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About Erikson

Erikson, the premier graduate school in child development in the United States, 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: to improve the lives of children and families.

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Cover: A student at a Chicago Public School that partners with Erikson's Early Math Collaborative.

Photo by Steven Gross

From the President

We devote a lot of time at Erikson to talking about attachment and separation, exploring how children form relationships and the role of these vital connections in development. As I prepare to leave Erikson after more than 11 years, I am reminded of the prominent role attachment plays in all of our lives.

As a researcher, one of the first things I learned about attachment was that it is a system. Babies don't make attachments all at once or to just "anybody." They make them in relationship to special people—people who are reliable, dependable, and trustworthy. Their attachments are formed over time—not through single incidents, but as a result of a long series of connections.

My connection with Erikson parallels this. Beginning years before I came to work here, my relationship with Erikson has grown and deepened and become more secure, stable, and enriched. I know that my attachment to the Institute and its people will endure long after I leave the office of president.

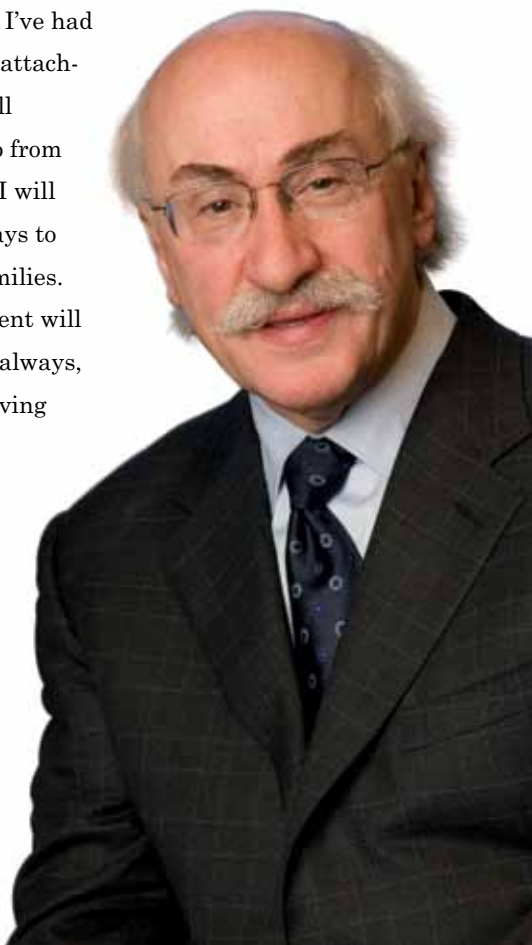
I have attachments to the ideas we debate, the campus we built, the students we teach, the faculty and staff with whom we work, the families and communities we serve, and the alumni, trustees, and other donors who make so much of what we do possible. Taken together they represent the whole of my Erikson experience.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I've had to be part of Erikson's story—its history of attachments. I'm also very excited about what will come next both for Erikson and for me. I go from here to the University of Nebraska, where I will use what I've learned at Erikson in new ways to improve the lives of young children and families.

For Erikson, the next stage of development will be exciting, challenging, inspiring, and, as always, transforming. I feel confident that I am leaving the Institute prepared to go from strength to strength, ready for a future that will reflect the success of its past while realizing the promise of ever more important contributions to the field.



Samuel J. Meisels
President





*Samuel J. Meisels, Erikson president
from January 2002 to June 2013*

Farewell, Dr. Meisels

While visiting the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute, **President Samuel J. Meisels** paused, sat on a child-sized chair, and opened his arms wide to a one-year-old orphan watching the visiting Americans.

The boy quickly climbed into Meisels's lap. "You could see that the two made an instant connection, even through the language and culture barrier," says **Fran Stott**, Erikson's Barbara T. Bowman Professor of Child Development and former dean. She traveled with Meisels and **Professor Jie-Qi Chen** to China in 2006 to explore program opportunities for Erikson. "Sam simply has a way about him that young children respond to."

Meisels soon will be making another journey, this one to the University of Nebraska. In June Meisels will become the founding executive director of the university's new **Buffett Early Childhood Institute**, which was established with an endowment of more than \$100 million thanks to a generous gift from philanthropist Susie Buffett and support from university, private, and federal sources. He leaves after more than 11 years as Erikson's president, a tenure matching the longest-serving Erikson leader, founder Maria Piers (1966–1977).

Under Meisels's leadership, Erikson grew from a highly respected institution to a robust engine of research, community partnerships, and graduate programs, all of which are continually evolving to meet the needs of the early childhood field. Meisels is quick to credit the faculty and staff's hard work for Erikson's successes.

"A person in a job like mine does very little by himself," says Meisels. "I've been fortunate to work with terrific people and to build on the strong history of accomplishment that already existed when I became president."



"Sam truly accomplished his bold vision for Erikson. The Institute is even more visible to and engaged with families and the entire community, with a beautiful new campus and outreach programs including the Center for Children and Families. I wish him much success at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute."

Virginia Bobins, '90, Chair, Erikson Board of Trustees, 1999–2003; Civic Leader

Energy, enthusiasm, and ideas

When Meisels arrived at Erikson in January 2002 from the University of Michigan, he was widely acknowledged as the leading national authority on assessing young children.

“I was ready for a new challenge, but I wasn’t interested in just being a college president. I was interested in being the president of Erikson Institute,” says Meisels. “Erikson was poised to increase its impact and

Erikson Leadership	
Maria Piers 1966–1977	James Garbarino 1985–1994
Joan Costello 1977–1979	Barbara T. Bowman 1994–2001
Bonnie Litowitz 1981–1984	Samuel J. Meisels 2002–2013

national profile, and I wanted to help move the Institute with all its strengths forward.”

Leading up to his becoming president, Meisels got to know Erikson well, as he consulted on faculty research for a year. Once settled in

Chicago, he moved quickly to deepen Erikson’s relationships with Chicago’s civic, foundation, and higher education leaders.

“Sam was on everyone’s calendar,” says Stott. “It was exciting to see how Sam’s connections, enthusiasm, energy, and big ideas contributed greatly to our growth in so many different ways. At the same time, he was still able to conduct and present his own research around the country.”

Perhaps Meisels’s most visible accomplishment is Erikson’s state-of-the-art campus in Chicago’s River North neighborhood—the first campus Erikson has



“When Erikson began the presidential search that led us to Sam, we made a list of the perfect attributes and skills for the position. We never thought we’d find all of them in one candidate, but we did in Sam. I thank him for his service to Erikson and wish him all the best.”

Susan Wislow, Chair, Erikson Board of Trustees, 2003–2006; Civic Leader



“There are only a few national spokespersons for the early childhood field, and Sam is certainly one of them. He never stops reading and thinking about how to improve the lives of children and families, and how to ensure that Erikson thrives as an institution and stays at the forefront. I can’t say enough about how productive his time as Erikson’s president was.”

Richard P. Kiphart, Chair, Erikson Board of Trustees, 2006–2010; Head of Private Client Advisors, William Blair & Company



From left: Dean Fran Stott and President Samuel J. Meisels conferring honorary degrees on Joan and Irving Harris in 2002. Irving Harris was a cofounder of Erikson.

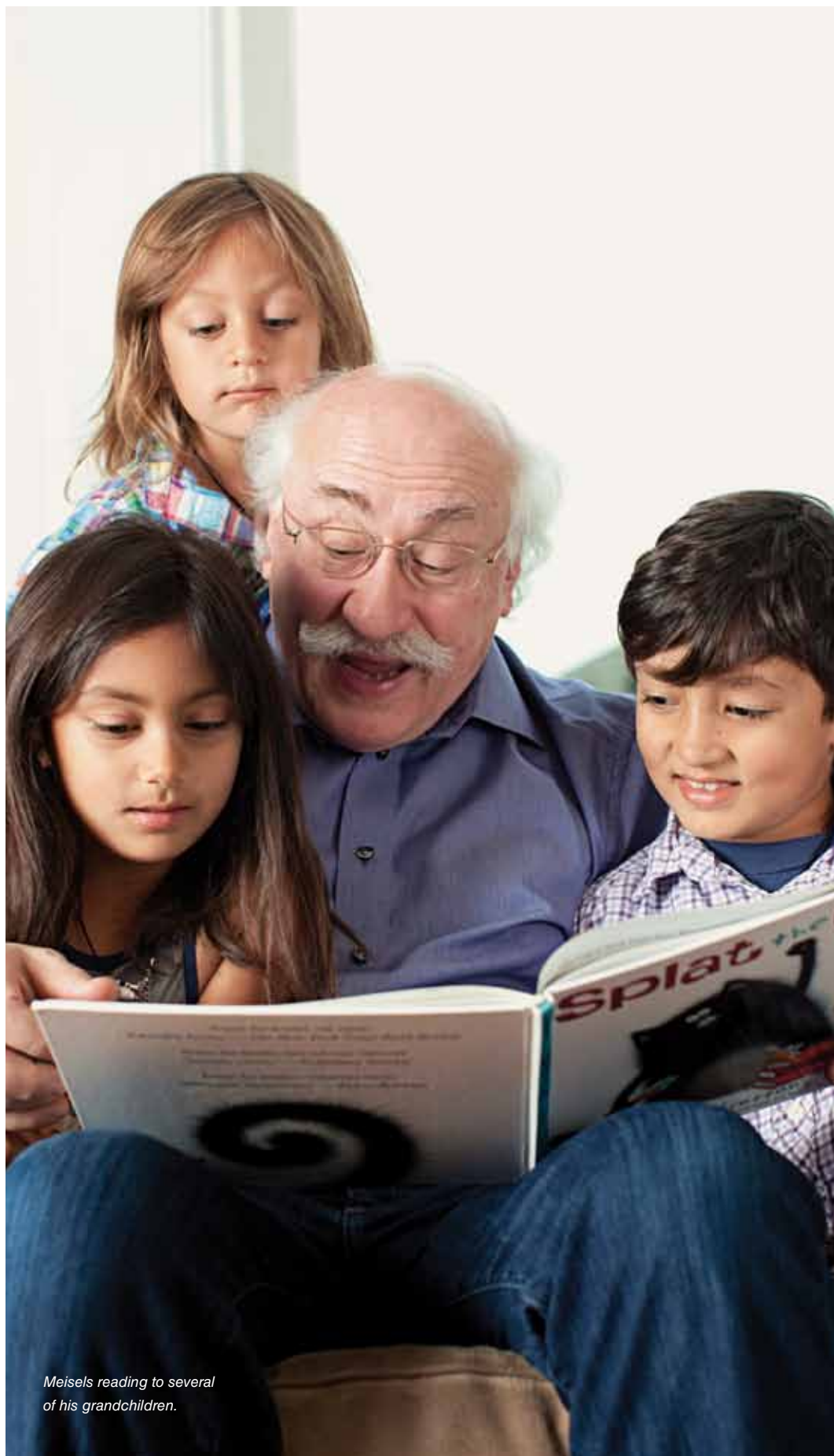
ever owned. Sitting at a high-traffic intersection, the glass-faced campus with its striking imagery of young children makes a clear statement about the importance of early childhood and the work Erikson does. The custom-built facility also was critical to Erikson's growth as it has enabled the Institute to serve more children, families, and early childhood professionals.

Meisels himself considers expanding the graduate programs while maintaining Erikson's high standards to be one of his proudest accomplishments. During his tenure, Erikson's student body more than doubled, growing from 120 to 300 graduate students in campus-based and online programs. Each fall, Meisels and his wife, Alice, look forward to meeting new and current students at a party held at their home.

"Without a doubt, it's the best night of the year for us. We love seeing how passionate the students are about working with children and families and hearing the enthusiasm with which they are approaching the challenging Erikson course work," says Meisels. "It's for them, our alumni, and the early childhood field that Erikson has maintained its commitment to offering the best degree programs in early childhood."

Meisels is also proud of his work in support of the entrepreneurial interests of Erikson's faculty and staff. Accomplishments under his leadership include:

- More than doubling funding for applied research and community-based projects. These initiatives have improved life for children and families throughout Chicago and invigorated Erikson's graduate programs and faculty.



*Meisels reading to several
of his grandchildren.*

- Greatly expanding partnerships with Chicago Public Schools teachers, administration, and students through the **New Schools Project**, **Early Math Collaborative**, and **Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy**.
- Establishing the **Center for Children and Families**, which over the past three years has provided comprehensive assessment and counseling to more than 1,300 Chicago-area families, including many at-risk children and families in distress.
- Establishing the **TEC Center** (Technology in Early Childhood) to empower early childhood educators to make informed decisions about the appropriate use of technology in the classroom and other early childhood settings.
- Raising more than \$50 million during a successful five-year fundraising campaign for the new campus, an endowed chair, fellowships, and special programs.
- Increasing the endowment by nearly 100% and completing two five-year strategic plans that provided direction as Erikson increased its visibility and influence on the early childhood field.

“Sam saw the beauty of what Erikson was and as president preserved the Institute’s unique identity as a practitioner-focused institution while growing it,” says Stott.

Leaders outside of Erikson also recognize the impact of Meisels’s leadership.

“He has done an incredible job of elevating Erikson’s reputation locally and nationally, and ensuring that Erikson’s work was relevant to children and families who are the most often marginalized,” says **Maria Whelan**, president and CEO of Illinois Action for Children. Erikson has partnered with Whelan’s organization over the years to train agency staff and evaluate key programs focused on serving very high-need children and their families. “I would describe him as an impatient gentleman. Polite, but on a mission to make a difference.”

Sara Slaughter, director of the education program at the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, agrees that Meisels is driven to effect change. “Sam is known as a national expert on the assessment of young children



“Under Sam’s leadership, Erikson strengthened its long partnership with Chicago and Illinois schools, agencies, and organizations. Erikson continues to transform the care and education for the youngest children throughout the city and state.”

Gerry Chico, Chair, Erikson Board of Trustees, 2010–2011; Chairman, Illinois State Board of Education; Senior Partner, Chico & Nunes, P.C.



“Sam fostered a spirit of innovation at Erikson, innovation that built on Erikson’s strengths—from its exceptional faculty to its highly responsive community programs. His legacy: a highly dynamic organization that is proactive in its efforts to effect positive change for children and families.”

Kate Neisser, Chair, Erikson Board of Trustees, 2011–present; Civic Leader

and Erikson’s longtime leader, but his greatest legacy will be his dogged insistence on doing what is best for children—no matter how difficult—and his ability to remain a true friend and trusted colleague even after heated debate,” she says.


Phyllis Glink, executive director of the Irving Harris Foundation, focuses on Meisels’s impact on children and families in Illinois. “Illinois’s early childhood community has relied on Sam’s leadership during the last 11 years to help build the systems and spark the reforms needed to support young children, especially those at risk or in need,” she says. “At the same time, Erikson has thrived under Sam and built on [Erikson cofounder] Irving Harris’s vision of helping give children the best possible start in life.”

Farewell, but not goodbye

With some bittersweet emotions, Meisels will preside over his 12th and final Erikson commencement ceremony in May, a few short weeks before he leaves to head the Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

Professors **Barbara Bowman** and **Fran Stott** will lead Erikson while the search for the next president progresses. Learn more on page 23.

“The most important professional experience of my life was being a kindergarten teacher. Second was being president of Erikson Institute,” says Meisels. “Everything else pales

in comparison to it. I will always be an advocate for Erikson, boasting to everyone how great it is.” 

Erikson is conducting a national search for its next president under the counsel of Russell Reynolds Associates, a leading global executive search firm. Recommendations or questions can be sent to presidentialsearch@erikson.edu.

Early math online

Websites are a dime a dozen, right? But a new Erikson website has value beyond most: it can help young children learn what the quantity “dozen” means and that a dime can represent a circle.

The **Early Math Collaborative** at Erikson Institute, formerly called the Early Mathematics Education Project, recently launched a new website at earlymath.erikson.edu.

“Our new name and new website illustrate Erikson’s ongoing commitment to supporting high-quality math education for young children—math educa-

tion that is practical, rigorous, inclusive, culturally aware, and developmentally appropriate,” says **Jennifer S. McCray**, director of the Early Math Collaborative.

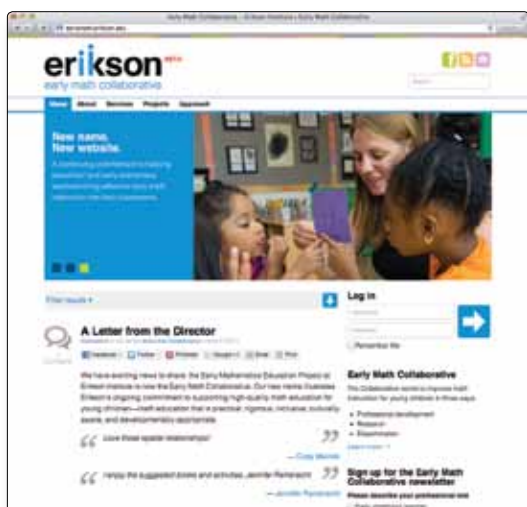
With the new website, the Collaborative is for the first time providing an online hub of early math resources for people beyond participants from its partner organizations, which range from public school districts to children’s museums.

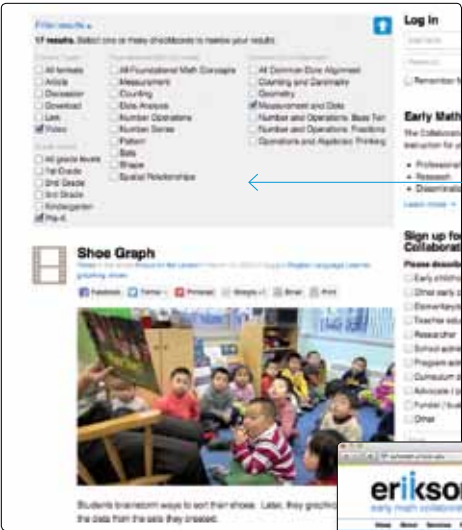
But this is just the start. The Early Math Collaborative’s new book, *Big Ideas of Early Mathematics:*

Teachers, parents, and others interested in early math have access to the Collaborative’s wealth of early math ideas, techniques, and materials at earlymath.erikson.edu.

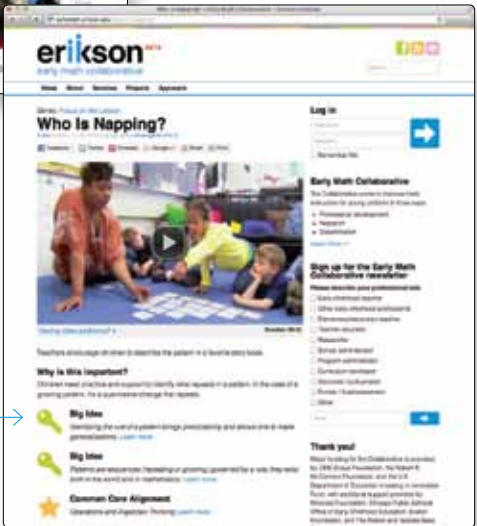
What Teachers of Young Children Need to Know (Pearson), is scheduled for publication in May. The book outlines a set of “Big Ideas”—central foundational math concepts developed by the Collaborative—and offers suggestions for how early childhood teachers can incorporate these concepts into their classrooms. Orders for the book are already coming in from community colleges, school districts, and teacher educators nationwide.

The Collaborative also was accepted into **100Kin10**, a multi-sector partnership seeking to address the shortage of STEM teachers in the U.S. and ensure high-quality STEM learning for all students. The goal: to recruit, prepare, and retain 100,000 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)





Relevant early math resources are easy to find. Everything is categorized based on math concept, grade level, and Common Core State Standards.



Each early math resource is accompanied by a description of its context and importance.

teachers in 10 years. To become a 100Kin10 partner, organizations undergo a rigorous vetting process conducted by the University of Chicago that reviews the boldness and innovative nature of each organization’s commitment to STEM and its capacity to contribute to the 100Kin10 movement.

All this good news builds on a history of growth. Since its founding in 2007, the Collaborative has grown from facilitating a single professional development project with Chicago Public Schools to a robust and complex group of professional educators and researchers working throughout the U.S. to improve math instruction for young children.

“No other program in Chicago provides prekindergarten through third grade teachers with large-scale, high-quality, and cohesive mathematics professional development that is not tied to a specific curriculum,” says **Jie-Qi Chen**, professor and principal investigator of the Early Math Collaborative. “Our entire team is ready to share our work with a wider population in and beyond Chicago.”

A resource for all things early math

The new Early Math Collaborative website supports all of the effort’s activities. On the site, teachers, parents, and others interested in early math have access to the Collaborative’s wealth of early math ideas, techniques, and materials. Each resource is connected to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, which schools nationwide are weaving into their curriculum.

“Our web content, which is rooted in our deep understanding of children’s learning and foundational mathematics, engages viewers by posing thoughtful

Major funding for the Early Math Collaborative is provided by

CME Group Foundation
Robert R. McCormick Foundation
U.S. Department of Education
Investing in Innovation Fund
Motorola Foundation
Chicago Public Schools Office
of Early Childhood Education
Exelon Corporation
The Robert and Isabelle Bass
Foundation, Inc.

questions and encouraging discoveries,” says Chen. “The rich information is cohesively organized, interactive, and user friendly.”

Videos on the Early Math Collaborative site feature children explaining their mathematical thinking—such as why a hexagon with its flat sides can’t be a circle—and examples of how teaching staff can encourage such thinking through targeted questions and activities. One video shows a child laughing with joy when she creates

six-pointed stars with triangles, hexagons, and diamonds. To reach this point, the teacher carefully supports the child’s exploration without giving her the answers and introduces mathematical language to the child. At the end, the teacher reinforces the math lesson: shapes can be combined and separated to make new shapes. Watch at www.erikson.edu/mathshapes.

Another video shows the moment when the class discovers the “growing pattern”—a regular increase in quantity over time—in *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood. After reading the book, the class charts how many characters appear on each page: one additional character per page. “It looks like stairs!” says one boy. Another chimes in, “It’s adding up. First there’s one, then there’s two, then there’s three. We’re adding one more to each [page].” The video, available at www.erikson.edu/NappingHouse, shows how the teacher structures the activity and the conversation to lead to math discoveries. A description on the site explains that recognizing patterns like this is one of the foundations for algebraic thinking.

The website also includes research and articles about best practices in early mathematics developed by Early Math Collaborative staff and others in the field.

Finding the right resource is made easy: for each video or article, there’s a brief description of its mathematical context and importance. Everything is categorized based on math concepts like counting and spatial relationships, grade level, and the six Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.

The site defines each of the Collaborative's "Big Ideas" and illustrates how teachers can incorporate these foundational math concepts into their classes.




The Early Math Collaborative's research on early mathematics teaching can be accessed from the website.

Participants in Early Math Collaborative projects use the new site to supplement their work with Collaborative coaches. After logging into the site, participants can access materials tailored to their professional development activities and any videos created as part of a one-on-one coaching process between the teacher and Early Math Collaborative staff.

"Between visits with Collaborative staff, teachers have immediate access to materials directly related to what they are working on with us, as well as a depth of other resources they can explore," says McCray. "It reinforces our work with the teacher and deepens learning."

Over time the Early Math Collaborative plans to add additional features and resources, including a forum for ongoing discussions around improving math education in the early years.

"We would love to hear your thoughts about the site and how we can continue to help teachers and others improve their practice in a subject we all care about: improving math education in the early years," says McCray. 

Erikson's Early Math Collaborative reaches hundreds of teachers, teachers-in-training, and teacher educators across the country each year through a variety of professional development services. Learn more at earlymath.erikson.edu.

Home on the international stage

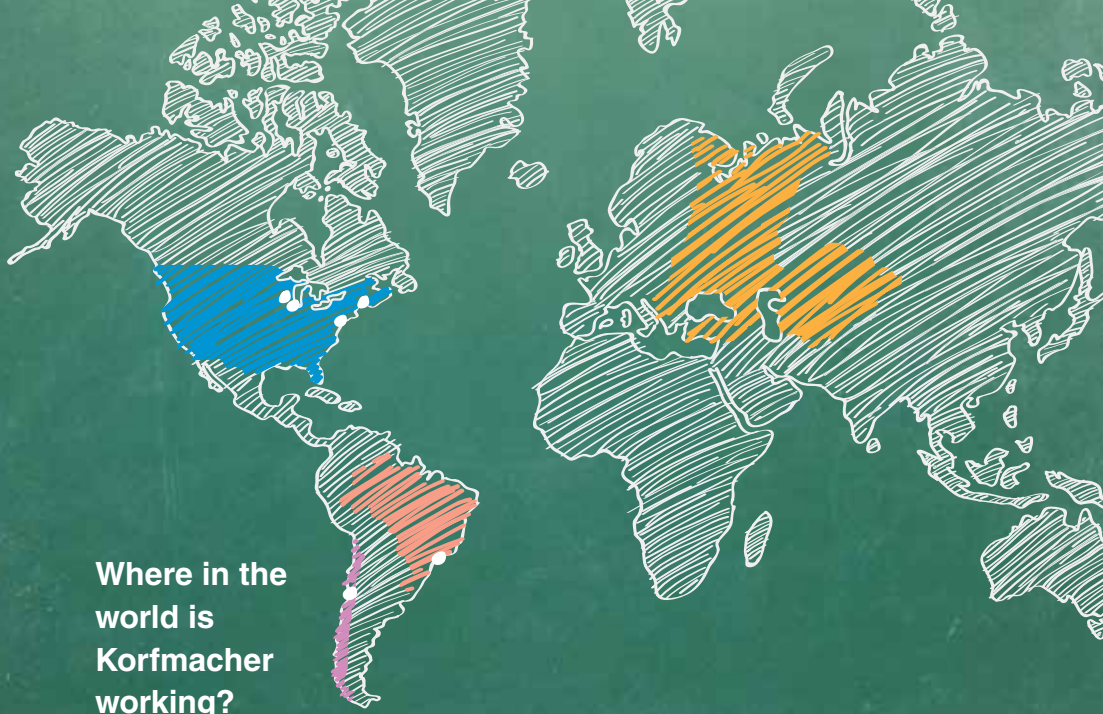
Growing evidence shows that well-designed and executed home visiting programs—in which trained helpers visit families' homes to provide information and support during pregnancy and early childhood—yield long-term benefits for children, their families, and society.

Yet, researchers sometimes refer to home visiting programs as a “black box”: outcomes are reported and discussed, but what happens inside a program is often less clear.

For the better part of 20 years, **Professor Jon Korfmacher** has worked to shed light on this. His investigation of home visiting programs has revealed new insights and led to the development of a groundbreaking quality measurement tool.

Having emerged as a leader in home visiting research, Korfmacher is increasingly tapped for his expertise by colleagues, governments, and non-profit organizations—both in the U.S. and overseas. We spoke with him about his latest endeavors and what's happening in the field internationally.





Where in the world is Korfmacher working?

One of your recent projects was developing a quality measurement tool with funding from the Pew Center on the States. Talk about that.

Korfmacher: Two colleagues from Wisconsin approached me with an interesting challenge. The home visiting agencies they worked with all claimed to have high-quality programs, but each had a different interpretation of quality. There was no standard tool to measure benchmarks of what makes a good program. Working closely with these agencies, we created the Home Visiting Program Quality Rating Tool, which is the first to measure program quality across multiple models. This is important for large agencies and states, which have never been able to monitor effectiveness across multiple program models using a single instrument. We hope that the rating tool will serve as an efficient roadmap to improvement for all of their programs.

I also had the opportunity to use the tool to assess birth-to-three home visiting programs in the Illinois State Board of Education's Prevention Initiative through the **Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy**. Following some refinements, the tool is now being piloted in collaboration with the Children's Trust Fund in Massachusetts. We'll make further tweaks and distribute it more widely.

Your international work has grown in recent years. What sort of global trends are you seeing?

Korfmacher: There is a big push toward evidence-based practices everywhere in the world. Many countries are looking to the U.S. and United Kingdom for

evidence-based models of home visiting, when it is not always clear how well these models can be transferred to other settings or cultures.

A program focused on improving home safety or the home caregiving environment, for example, may have to be radically adapted to fit environments where electrical appliances or printed materials are less readily available. There is also a huge debate about whether to go with what I will simplistically call the “U.S. approach”—home visiting for families most at risk—or the “UK approach”—universal home visiting for all families.

[Your first overseas foray was in Brazil. Talk about the work you’re doing there.](#)

Korfmacher: Three years ago, the University of São Paulo’s NEV Center for the Study of Violence was designing a home visiting program to support teen moms in the *favelas* [slums] of São Paulo, and they invited me down as a consultant and international advisory group member. In an intensive three-day meeting, I helped them work through some basic logic modeling—what they were trying to achieve, what outcomes they wanted to see, and how to measure those outcomes. I now travel to Brazil about once a year to consult with that group.

This led to the opportunity to address a conference of more than 1,000 home visitors in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, and most recently to participate in a meeting convened by the Ministry of Health in the country’s capital of Brasilia about establishing a national home visiting program in collaboration with multiple branches of the federal government.

[This led to work with Chile. What is developing there?](#)

Korfmacher: In Brasilia I met a Chilean researcher who arranged a meeting with Chile’s Ministry of Health in Santiago. They are trying to decide how to allocate scarce resources to home visiting and had a lot of very direct questions, such as how often visits should happen, what kind of supervision visitors should have, where home visitors should be hired, and how to measure specific personality characteristics.

Countries in South America may have home visiting models that are working well, but they lack established ways to document and share information and discuss common challenges. My colleagues are looking to form a Latin American Home Visiting Network and have invited me to be involved.

[What will you embark on next?](#)

Korfmacher: My world tour continues. The regional division of UNICEF that works with Central and Eastern European countries recently contracted with Erikson to create a “toolkit” with recommended screenings, assessments,

and curricula that home visitors can use in the region. While many of these countries have nurse home visitors, their work is narrowly focused—for example, monitoring a baby’s weight rather than health and development more broadly—and the region is struggling with maternal and child health outcomes. One challenge is that these countries are quite diverse, and many of

Assessing Home Visiting Programs

The **Home Visiting Program Quality Rating Tool** measures the effectiveness of programs in five areas:


- **Home visiting staff competencies**, including professional experience and promotion of child development and well-being
- **Service delivery**, including recruitment and transition plans
- **Program characteristics**, including program model and emphases
- **Program management and development**, including leadership practices and professional development
- **Progress monitoring**, including outcome measurement

the tools we might recommend have not been adapted in their various languages. The toolkit is currently being reviewed by an international technical advisory group that I am part of. Our future work will focus on developing practice recommendations for this region.

In the U.S., I’m working with the Home Visiting Research Network, newly formed out of Johns Hopkins University and supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration. We did a web survey

of thousands of stakeholders and came up with 10 priority areas to set the research agenda over the next few years. I’m heading a committee charged with bringing innovative methods into this research. I’ll also be leading the development of a “practice-based research network” where individual home visiting programs can participate in applied research focused on improving clinical services.

How has being at Erikson benefited your work?

Korfmacher: Erikson gives me the freedom to pursue this research and values that it is applied work with real-world implications. When I interviewed for a faculty position at other institutions 15 years ago, I had to spend a lot of time explaining *why* I wanted to do this work. Erikson got it right away. The Institute sees the relevance and the benefit of this kind of study for children and families—and for our students. I recently started teaching research methods, and the lessons I’ve learned have been good fodder for those classes. 

A recent Pew Charitable Trust report highlights key findings from 12 home visiting studies, including Korfmacher’s. Download the report at www.erikson.edu/pewhomevisit.

Building a community of learners

Before she starts group sessions with parents or child care providers, **Jill Bradley, M.Ed. '81**, covers the table with a piece of colorful, African-patterned fabric. “It draws people into the room and makes it a special place,” she says. “It helps break the ice.”

Knowing how to encourage people—and programs—to move to a higher level is the hallmark of Bradley’s 32-year career. And it’s what makes her so effective in her work with Illinois Action for Children.

“At the heart of everything I do is building community,” Bradley says. “It’s connecting people with people, and people with resources—all aimed at improving the quality of life for families and children.”

As a member of the agency’s Family/Neighborhood Partnerships Department management team, Bradley helped build social networks and programs to support families in Chicago communities like Chatham and North Lawndale. She moved into a new role March 1, focusing more specifically on parent engagement, but she still has a hand in many areas.

On any given day, you might find her running a parental leadership engagement group, training child care providers, or speaking to a local business association about community resources and childcare referral programs.

Supporting license-exempt childcare providers who are eager to improve their practices is a particular strength of Illinois Action for Children, and a goal Bradley is passionate about. She guides them in group discussions, works with them in model classroom and home care settings, and connects them with resources. Her work with the Chatham Cluster Caregiver Group, for example, incorporates literacy activities, professional story-telling workshops, and family scrapbooking.

“We might be these providers’ first foray into trying to improve their quality of care or seeking out activities to keep their children engaged,” Bradley



Photos by Loren Sanlow



Jill Bradley, M.Ed. '81
Parent Engagement and
Training Manager, Illinois
Action for Children

says. “It gives them a tremendous boost to be heard and to be treated as serious professionals.”

Another major focus of Illinois Action for Children is boosting parent engagement and leadership. Bradley’s team partners with organizations like the Chicago Housing Authority and the Department of Family Support Services to help parents take a more active role in their children’s development.

Besides acting as a sounding board, Bradley’s team nudges participants out of their comfort zone. For example, parents are challenged to seek out affordable learning opportunities within a two-mile radius of home, such as the beach and the library.

Other workshops empower parents to become leaders in their families and in their communities. The curriculum covers everything from management of family relationships to strategies for seeking leadership in their children’s schools.

And parental engagement efforts don’t end there. A new focus is on what are being called grandfamilies—grandparents who find themselves raising their children’s kids. They face a range of unique issues, from social to legal. “Often our main message is to tell them they’re not alone; others are grappling with the same issues,” she says.

Last year, the Illinois AfterSchool Network recognized Bradley with its Richard Scofield Award—presented annually to an outstanding afterschool professional—for her personal excellence, leadership, and contribution to the field. “Jill has that uncommon ability to connect with anyone,” wrote her nominator, “to inspire them to do their very best.”

Three decades of making a difference

After graduating from Erikson in 1981, Bradley ran the early childhood center at Olive-Harvey College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago. State-of-the-art classrooms with two-way mirrors and sound wiring meant that students doing their practicum could be observed at any time unawares. “This held them to a higher standard of quality and accountability,” Bradley says.

In 1990, she moved to the Chicago Housing Authority, which ran a handful of childcare centers in some of the roughest public housing complexes in the city. “Parents there didn’t value their children any less,” Bradley says. “They wanted the best for them.”

In often-difficult conditions, she and her team worked to raise the quality of the childcare staff. Many went back to school at Bradley’s urging; others

stepped down when they realized they weren't right for their roles. "The transition took years," Bradley says. "I can't claim better outcomes for the students, but the centers were held in higher regard; they were no longer places of last resort."

Before joining Illinois Action for Children, Bradley served for 10 years as chief program officer for the Carole Robertson Center, working with parents and childcare providers in the North Lawndale, Little Village, and Near West Side communities. During her tenure, the agency tripled in size, began serving infants and toddlers, developed staff in innovative ways, and reached out to more diverse constituents.

[Erikson: A seminal force](#)

As Bradley reflects on her professional path, she is quick to trace it back to Erikson. "Everything I've done has in some way been shaped by my experience there," she says.

Bradley started out teaching high school, but soon she began thinking more broadly about what would make her a better teacher and how she best fit into the education field. After taking a job as director of a child care center, she was encouraged to enroll at Erikson to get the knowledge she needed to be effective in her role.

"It opened an entire world to me," she says. As an African-American woman, she didn't have many role models in graduate programs. The Institute's supportive yet practical approach was a big draw.

"I knew sitting around a big wooden table talking about Socrates wasn't going to work for me," she laughs. "At Erikson, we were able to pose real questions and get real answers. We were seeking education that was relevant to our work, and that's what we got—knowledge that could be applied right away." [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.

Old friends, interim leaders

Professors Barbara Bowman and Fran Stott will lead Erikson while the search for the next president progresses under the counsel of **Russell Reynolds Associates**, a leading global executive search firm.

From **President Samuel J. Meisels's** departure, effective June 1, 2013, until the new president begins his or her tenure, Bowman will assume management for external affairs, and Stott will provide internal governance.

"We are thrilled that Barbara and Fran have agreed to lead Erikson in the interim," says **Kate Neisser**, chair of the Board of Trustees. "Both are beloved members of the Erikson community, and Barbara is one of the Institute's founders."

Meisels announced in October 2012 that he was stepping down at the end of the academic year. He will become the founding executive director of the University of Nebraska's new Buffett Early Childhood Institute.

Recommendations for the next president or questions can be sent to presidentalsearch@erikson.edu.



Professors Barbara Bowman (left) and Fran Stott

Serving on the home front

The turmoil of a parent's deployment or homecoming can stress and upset young children in military families. They may struggle with sleeping, aggression, or separating from a caregiver as they try to process the changes in their family.

With the support of a **Prince Charitable Trust** grant, the **Center for Children and Families** is offering free parent-child therapy services to Chicago-area families with children through the age of five affected by their parent's deployment.

The trauma-informed therapy will help these children deal

with the absence, the remaining caregiver's increased stress, and their parent's possible combat-related trauma, such as physical injury or post-traumatic stress disorder.

In addition to directly serving families, the Center has forged close relationships with Chicago-area military, National Guard, and veterans organizations, as well as child care providers and pediatricians, to share information on the unique needs of young children in military families.

Military families can contact **Cassandra Ward**, military families intake specialist, at (312) 893-7203, for more information.

Hot off the presses

Two Erikson faculty members are adding to the field's must-read list.

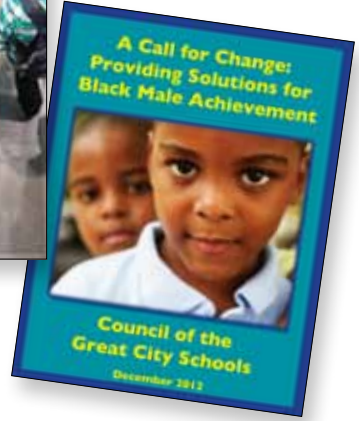
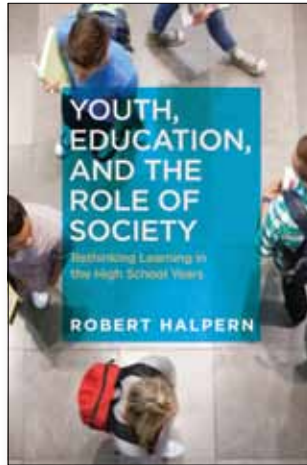
Aisha Ray, senior vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty, contributed a chapter to *A Call for Change: Providing Solutions for Black Male Achievement*. The ebook is part of an effort to provide concrete solutions for schools, communities, and policy makers to address the achievement gap for African American boys.

Ray states in her chapter, "The foundation for addressing the educational crisis of black boys must be constructed during early childhood," and proposes 12 actionable solutions based on what she terms "effective, evidence-based models."

She also points out the larger societal benefits of implementing these strategies for early childhood education programs. "[T]he crisis of black boys represents a larger American failure that involves too many of its children," she writes. "Addressing the crisis of black males will advance our nation's capacity to solve the problems of all of its youngest citizens."

The Council of the Great City Schools commissioned the book following a 2010 report that sought to draw attention to the poor outcomes of African American males in urban schools.

Download the free ebook at www.erikson.edu/callforchange.



In his new book, **Professor Robert Halpern** offers a sweeping critique of how we educate adolescents in our country. "High school learning as typically structured is just too fragmented, isolated, and abstract to meet young people's developmental needs," he writes in *Youth, Education, and the Role of Society: Rethinking Learning in the High School Years*.

Halpern suggests that learning in the teenage years needs to go beyond the school walls, requiring "a fundamentally different understanding of where learning can take place and the wholehearted participation of a variety of institutions and sectors of society."

The book, published by Harvard Education Press in May, explores what developmentally-appropriate learning

experiences look like for adolescents, including how other countries "structure learning" for this age group. With this foundation, Halpern is able to articulate the social and cultural challenges that must be met to expand the educational opportunities available to our youth.

Halpern's research and writing of the book was supported by a grant from **The Herr Foundation**.

Purchase the book at www.erikson.edu/YouthEducation.

Attention, global leaders!

Erikson is partnering with the **Clinton Global Initiative** to bring early childhood education to the attention of the world's business, government, and non-profit sectors.

Established in 2005 by **President Bill Clinton**, the initiative convenes global leaders to create and implement innovative solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

"High-quality early childhood education must be a top concern for business and other leaders," says **Jana Fleming**, executive director of the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy and an initiative participant. "Workforce development, social justice, and a better future all begin in a child's earliest years."

Erikson is a member of the initiative's **Early Childhood**

Education Working Group and has made two major commitments to action for 2012-13.

For the first commitment, Erikson and the **Child Care Services Association**, along with their partners, pledged to increase public understanding of early childhood teachers' critical role in helping ensure a young child's future success in school and in life. Fleming co-chairs this effort with **Sue Russell**, president of the Child Care Services Association.

The effort began by developing a set of key message points subsequently used in communications campaigns conducted by the partner organizations. Download the message points at www.erikson.edu/CGIcommitment.

For the second commitment, Erikson, along with the **Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media**, **The Ounce of Prevention Fund**, the **Public Broadcasting Service**, and **Sesame Workshop**, are advancing

quality early learning by promoting innovative technology and digital media. The effort will focus on empowering economically vulnerable U.S. families. The partners have formed the **Alliance for 21st Century Early Learning**, of which **Chip Donohue**, director of the TEC Center, is a member.

In June, Erikson will participate in the annual **Clinton Global Initiative America** meeting in Chicago.

Join us for Erikson Institute's **GALA** June 18, 2013

Certain to be THE gala of the year!
Honoring the Robert R. McCormick Foundation,
David Hiller, President and CEO,
with the Spirit of Erikson Institute Award

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Gala Chairs: Kate Neisser, Cari Sacks,
and Ikram Goldman

Tickets and information
Visit www.erikson.edu/gala or
contact us at gala@erikson.edu
or (312) 893-7118.





For the love of Fran

One of **Professor Fran**

Stott's favorite sayings may be "It depends," but at last December's Alumni of Erikson Institute annual meeting and dinner, there was no question about why more than 100 alumni and friends were in attendance.

They were there to celebrate Stott's commitment to Erikson, its students, and its alumni, and to the early childhood field.

Six speakers shared favorite stories, lessons, and "Franisms": **President Samuel J. Meisels**, **Professor Barbara T. Bowman**, retired professor **Joan McLane, M.Ed. '69**, **Deborah Rogers-Jaye, M.S. '04**, **Josh Abrahams, M.S. '11, M.S.W. (Loyola) '12**, and **Barbara Abel, Ph.D. '99**.

Jeanna Capito, M.S. '01, president of the Alumni of Erikson Institute, served as the event host.

Watch the event video at www.erikson.edu/aei2012.

Illustration and "Franisms" presented to Stott by alumnus Josh Abrahams

Erikson goes to the hospital

The **Fussy Baby Network** recently launched a partnership with two major Chicago medical centers, the **University of Chicago** and the **University of Illinois at Chicago**, to infuse its model for engaging with families, called FAN, into the universities' pediatric residency and fellowship programs.

"We have the opportunity to greatly strengthen medical education, starting in Chicago," says **Linda Gilkerson**,

professor and executive director of the Fussy Baby Network. "Doctors will have more ways to connect with families, and families will feel heard and understood, which research shows makes them more likely to follow their doctor's advice."

At many training programs, pediatricians aren't coached on softer skills like communication and empathy—skills that lead to better overall care for young children and families and that are the basis of the FAN approach.

With the support of a two-year, \$450,000 grant from the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**, the Fussy Baby Network will build the FAN approach into the universities' training curriculum. Over the two-year project, 83 residents serving more than 12,800 children will receive the training.

This project continues the Fussy Baby Network's strong ties to the University of Chicago. **Larry Gray, M.D.**, of the University of Chicago has been medical director of the Fussy Baby Network since its founding in 2003 and will provide pediatric leadership in this new partnership.

The Fussy Baby Network is also partnering with Healthy Steps for Young Children, a national initiative to foster healthy growth and development, to train pediatricians and their teams in the FAN approach.

Learn more about the Fussy Baby Network at www.fussybabynetwork.org.



McCormick Math Minute

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

Mitten math

Olivia Trevino's preschool class at John L. Marsh Elementary School, a Chicago Public School on the city's far southeast side, took advantage of the winter weather to explore picture books about mittens. Along the way, they learned important math lessons about sets, patterns, and data analysis.

The Mitten by Jim Aylesworth and *The Mitten* by Alvin Tresselt are two versions of the classic folk tale about a group of animals that try to squeeze into a boy's lost mitten. Other children's books, including *One Mitten* by Kristine O'Connell George, *The Mitten Tree* by Candace Christiansen, and *Missing Mittens* by Stuart J. Murphy, also play with the idea that mittens come in pairs.

All these mitten stories can inspire a lot of mitten math. At Marsh Elementary, the preschoolers began with a question: does our class have more gloves or mittens? To find the



answer, they followed a simple data analysis process. The children did a binary sort, dividing their handwear into a set of mittens and a set of gloves. They then counted how many were in each set and used their data to make a bar graph answering the question.

The next day the children found that the same collection of gloves and mittens could be sorted in many other ways. All they had to do was to change which attribute they used. The children sorted the handwear based by size, then re-sorted the gloves and mittens based on whether or not they had stripes.

They also used their mittens and gloves to make repeating patterns on the rug. Later, they used paper mittens to create patterns that they could glue down. Patterns are an important part of foundational math, as children who understand

patterns begin to recognize and predict repetition and regularity, which exists in math and in the world.

"Starting with interesting stories and using the mittens and gloves they wear every day really engaged the students," reflects Trevino.

Math is meaningful when it connects to children's lives—in this case, their own mittens and gloves.

The Erikson Early Math Collaborative, launched with the support of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, works with teachers to bring foundational mathematics to the early childhood classroom. Learn more at earlymath.erikson.edu.



Class notes

Ibby Seale Jeppson, '72, is the director of resource development for DC Prep, the highest performing network of charter schools in Washington, D.C. DC Prep currently enrolls 1,200 students in preschool through 8th grade on three campuses located in the most under-resourced neighborhoods in the city. In the next decade, DC Prep will grow to 10 schools. Ibby invites Erikson graduates to consider joining the founding team of teachers at the new campuses.

Benjamin Crabtree, M.S. '10, is a certified developmental therapist working as an independent contractor through Early Intervention in Illinois. He writes that he is “using music as a wonderful tool for positive growth and development.”

Laura Englehart, MS. '10, writes that she “continues to embed so many of Mary Hynes-Berry’s teaching methods and inspirations into her teaching of early learners. Thank you, Mary!!!”

Professional education online

This spring, Erikson offered its first *online* continuing education courses. The popular webinar series tackled issues relevant to early childhood practitioners, such as addressing trauma, including families with lesbian or gay parents, and engaging with autistic children and their families.

Stay tuned for more online offerings, which will provide the same high-quality instruction, challenging topics, and range of credit offerings as our on-campus continuing education. Learn more at www.erikson.edu/webinars.



Submit a class note

To share your news—such as a new job, an award, marriage, or a new family member—email us at AlumniNews@erikson.edu. We would love to hear from you!

Investing in young children

A conversation with Cari Sacks, '91

Erikson trustee and alumna

Last spring, **Cari Sacks** celebrated a milestone birthday with her closest friends and family. Her husband, Michael, had a huge surprise for her: he wanted to create the **Cari B. Sacks Scholarship at Erikson Institute** in her honor.

We talked with Cari Sacks about her graduate school days and the scholarship, which supports students who demonstrate the highest potential for leadership in the field of early childhood.

What brought you to Erikson?

After college, I was working in public relations, but I didn't find it satisfying at all. I really missed working in the world of children, which I had done all through college. I started researching graduate programs in early childhood education and discovered that the best school for what I wanted to do was right in my backyard. I was so lucky.

Tell me about your student days here.

I loved every second of it. Aside from the depth of knowledge I gained about young children and families, Erikson was a very nurturing place. My professors—including **Fran Stott**, **Joan McLane**, and **Barbara Bowman**—were very encouraging and made me feel very valued. When I graduated, the ceremony was in Barbara's backyard, and I walked down the aisle with my son on my hip. He was born in the middle of my graduate program and really gave a deeper meaning to my studies.



Photos by Loren Santow

Cari Sacks, '91, in the Kiphart Student Lounge at Erikson

What was your reaction to the scholarship in your honor?

It was the best gift I could ever get. I had asked people not to bring gifts to my party, but if they wanted, they could support Erikson's **Center for Children and Families**. Then my husband surprised me with the scholarship. I was very touched. It doesn't happen many times in your life that you get a gift

that will do good for others for a long time. It's really an amazing feeling.

I hope the scholarship will help attract the best and brightest people to the early childhood field by giving them the opportunity to go to Erikson and learn from the best. No one has ever gotten rich by working in the field. We pay the people
(Continued on next page)

who take care of our children the least amount of money, which isn't the way it should be.

Why do you support Erikson and by extension the early childhood field?

I believe that the work that Erikson does is the most important work, and that early childhood education is the key to a lot of society's problems.

Everyone is worried about the gun violence in Chicago and around the world, especially violence by young people. You have to look at the big picture and realize that this is not something that starts when these kids are teenagers. Often the problems start before these kids were even born. By the time they start school, some children are so far behind and don't have the support they need, they begin to feel hopeless. Eventually they drop out of school because they are failing. We need to help these children feel from the beginning that they

Announcing the Pelino Family Scholarship

Thanks to the generosity of **Margie Pelino**, greater numbers of Chicago's youngest students will share a classroom with teachers possessing a deep knowledge of child development and education.

Pelino recently made a \$1 million gift to create scholarships for Erikson students who are teachers in prekindergarten through third-grade classrooms, as well as those who are pursuing their early childhood teaching license. The **Pelino Family Scholarships** will be awarded to students enrolled in an Erikson master's degree program or the online Early Childhood Bilingual/ESL Certificate.

The scholarships will support students of color, those specializing in bilingual/ESL education or early childhood special education, and those who work or plan to work in high-need Chicago-area schools.

For more information, contact **Michel Frendian**, dean of enrollment management, at mfrendian@erikson.edu.

have promise and somewhere to turn, not a dead end.

Through its policy work and work in the community and in schools, Erikson tries to get kids on equal footing. This is so important. Early childhood is the key to making the world better for kids and eventually better for every human being.

Make a gift to Erikson in support of student scholarships at www.erikson.edu/support.



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.

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