presentation videos at www.erikson.edu/newschools.

Keynote

Cybele Raver

Director, Institute of Human Development and Social Change
Director, Children’s Self-Regulation Lab
New York University

Jennifer Cheatham

Chief Instruction Officer
Chicago Public Schools

Jie-Qi Chen

Professor and Principal Investigator
Early Mathematics Education Project
Erikson Institute

Sarah E. Dennis

Professional Development Facilitator
Erikson Institute

Chris Maxwell

Director, New Schools Project
Erikson Institute

Gillian Dowley McNamee

Professor and Director of Teacher Education
Erikson Institute

Charles Payne

Frank P. Hixon Distinguished Service Professor
School of Social Service Administration,
University of Chicago

John Price

Chief of Schools, Burnham Park Network
Chicago Public Schools

Stephen Zrike, Jr.

Chief of Elementary Schools, Pilsen-Little Village Network
Chicago Public Schools



Children at Christopher House construct an understanding of number by counting and connecting numerals to the quantities they represent.

year, according to **Jennifer Cheatham**, a presenter at the forum and chief instruction officer of the Chicago Public Schools.

All the forum presenters agreed that academic performance needs to improve and that achievement gaps beginning in the early years need to be closed. However, Erikson professional development facilitator **Sarah E. Dennis** finds that principals and teachers often struggle to understand how academic rigor can be appropriately and meaningfully included in pre-kindergarten through third-grade classrooms. She suggests that they implement the “spirit of Common Core,” which in English/language arts encourages students’ deeper understanding of literature, critical thinking, expression of ideas, and learning from others.

During their presentations, **Jie-Qi Chen**, professor and principal investigator of Erikson’s Early Mathematics Education Project, and **Gillian McNamee**, professor and director of Teacher Education at Erikson, both emphasized that standards and curricula should be used to support teaching and learning but not in a way that disregards children’s developmental needs. They reminded participants that the new standards in and of themselves will not provide a silver bullet to transform the quality of teaching and learning.

Charles Payne, Frank P. Hixon Distinguished Service Professor in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago, asserted in his comments that recent reforms in education have led schools to become too narrowly focused on academic achievement, while neglecting the social-emotional domain. Children at the social margins, including low-income children and children of color, are most affected by this shift. They often require a more



*(Left) Forum speakers Charles Payne, Cybele Raver, Chris Maxwell, and Stephen Zrike, Jr.
(Right) Some 90 researchers and teachers attended the February forum hosted by Erikson's New Schools Project and Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy.*

explicit and stronger focus on the development of the social relationships and skills needed to take full advantage of learning opportunities in the classroom.

Research by **Cybele Raver**, director of the Institute of Human Development and Social Change and the Children's Self-Regulation Lab at New York University, confirmed this point. During her keynote address, Raver shared her research showing that social-emotional support benefits children's academic performance. For the study, Raver and her team selected Head Start programs throughout Chicago in which most parents were working but still faced a range of poverty-related stressors. Classrooms were randomly assigned either to the intervention group, which promoted children's social-emotional development with the assistance of a mental health professional, or to a control group, in which each classroom was provided with a teacher's aide.

The study found that the intervention classrooms—with their greater social-emotional supports—showed significantly reduced children's behavior problems. Additionally, there was significant improvement in children's executive function, which includes inhibiting impulses, maintaining attention, regulating emotions, and having a good working memory. It also found that children in the treatment group performed considerably better on language, letter naming, and early math tasks, demonstrating that children in classrooms where teachers intentionally foster self-regulatory skills were better able to take advantage of instruction and learning opportunities.

Learn more about the
New Schools Project at
[www.erikson.edu/
newschools](http://www.erikson.edu/newschools) and Herr
Research Center for
Children and Social Policy
at www.erikson.edu/hrc.

Raver pointed out that while her research showed notable gains in children’s academic learning, other research has demonstrated that children did not consistently maintain these types of gains over time. Children who went on to high-quality kindergarten and primary-grade classrooms maintained their gains, while children who went to lower-quality schools did not.

Implications for policy and practice

The forum presentations suggested several next steps for both district and school policies and teacher practice in pre-kindergarten through third-grade classrooms, including:

- 1. Redefining rigor.** All students benefit from being asked to think, solve problems, and express ideas in an environment that is appropriately challenging and supportive. The key to elevating the quality of pre-kindergarten through third-grade classes through appropriate rigor is to provide rich content, active learning experiences, materials, time, and intentional teacher guidance. Together, they inspire young children’s curiosity, engage their intellect, and respond to their unique developmental characteristics.
- 2. Explicitly focusing on social-emotional development.** Research presented at the forum calls for schools and districts to be more intentional in the support of students’ social-emotional development. If children receive these interventions early, later achievement gaps may be prevented. However, to be successful, interventions must be sustained over time.
- 3. Ensuring an aligned, high-quality environment from pre-kindergarten through third grade.** Students benefit when schools intentionally focus on building students’ learning from one year to the next. This calls for an alignment of standards, curriculum, assessments, teaching methods, and professional development across the early grades, pre-kindergarten through third grade. This consistent and seamless pathway of learning can lead to increased gains in academic achievement. **ii**



Lisa Morgan Mulvaney, M.Ed. '95, sits
in front of artwork at Ann & Robert H. Lurie
Children's Hospital of Chicago.

Healing through art

A two-story indoor bamboo garden, art that promises more to discover, no matter how many times you look—touches like these helped make Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago a healing environment for all when it opened on June 9. One Erikson alumna was the organizing force behind it.

Lisa Morgan Mulvaney, M.Ed. '95, began her work more than four years ago when Children’s Memorial Hospital decided to move to a new \$855-million campus in Chicago’s Streeterville neighborhood and become Lurie Children’s Hospital.

As the coordinator of the Creative Arts Program and a certified child life specialist, Mulvaney recruited 23 community partners—ranging from Chicago Children’s Museum to Redmoon Theater—and challenged them to develop artwork for Lurie Children’s Hospital that encourages healing and celebrates the vibrancy of Chicago’s cultural organizations.

A child life specialist—a professional trained to help children and their families understand and cope with the hospital environment—might not seem to be the first choice to head an arts program. Mulvaney, however, found it the perfect fit.

“My background in child life helped me understand kids’ needs from a developmental and psychosocial perspective, and my years of experience working in a health care environment taught me about the importance of collaborating with clinicians and hospital staff,” she says. “I was then able to work with all the groups to reach consensus on what is appropriate for a pediatric health care environment. My entire career really led me to this point.”

Each community partner was paired with a hospital floor or space and asked to create several types of artwork. On each in-patient floor, a large entrance display welcomes children and families. In the nurses’ stations, dioramas, or “discovery boxes,” are embedded at children’s eye level to engage children while the adults talk over the desk. Along the corridor walls, series of photos or illustrations, called “paths of discovery,” entice children and visitors to continue on—five-foot segment after five-foot segment—to discover

what the next segment shows. Beyond the delight of discovery, the “paths” help people find their way around the hospital and can even serve a therapeutic purpose. The images encourage children working with physical therapists to complete longer and longer distances down the corridor.

The several hundred works of art created by community partners had to be responsive to the unique needs of a pediatric hospital. They needed



to meet strict architectural codes and infection control standards, and stand up to frequent cleaning. Aesthetically, the art had to be appealing to people of all ages and backgrounds and not over-stimulate or intimidate potentially vulnerable children and families. The artwork also had to communicate hope, healing, and humor, while allowing for fear and sadness.

“There were so many things to consider, but all the community partners were up to the challenge,”

Mulvaney says. “And the good news is that our partnerships won’t end when the last piece of art is installed.”

Mulvaney hopes community partners will continue to play an active role in the hospital by providing performances, workshops, and other programming for patients, families, and staff.

Bringing kids’ voices into the boardroom

In addition to her work with the creative arts program, Mulvaney founded and facilitates the Kids’ Advisory Board, a group of current patients between 11 and 18 years old who advise the hospital on patient care. The board was an integral part of planning for Lurie Children’s Hospital, meeting with staff, administration, and consultants throughout the process.

“It’s been incredible to give kids the opportunity to come back to the hospital as active participants,” says Mulvaney. “They are so proud to help shape the hospital and represent so many kids like them who face incredible challenges.”

Many of the board’s suggestions were built into Lurie Children’s Hospital, including a hair salon where patients can have their hair washed if their medical condition makes showering difficult. A seemingly minor amenity like this can make a big difference for sick children, according to Mulvaney. The board’s suggestions to create destination spots and bring nature into the hospital led to the Crown Sky Garden, a 5,000-square-foot indoor bamboo garden, where children and their families can go to relax.

The Kids’ Advisory Board, as well as staff, clinicians, and the Family Advisory Board, also reviewed all concepts for the community partners’ artwork.

Discovering the field of child life

It wasn’t until after college that Mulvaney discovered the field of child life. The sociology major’s first job was working in Children’s Memorial’s human resources department.

“I was always interested in hospitals, children, and the psychological aspects of childhood,” she says, “but I didn’t know that they coexisted until I discovered the child life department at Children’s.”

Mulvaney volunteered in child life and at child care centers for several years before her desire to become a child life specialist led her to Erikson and an internship at the University of Chicago Children’s Hospital. She subsequently joined the hospital’s child life staff and founded a Kids’ Advisory Board, as well as a bereavement program for children and adults. The board contributed to planning for what is now Comer Children’s Hospital at the University of Chicago. In 2006, Mulvaney returned to Children’s Memorial.

“The reward of being able to help create an incredible, healing place like Lurie Children’s Hospital is indescribable,” she says. “There’s not another children’s hospital like it, and I am so honored to be a part of it.” [ii](#)

Erikson’s child life alumni work at hospitals throughout Chicago and the nation. Learn more about Erikson’s child life program at www.erikson.edu/childlife.

Taking the story out of the book

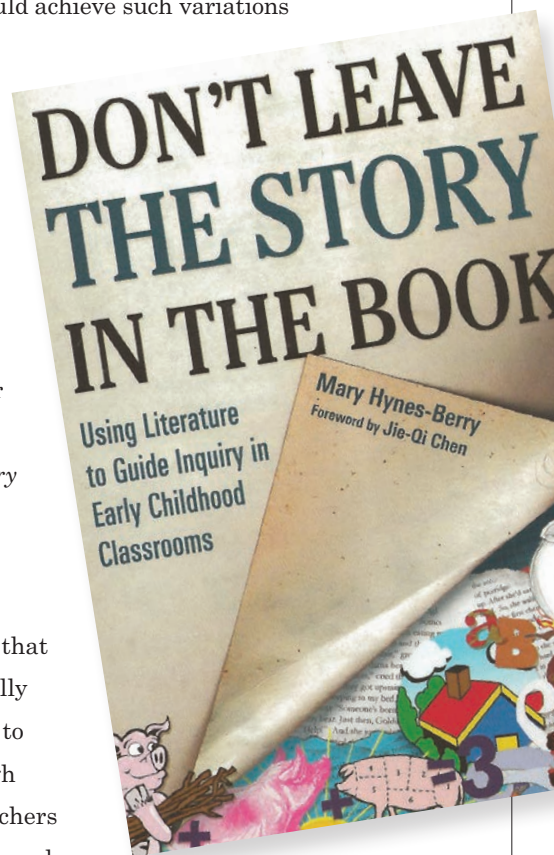
Take a moment and reflect on the story of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” Papa, Mama, and Baby Bear go for a walk to let their porridge cool. While they’re out, a young Goldilocks sneaks into their home to sample their food and try out their furniture until she finds the ones she thinks are “just right.”

Now, what questions or ideas come to mind? You might wonder where Goldilocks’s parents were or how a family of bears had a furnished home. You might wonder how three bowls of porridge, presumably prepared in the same pot and served at the same time, could achieve such variations in temperature.

Exploring that sense of wonder makes the difference between a forgettable fairytale and a cherished favorite that illuminates something about ourselves and the world, says **Mary Hynes-Berry**, senior instructor at Erikson. Teaching educators to cultivate and build upon that wonder has been her life’s work and was the driving force behind her new book *Don’t Leave the Story in the Book: Using Literature to Guide Inquiry in Early Childhood Classrooms* (Teachers College Press).

A master storyteller herself, she finds that the teaching potential of a story is virtually inexhaustible when children are allowed to explore its themes and characters through conversation. But too often, she says, teachers don’t use literature to open conversations and instead ask their students to recall basic facts.

“They ask superficial questions like ‘How many bears were there?’ But what’s the point of that? They’re basically saying ‘Give me my answer.’”





Teachers often use that approach to prepare children for the kinds of questions they'll encounter on standardized tests. Instead, Hynes-Berry insists, teachers should encourage real, dynamic conversations, the kind that inspire children to embrace critical thinking and develop a love of learning.

"Look at the etymology of 'converse,'" says Hynes-Berry. "Its Latin roots are 'con,' meaning 'with,' and 'verso,' meaning 'to turn.' So, the word really means 'turn together.' So, I take in what you say and then offer something back."

In this way, teachers and students share knowledge with one another to create new and greater understandings.

"If we let good teachers be good teachers and not force them to drill students for tests," Hynes-Berry continues, "conversations would happen all the time."

Serious play

In her work as an instructor, Hynes-Berry is an advocate for "serious play," which she equates with quality learning. She uses the acronym SIP to describe a worthwhile activity. It must be:

Satisfying: Whether called learning or play, it must be meaningful in a pleasurable way. When something is boring or unpleasant, we stop playing—and learning.

Intentional: Teachers must think strategically about how to deeply engage students in meeting specific learning goals.

Problem-Solving: Authentic problem-solving requires students to draw on prior knowledge and experience to strategize, experiment, and then evaluate their results.

“What I’m teaching are carefully, thoughtfully structured lessons that are going to invite higher-order thinking—and they are virtually indistinguishable from play in the most profound sense,” says Hynes-Berry.

In one professional development session with StoryBus, a program launched by the Dolores Kohl Education Foundation that helps teachers develop richer literacy experiences for their students, Hynes-Berry demonstrated SIP activities related to “The Little Red Hen.”

Learn more about
Hynes-Berry’s book
at [www.erikson.edu/
hynesberrybook](http://www.erikson.edu/hynesberrybook).

Separating the teachers into groups, she gave one group beans, glue, and construction paper and told them to create a picture related to the story. Another group was given pots and pans and medicine bottles covered with contact paper and told to perform a

song. A third group had to act out the story using only nonsense words.

The teachers looked at the hodgepodge of materials on their tables, then each other.

“They were like, ‘What is she thinking? She can’t be serious!’” Hynes-Berry laughs, remembering their faces. To the teachers, the activity itself may have looked like a somewhat ridiculous arts-and-crafts activity, but time and again, Hynes-Berry has seen how carefully constructed activities inspire the participants to think deeply and creatively.

“They’re given odd challenges and very limited resources, but they do absolutely astonishing, delightful things.”

One teacher had never attended a professional development session where she was invited to come up with her own solution. “I can’t believe you told us to make music but didn’t tell us how,” she told Hynes-Berry. Afterward, she expressed the satisfaction of meeting the challenge.

Hynes-Berry hopes to inspire even more teachers with her book. From her perspective, the consequences of not bringing wonder, conversation, and serious play into the classroom are high.

“There will not be any creative or innovative thinking as long as problem-solving is not at the center of our schools, and we will be a nation at-risk.” **ii**

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.

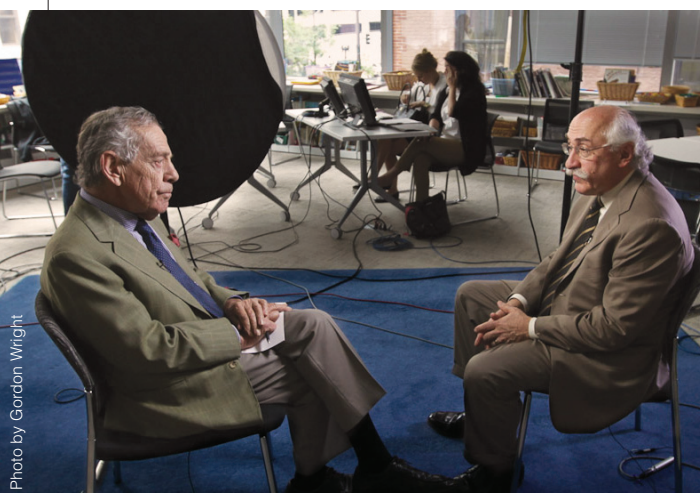


Photo by Gordon Wright

Must-see TV

President Samuel J. Meisels was featured on the CBS news show *60 Minutes* in March. Host Morley Safer interviewed him on the rising trend of “redshirting,” or delaying kindergarten until children are six years old.

Meisels cautioned that the research is divided on the value of redshirting. He also stated that it can contribute to greater inequity, as many families cannot afford to send their kids to a private preschool for the year they are held out.

Watch the segment at www.erikson.edu/60minutes.

Homecoming

Barbara Bowman, the Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Development, is leaving Chicago Public Schools after serving eight years as its chief early childhood education officer. During her tenure, she devoted 60 percent of her time to CPS and the remainder to Erikson.

Bowman made significant strides toward increasing the quality of Chicago’s early childhood classrooms. Among her greatest accomplishments was successfully advocating for investments in early childhood, gaining \$10.5 million in

Morley Safer interviews President Samuel J. Meisels in Erikson’s Teacher Resource Room.

research grants to improve teaching.

At the April Chicago Board of Education meeting announcing Bowman’s departure, board members read letters from President Barack Obama, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

An excerpt from Secretary Duncan’s letter captures the general sentiment:

“On behalf of America’s schoolchildren and parents, policymakers and educators, I congratulate you and thank you for your lifetime of work in early learning.”

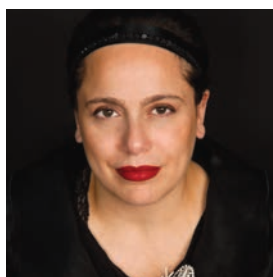
Bowman resumes her full-time faculty position at Erikson on June 30, 2012. In addition to teaching, she will focus on the development of special research and community engagement projects.



From left: Samuel J. Meisels, Heidelise Als, and T. Berry Brazelton

On board for young children

Ikram Saman Goldman, owner of Ikram, a women's fashion boutique in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood, joined Erikson's Board of Trustees in March. *Chicago Magazine* recently named her one of Chicago's 100 most powerful people, describing her as "the most influential fashion player in town." Goldman and her husband, Joshua, have twin three-year-old sons.



Caps and gowns

At Erikson's 45th commencement ceremony in May, 91 graduates received their master's degrees in child development or early childhood education, and one a doctoral degree in child development.

Honorary doctorates were awarded to **T. Berry Brazelton**, clinical professor of pediatrics emeritus at Harvard Medical School, and **Heidelise Als**, director of neurobehavioral infant and child studies at Children's Hospital Boston.

Dr. Brazelton issued a challenge to the graduates: "Your mission is to ensure that all children that you have a chance to interact with grow up to be adults who have the resilience to cope with adversity, to strengthen their communities, to participate actively in civic life, to steward our fragile planet's limited resources, and [to] nurture the next generation to be prepared to do the same."

In her commencement address, Als reminded students that they will shape future generations. "Children and families everywhere, professionals and politicians, will count on you; you will be in the right place at the right time; which will always be 'the here' and 'the now,'" she says.

It's Erikson and it's online

That's the tagline for Erikson's online degree and certificate programs, but it applies to much more at Erikson these days.

In March, Erikson launched the TEC Center, which stands for Technology in Early Childhood, under the leadership of **Chip Donohue**. Created with the support of The Boeing Company, the Center empowers early childhood educators to thoughtfully and appropriately use technology in the classroom and other early childhood settings. Learn more at www.teccenter.erikson.edu.

Also in March, **Jennifer S. McCray** and **Jie-Qi Chen** of the Early Mathematics Education Project presented for a U.S. Department of Education webinar on early math. **Jana Fleming**, director of the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy, and **Chris Maxwell**, director of the New Schools Project, are featured in the PreK–3rd Grade National Work Group's webinar series, Reducing the Achievement Gap by 4th Grade: The PreK–3rd Approach in Action, which runs through the end of 2012.

Valuing reading and singing

A new study by **Professor Pamela Epley** quantifies the value of typical home activities, such as reading and singing, for children with special needs.

To be exact, when parents of children under school age increased the frequency of these activities by approximately one-third, their children scored 8%–9% higher on later reading and math assessments. However, caring for a child with special needs can often leave parents with little time or energy for reading, singing, or other activities that promote learning.

Epley finds important implications for early intervention practitioners and other professionals who support children with special needs and their families. The study suggests that practitioners should affirm the value of parents' interactions with their children and help the family receive needed support services—from counseling to connecting them to a local children's playgroup—even if the services seem to be unrelated to the child. If parents' needs are met, they may be able to engage more with their children.

The study is based on an analysis of The Early Childhood

Longitudinal Study–Birth cohort. The study sample was comprised of approximately 200 children with special needs.

Rethinking high school

The high school experience must change to include a variety of learning opportunities and outside-of-school partners, says **Professor Robert Halpern** in a new report.

Published by The Nellie Mae Education Foundation, *It Takes a Whole Society: Opening Up the Learning Landscape in the High School Years* calls for shifting from a one-size-fits-all approach

to high school education to a diverse set of learning experiences, blending both academic and applied learning.

"The structure of learning during the high school years in the United States urgently needs re-thinking," says Halpern. "We must begin to organize learning so that all young people have the chance to access vital, rich learning experiences that benefit them now and prepare them for their futures."

Such change would require the participation of a variety of institutions and sectors of society, argues Halpern. High schools should provide a bridge to the adult world by introducing occupations and work, offer real tasks with real consequences, and link students' personal experience to something larger.

Download a PDF of the report at www.erikson.edu/rethinkHS.



Playing for a good cause

More than 300 friends of Erikson turned out to dine, dance, and support young children at Erikson's annual benefit, **play ball**, on May 11.

The event raised more than \$630,000 and honored **Joseph A. Gregoire**, regional president, Illinois banking, PNC Bank, for his support of PNC's Growing up Great Program, a \$350 million investment in young children, and his involvement with a number of civic organizations that support children and families.

"In my eyes, Erikson has always stood for one thing—the education of children," said Gregoire. "It was among the first to recognize the importance of our earliest years to later achievement in life, and it has been a nationwide leader in early childhood education for more than 45 years."

"I am honored to receive this Spirit of Erikson Award and to be in the distinguished company of past awardees."

Trustee **Ed Loeb** and his wife **Courtney** chaired the event.



From left: Ed and Courtney Loeb, Samuel J. Meisels, Kate Neisser, and Joseph A. Gregoire



Fussy Baby Albuquerque Metro

An affiliate of Fussy Baby Network
Erikson Institute

Welcome to the family!

Erikson's Fussy Baby Network welcomed its eighth national partner site in Albuquerque, New Mexico. With the new site, Fussy Baby Network is piloting a new approach to establishing partners, a process it calls "infusion."

The first sites were started to train infant and family service programs to provide the Fussy Baby Network's home visitation services and phone support for parents of children with excessive crying, sleeping, or feeding issues. In contrast, the Fussy Baby Network is partnering in Albuquerque with FOCUS, a program operated by the University of New Mexico, to infuse the existing services with the Fussy Baby approach.

Housed in the university's Center for Development and Disability, FOCUS provides home-visitation and case management services to vulnerable families. Its staff works long-term with families to provide them with support and education for their children's developmental issues.

Ybeth Iglesias, a FOCUS program manager, says, "We chose to become an infusion site because the Fussy Baby Network approach nicely parallels our mindset, and it also provides some great tools for improving how we work."

The FOCUS staff has found that adopting the Fussy

Baby Network's model for home visits has helped them operationalize their skills and techniques. Giving a name to each step—like empathic inquiry (listening with acceptance), collaborative exploration (thinking with the parent about the issue), and capacity building (strengthening the parents' competence and confidence)—and providing a logical sequence for when and how they happen heighten the staff's awareness and intentionality during visits.

"It's helped our staff to be mindful of where we are in that process and whether the parent is in a different place," says Iglesias. "So, if we arrive at the visit ready for capacity building, but the parent is at empathic inquiry, we can recognize that and then meet the parent where they are so we can move forward together."

Iglesias and the FOCUS staff finished their training in February. For the following six months, the Fussy Baby Network will provide consultation and guidance to FOCUS supervisors to help them support their staff in implementing the Fussy Baby approach.

For more information about the Fussy Baby Network, contact Executive Director Linda Gilkerson at lgilkerson@erikson.edu or visit www.fussybabynetwork.org.

Around the world

Erikson's outreach doesn't end at the Chicago city limits or the U.S. border. Several faculty members are traveling the world in the service of children and families.

In February, **Professor Jie-Qi Chen** visited Germany to give a keynote presentation at the invitation-only conference A Mathematics Education Perspective on Early Mathematics Learning between the Poles of Instruction and Construction. Chen argued that children have the greatest success when their interests and ways of understanding are supported and challenged by teaching practice. This leads to both teachers and students playing active roles in the learning process.

During each of the last four years, Chen has spent a month in China working with early childhood teacher educators to study teachers' knowledge across different content areas. She also is working with UNICEF and the Office of Preschool Education in China's Ministry of Education to help



A new face

Candace Williams, M.S. '08, M.S.W. (Loyola) '09, joined Erikson as the director of family and community partnerships within the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy. In this role, she will help communities develop and maintain supports and services for families whose children are facing developmental and educational challenges. Initially, she will focus her efforts on Chicago's Altgeld and Austin neighborhoods. Most recently, Williams served as the director of special initiatives at Positive Parenting DuPage. Her experience also includes serving as an educational consultant for Chicago Public Schools and facilitating training programs for youth, families, and professionals who live and work in



urban communities. From 2009 to 2011, she was an Illinois Early Childhood Fellow, a fellowship established to develop emerging leaders in the field of early care and education.

develop a professional development system for preschool teachers in rural China.

Professor Jon Korfmacher

has an ongoing consulting relationship with a home visiting program and evaluation in São Paulo, Brazil, sponsored by the University of São Paulo's Núcleo de Estudos da Violência. The program supports the healthy development of adolescent mothers and their children by helping them develop their parenting skills and receive needed social services. In 2011, Korfmacher was an invited speaker at an international home visiting forum sponsored by Núcleo de Estudos da Violência. The forum presentations will be published as a book later this year. **Chip Donohue**, director of distance learning and the TEC Center, has traveled to the New Zealand Tertiary College 12 times in the last eight years, helping the college design and improve its

online learning management system for early childhood professionals. The college delivers online programs in New Zealand, Australia, India, Singapore, and the Philippines. In February, Donohue was back in Auckland to share best practices and lessons learned from EriksonOnline and to discuss how best to infuse digital literacy into teacher preparation programs. He also spoke about the implications of the new guidelines for media and technology in early childhood programs, which were released by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media. Donohue co-chaired the writing team and working group that developed the guidelines.

\$15 million well spent

A partnership of 11 educational and nonprofit organizations, including Erikson, received an Investing in Innovation, or "i3," grant of \$15 million over five years from the U.S. Department of Education.

The partnership will implement the Child-Parent Center

(CPC) education program, one of the nation's most comprehensive early childhood interventions, in six school districts and 33 sites in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. An estimated 9,000 children ages three to nine will be served. The CPC education program provides intensive educational and family-support services for children in low-income families and high-poverty neighborhoods.

Chris Maxwell, director of Erikson's New Schools Project, will develop a pre-kindergarten to third-grade professional development system for participating sites. **Professor Barbara Bowman** is a co-principal investigator, and **President Samuel J. Meisels** sits on the advisory committee.

The project was developed by the Human Capital Research Collaborative, a partnership between the University of Minnesota and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, and its partners.

Innovation Fund moves early childhood field forward

Four recent grants from the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Faculty Innovation Fund will enable Erikson’s faculty to advance the field of early childhood development—advancements that will translate to improvements in services and policy affecting children and families.



Top to bottom: Pamela Epley, Gillian McNamee, and Tracy Moran

Building teacher/parent partnerships
Early childhood teachers in inclusive classrooms—where students with and without special needs learn together—can feel unprepared to work with students with disabilities and their parents. Yet strong partnerships between parents and teachers can help young children with disabilities reach their potential. **Professor Pamela Epley** is examining general pre-kindergarten teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to partnering with parents of children with disabilities. She will then develop strategies for supporting teachers’ ability to establish strong partnerships.

Teacher preparation
As the challenges faced by teachers continue to evolve, so too must Erikson’s teacher education program. With the help of the Innovation Fund Award, **Professor Gillian McNamee** and the teacher education faculty will collect data on how effectively Erikson’s teacher education program has been preparing students for the teaching-learning challenges they face in their practice settings. Faculty will use the information to identify areas where the program can be strengthened and how Erikson can stay responsive to changes in the teaching profession.

International adoption
New parents sometimes joke about needing a how-to manual for their children. With international adoptions, especially those involving children with special needs, the need for support is even more critical. Families who have recently adopted a child into their

homes often don’t know where to turn for help during this period of major adjustment. **Professor Tracy Moran** and **Dr. Larry Gray**, medical director of both Erikson’s Center for Children and Families and the University of Chicago Adoption Center (UCAC) at Comer Children’s Hospital, are collaborating to develop a series of supports for these families, including online resources, discussion groups, and a handbook. The handbook will identify Chicago-area and online resources and mental health information created specifically for these families.

Assessment of Parenting Tool
Professor Tracy Moran has also developed a new measure of parenting self-efficacy—that is, how well you think you’re doing as a parent and how good you feel about your performance in the role—called the Assessment of Parenting Tool (APT). The grant will enable Moran to refine and validate the tool and pilot it with 100 culturally diverse new parents recruited from maternity wards and pediatric clinics. Moran’s ultimate goal is to examine the link between maternal depression, self-efficacy, and parents’ interaction with their very young children.

McCormick Math Minute

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

Icebergs to inches: The math of penguins

Laura Miller and her preschoolers at Dr. Jorge Prieto Math and Science Academy in Chicago's Belmont-Cragin neighborhood read *Penguins!* by Anne Schreiber. The children wondered, "Are we taller or shorter than an emperor penguin?" With that, they began their exploration of linear measurement and comparative size.

Penguins! states that the average height of an emperor penguin is about 44 inches. Using a measuring tape, the students marked that height on butcher paper taped to the wall. They then worked together to ensure that a penguin shadow—created by an overhead projector and toy penguin—matched the mark. Along the way, the students visually compared the height of the shadow to the mark on the butcher paper, saying, "We have to make it bigger" and "Not that big!" They then compared their own heights to the penguin's shadow, saying,

"I am the same size as the penguin" or "I am a little bit taller."

Miller asked her students, "How else can we measure the penguin?" "Books!" said one student. But the class soon realized that books weren't all the same size, which made measuring with them difficult. Another student said, "We can use blocks; they're the same size!" Stacking the classroom's blocks showed that eight rectangle blocks or 16 square blocks equal an average penguin's height. A student even pointed out that the number of squares is double that of rectangles, as two squares equal a rectangle.

Penguins—and a thoughtful teacher—had given the students a greater understanding of key concepts in foundational mathematics.

**"Are we taller
or shorter than an
emperor penguin?"**



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.



Host your event at Erikson

Whether you're planning a large conference, staff retreat, or reception, Erikson can accommodate your needs. Erikson's striking modern building is state-of-the-art, convenient, and affordable. To learn about options and availability, contact Matthew Zaradich at (312) 893-7171 or mzaradich@erikson.edu.

Alumni survey

Watch your inbox for an alumni survey later this year.

The survey seeks to gather information on the scope and impact of Erikson alumni's work and to identify emerging issues in the field.

The data will help Erikson refine and expand academic and professional development programs, prepare for reaccreditation, and raise funds for more scholarships and other Erikson initiatives.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Good work

Michael Olenick, M.Ed. '78, recently became president of Child Care Aware of America, which was formerly the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, or NACCRRA.

Jim Gill, M.Ed. '93, released a new CD and DVD, *Music Play for Folks of All Stripes*, which was named a 2012 Notable Children's Recording by the American Library Association. The criteria for the award state that the recording must respect young people's intelligence and imagination, exhibit venturesome creativity, and reflect and encourage the natural interest of children.

Dorothy Cole-Gray, M.Ed. '97, was named 2012 Administrator of the Year by the National Head Start Association. The award celebrates local program leaders who provide exemplary direction and leadership to their Head Start or Early Head Start Programs. Cole-Gray is the senior operations director for children's services at the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago.

Kristin Peters, M.Ed. '01, a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, shares her journey to the religious community in a video at www.fspa.org/called. Peters ministers at the La Crosse County Jail in Wisconsin and YWCA's Ruth House, a home for women recovering from addictions.

Angela Searcy, M.S. '02, has been chosen as a professional development coach for The Ounce of Prevention Fund Professional Development Initiative. She will implement training, coaching, and reflective practice groups.

Brian Daniels, M.S. '09, earned a master's degree and is working on a doctorate in clinical psychology (child/adolescent) from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. He is completing his therapy practicum at Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital—Adolescent Partial Program, and his advanced therapy practicum will be at the Orthogenic School at the University of Chicago.

Kevin O'Brien, M.S. '09, recently accepted the director position at Mary Meyer School, a play-based preschool serving three- and four-year-olds in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. The school, which is fully licensed, NAEYC-accredited, and nonprofit, offers morning and afternoon sessions that each accommodate 18 children under the care of three teachers.



Investing in young children

*A conversation with Pam Howell-Beach
CEO, Stranahan Foundation*

Last fall, the Stranahan Foundation awarded Erikson's New Schools Project a \$150,000 grant that will support partnerships with the teachers and administration of nine Chicago Public Schools, including two new partner schools in Chicago's Austin neighborhood.



The grant will also help support the New Schools Project's work to create a citywide community of teachers dedicated to a high-quality and coordinated pre-kindergarten through third-grade education.

We talked with **Pam Howell-Beach**, CEO, Stranahan Foundation, about the grant. The foundation, established in 1944 by brothers Frank D. and Robert A. Stranahan, was originally housed under the auspices of the family business, Champion Spark Plug. The business was sold in the

late 1980s, but the foundation continues to be based in Toledo, Ohio.

Why does the Stranahan Foundation support early childhood initiatives?

Howell-Beach: The foundation launched its Early Childhood Initiative in 2011, as trustees felt a growing excitement around the opportunities to improve learning outcomes for young children and the potentially life-changing implications for disadvantaged populations. We were convinced by the research that the quality of teaching and adult/child

interactions are central to impacting children's learning and development. We also saw that aligning pre-kindergarten through third-grade learning experiences is a critical strategy to sustain early learning gains.

What was the most notable thing you learned about early childhood?

Howell-Beach: Through conversations with early childhood experts, we grew to appreciate the complexities and challenges of this work. Teachers not only need a deep knowledge base in early childhood development, but also practical skills and strategies for translating that knowledge into effective classroom practice, often with culturally, ethnically, and developmentally diverse youngsters. The foundation trustees decided to invest in programs that help teachers meet these challenges and that support and nurture effective teaching. Our ultimate goal: powerful, high-quality early learning experiences that lead to improved educational and life outcomes for kids.

How did you learn about Erikson?

Howell-Beach: We contacted about 160 early childhood funders and experts from around the country, seeking their suggestions regarding promising initiatives. Several mentioned Erikson as a highly respected leader in the field, and the New Schools Project was specifically suggested as a program that might fit with our priorities. Erikson was ultimately one of 17 organizations invited to participate in the Stranahan Foundation's Early Childhood Request for Proposal process last summer and among the seven

candidates that ultimately rose to the top. The foundation is proud to include the New Schools Project and the pre-kindergarten to third-grade approach in its portfolio of early childhood investments.

Why do you support the New Schools Project?

Howell-Beach: Erikson faculty and staff possess deep expertise and knowledge. They also radiate a commitment to and passion for their work that is truly extraordinary and contagious. The New Schools Project's classroom teachers we met during our site visit also exuded that excitement and

dedication. Their enthusiasm for how the project has helped create a culture of collaboration within their schools and improve their teaching—coupled with their insights into how kids are impacted—helped convince our trustees to support the program.

As our early childhood consultant Sara Mead noted, the New Schools Project is an exceptionally robust effort that engages with schools at deep curricular and instructional levels. The project also establishes professional learning communities among teachers and administrators and creates a seamless, high-quality education for children. Our hope is that, through these efforts, each child is continually motivated and excited about learning and carries that with them throughout their lifetime.

The New Schools Project partners with principals and teachers in Chicago Public Schools to establish effective learning environments for children in pre-kindergarten through third-grade classrooms. Make a gift to the Project at www.erikson.edu/support.

Double your support

Erikson received a \$200,000 challenge grant doubling gifts to a new initiative that will create a community-wide system of support for young children in Chicago's Austin neighborhood.

"Schools can't do it alone. The entire community must join together to help children succeed," says **Chris Maxwell**, director of the New Schools Project. "Our partnership with the Austin community is one piece of Erikson's larger commitment to supporting all aspects of young children's development and growth."

At the invitation of Austin community leaders, Erikson and its New Schools Project are working with schools, community groups, and families to help create a collaborative early childhood network in the neighborhood.

Austin has one of the lowest per capita income levels in Chicago and an ever-widening achievement gap for young children entering school. Through the collaborative network, Erikson will help the community ensure that children are ready for school, support families, improve child care, and advance teacher quality.

All new gifts and increased gifts to the Austin Initiative or Erikson's Annual Fund made before April 5, 2014, will be matched by the generous donor up to \$200,000.

Make a gift now at www.erikson.edu/support.



Photo by Kathy Richland

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Erikson on Children
Summer 2012

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 adivitakopacz@erikson.edu or to Office of Communications, Erikson Institute, 451 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60654-4510.

Writers: Jeffrey Brennan and Anne Divita Kopacz

Editor: Anne Divita Kopacz

Design: Gerta Sorensen, Sorensen London Design

Photography: Steven E. Gross, Shawn O'Malley, Mike Paulucci, Kathy Richland, Loren Santow, and Gordon Wright

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12-824/7M/ADK/0612

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