

**erikson**  
graduate school in child development

# In the Service of Children

FALL 2007

*Kindergarten teacher Violetta Rivera introduces Bryan Monteil and Xavier Gomez to early math concepts of shapes and spatial relationships.*



# Mastering Math



In this newsletter, we announce Fulfilling the Promise: The Campaign for Erikson Institute—a \$30 million fundraising drive that will take our work to a new level.

For me, the excitement in this news lies in the word promise.

A promise is a commitment. From its very first days, Erikson Institute made a commitment to preparing professionals to give young children the very best start in life. We've never wavered from our cause, and with this campaign, we're signaling our intent to expand and intensify our efforts.

In another sense, promise connotes potential, and that's where the excitement comes in. Erikson has always aimed to help children achieve their full potential. Now we're launching this campaign because it's time for us to raise the bar for our own efforts.

We already do great things—but with long-term support from our friends and partners, we can do more. With a spacious, custom-designed facility, we can reach more students and offer them richer learning experiences. We can expand programs, enhance our research and policy work, and support faculty as they pursue new ideas and launch new projects. We can start new programs that serve children and families directly.

How can I be so sure that we will grow and expand our reach in all these directions? Because, in many ways, we already are. This issue showcases one excellent example: Jie-Qi Chen's ambitious project to improve the quality of early mathematics instruction in the Chicago Public Schools. With nearly \$1 million in funding from the McCormick Tribune Foundation and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange Trust, her team will provide intensive, yearlong professional development to 270 preschool and kindergarten teachers and coaches over three years. Every year, 3,000 young children in their classrooms will benefit from early, high-quality exposure to math. Over time, that adds up to large-scale, lasting impact.

I'm also confident because generous pledges from our Board of Trustees, the Irving Harris Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, and the State of Illinois have already brought us more than halfway to our campaign goal. Our aims are within reach, but there's much more work to do and support to be won. With your help, we can realize the promise of our vision.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Samuel J. Meisels".

Samuel J. Meisels  
*Irving and Neison Harris President's Chair*

## In the Service of Children

FALL 2007

*In the Service of Children* is published by the Department of Institutional Advancement for the donors, alumni, and friends of Erikson Institute. Send comments or suggestions to [tshears@erikson.edu](mailto:tshears@erikson.edu). Send changes of address to [address.update@erikson.edu](mailto:address.update@erikson.edu) or Institutional Advancement, Erikson Institute, 420 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60611.

Contributing writers: Toni Shears,  
John Counts

Editors: Toni Shears, Patricia Nedeau

Design: [www.faustltd.com](http://www.faustltd.com)

Cover Photo: Rubinic Photography,  
Chicago

© 2007 Erikson Institute. All rights reserved.

11-07/14.25M/07-429

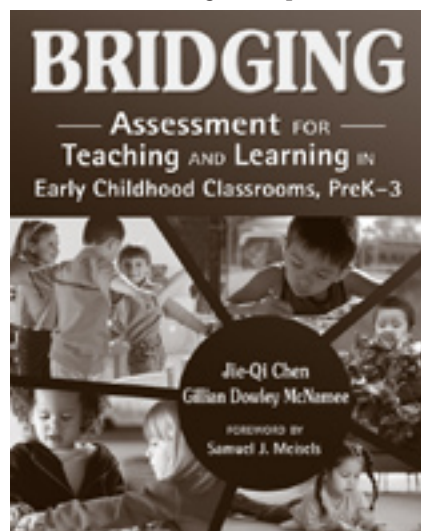
## Bridging In Book Form

Bridging—Professors **Jie-Qi Chen** and **Gillian Dowley McNamee**'s method of using instructional in-class assessments to refine curriculum and teaching—is now available to teachers everywhere, in a new book detailing their techniques.

*Bridging: Assessment for Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Classrooms, PreK-3* (Corwin Press, 2007) outlines 15 child-friendly classroom assessment activities that reveal not only what a child knows but his or her learning process across five curriculum areas. Guidelines help early childhood teachers use these observational assessments to examine teaching practice and modify instruction for optimal learning.

The book is the culmination of many years of research, development, testing, and classroom implementation of the method—and a true Erikson collaboration. Doctoral candidates **Ann Masur**, **Luisiana Meléndez**, and **Jennifer McCray** helped develop the assessment and contributed to the book. Erikson president **Samuel J. Meisels** wrote the forward for the text. Chen and McNamee dedicated the book to former dean **Frances Stott** in gratitude for her support of their work.

McNamee and Chen also published an article on Bridging that recently won the *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education's* Taylor and Francis Award for the outstanding article of 2006. Both publication in the journal and selection of the winning article involves rigorous peer review.



## Alumna Joins the Faculty



**Luisiana Meléndez**, '95, Ph.D. '07, has joined the Erikson faculty as an assistant clinical professor.

Since 2002, Meléndez has been an instructor in Erikson's Bilingual/ESL Certification Program. While pursuing her doctorate at Erikson, she has also worked as a research assistant in the Bridging Project; led an integrative seminar for master's students; and supervised student teachers.

A native of the Dominican Republic and an early childhood teacher for more than 20 years, Meléndez has considerable experience in teaching students whose first language is not English. Her interests focus on teacher education and the role of culture in the teaching and learning process. In 2006, she won a fellowship in a national leadership program that prepares Latinos for faculty careers in higher education.

In 2007–08 she is teaching two courses: Foundations of American Schooling, a core course in the master's in early childhood education program, and Bilingual Education and Methods and Materials for Teaching Young English Language Learners II: Reflective Practice, part of the bilingual specialization and certification program.

## Gilkerson Honored

The Illinois Association of Infant Mental Health (ILAIMH) honored **Professor Linda Gilkerson** Oct. 26 for her countless contributions to the field.

Gilkerson has played a key role in creating a workforce of professionals prepared to spot and address mental health issues among the youngest and most vulnerable. She cofounded the Irving B. Harris Infant Mental Health Program at Erikson and is the driving force behind many other efforts to bolster the awareness and skills of practitioners who work with infants and toddlers in Illinois.

A long-time member of ILAIMH, Gilkerson has been a major presence in both professional and policy circles, advocating to raise awareness of infant

mental health and working to improve the quality and availability of services. In just one example, a major study she helped lead revealed unmet needs of infants and toddlers with social-emotional issues in Illinois. Following up on that study, she cochaired efforts to develop the Illinois Early Intervention System's Social-Emotional Pilot Project with ILAIMH's backing in 2002. The successful pilot was expanded to provide infant mental health consultation and support to staff statewide throughout the early intervention system in 2004.

Gilkerson's Erikson colleague Professor **Frances Stott**, past president of ILAIMH, presented the award at the association's annual conference.

## Welcome Aboard

Erikson welcomes two new trustees who recently joined our board, contributing energy and experience.



**Eric Adelstein**

Partner, Adelstein Liston



**Sabrina Gracias**

Director of investor relations  
Valor Equity Partners



## Erikson in the News

Erikson expertise was cited frequently in the press and on the airwaves recently:

- **Toby Herr**, '82, executive director of Project Match, discussed the merits of New York City's proposed Opportunity Program on National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation," on Sept. 17. Like Project Match's Pathways to Rewards program, the New York initiative would provide financial incentives for parents and children to make positive lifestyle changes.
- **Samuel J. Meisels**, holder of the Irving and Neison Harris President's Chair, was quoted in the *New York Times* and interviewed on WBEZ Public Radio's Eight Forty-Eight show on the issue of kindergarten readiness. **Barbara T. Bowman**, Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Development, also talked about the topic on WFLD-TV Fox News in October.
- Professor **Linda Gilkerson** and the Fussy Baby Network were featured Aug. 20 in a front-page story in the *Chicago Tribune*. New Spanish-language services for families with fussy babies were featured on Telemundo in September.

For more media highlights, see

<http://www.erikson.edu/alumni.asp?file=newsclips>

## Thanks for Calling

Erikson would like to acknowledge our Thank-a-thon callers. These individuals generously volunteered their time to telephone donors to personally convey our appreciation for contributions made to Erikson in Institute 2007, and we are very grateful for their efforts.

Callers included: Kristy Amendola, Tonya Bibbs, Atena Danner-McPhaden, Abigail Duchatelier, Leslie Katch, Julie Minasian, Katherine Nagy, and Melanie Wiley.



**Visible progress:** Erikson's new home is going up fast at the corner of LaSalle Boulevard and Illinois Street. Our new campus will nearly double our space, providing room to expand programs and services. Move-in is slated for August 2008.



Guest speaker David Kirp (second from right), professor of public policy at University of California Berkeley, and Samuel Meisels chatted with Lew Collens, recently retired president of Illinois Institute of Technology, and his wife, Marge, at a talk opening the Herr Research Center's second annual Midwest Policy Conference. Kirp shared his views on the prospects for quality universal preschool with nearly 100 guests. After the talk, he signed copies of his book, *The Sandbox Investment: The Preschool Movement and Kids-First Politics*.

# thank you!

Erikson gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their recent grants. With this vital support, we are improving the lives of more children and families in Chicago and beyond.

---

## The Chicago Community Trust

New Schools Project—\$120,000

---

## CME Trust

Early Mathematics Education—\$242,000

---

## Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

Fussy Baby Network—\$289,182

---

## The Educational Foundation of America

Bridging: A Diagnostic Assessment for Teaching and Learning—\$131,000

---

## Forest City Enterprises Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Unrestricted—\$25,000

---

## Lloyd A. Fry Foundation

Vocabulary Acquisition and Story Comprehension among English-Language-Learning Preschoolers—\$44,000

---

## Grand Victoria Foundation

Professional Development in the Western Suburbs—\$40,000

---

## The Irving Harris Foundation

Fussy Baby Network—\$83,333

Harris Doctoral Fellowships, Leadership Fellowships, and Excellence Scholarships and student recruitment—\$548,330

---

## The Herr Foundation

Herr Center for Children and Social Policy—\$139,122

---

## Illinois State Board of Education

Highly Qualified Teachers Project—\$41,516

Prevention Initiative Mental Health Consultation and Training—\$50,000

---

## McCormick Tribune Foundation

Chicago Program Evaluation Project—\$125,000

Early Mathematics Education—\$200,000

Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy—\$255,000

---

## W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation

New Schools Project—\$150,000

***Don't forget to save the date!***

---

## 2008 Prism Ball

---

### April 12 at the Field Museum

Come dine, dance, bid on fabulous auction items, and support Erikson's work in the service of children.

Erikson trustee Cari Sacks, '91, and her husband, Michael, are chairing the event. The Spirit of Erikson Institute Award will be presented to After School Matters and accepted by Maggie Daley.

For more information or reservations, contact Magda Slowik at [mslowik@erikson.edu](mailto:mslowik@erikson.edu) or call (312) 893-7113.







Faculty

# Mastering Math

*Erie Elementary Charter School's Lindsay Cooper helps kindergarteners Mariah Baskerville and Raymond Spence explore patterns and shapes—important early math concepts. Cooper is one of 90 teachers and coaches participating in the Early Mathematics Education Project this year.*

Jay Rubinic photo

# Math is fundamental and fun—not scary.

**T**o make sure young children experience it that way, Erikson is launching a project to improve the quality of early childhood mathematics instruction in the Chicago Public Schools.

Headed by Professor Jie-Qi Chen, the intensive professional development program will bolster teachers' mathematical knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Nearly 300 participating teachers and teacher coaches will spend a year sharpening their math skills, implementing teaching techniques, and reflecting on how young children learn about math.

Early, engaging exposure to mathematical concepts has been shown to contribute to success in school later on, yet in recent years 123's have taken a back seat to the ABC's. "Mathematics hasn't been given as much attention as literacy, even though it's everywhere in young children's lives," Chen said. "It's very important to build an early foundation, to develop a natural curiosity about math. Once children are interested in something, it's so much easier for them to learn."

The best way to spark that mathematical interest is to have teachers who are skilled and excited about using math in early childhood classrooms, Chen says. And to introduce important mathematical concepts like number sense, patterns, geometry, and measurement, teachers need to be mathematically proficient so they are comfortable teaching the topic.

Too often, that's not the case. Research shows that teacher preparation in mathematics is often weak, leading to a lack of confidence and a reluctance to teach or talk about math, according to Jennifer McCray, '99, who is completing her Erikson doctoral dissertation on this topic.

Likewise, international tests of math skills have long shown that American students are falling behind their peers in other countries. On the Third International Math and Science Survey in 2003, U.S. 12th graders' scores ranked 19th out of 21 nations, ahead of only Cypress and South Africa. (Typically high-performing Asian nations did not participate in the 2003 test).



*Ted Lacey photo*  
James E. Oliff (right), vice chair of the CME Trust board of directors, joined trustees Howard Siegel (back) and Leo Melamed in presenting a symbolic check to Jie-Qi Chen and Samuel J. Meisels for the Early Mathematics Education Project.

If teachers know math, talk about it, and weave it into classroom activities, they will instill that kind of love for it in children.

Evidence shows that this achievement gap starts as early as preschool and worsens throughout middle- and high school.

McCray, now a research fellow and director of the Early Mathematics Education project, said growing evidence suggests that high-quality instruction in the earliest years of a child's education offers the best hope for boosting mathematics achievement among U.S. children.

A needs assessment Chen and McCray conducted with CPS early childhood teachers confirmed demand for better teacher preparation. "Teachers unanimously wanted more workshops on math," Chen said. "This program will make them feel more comfortable teaching math in an activity. If teachers know math, talk about it, and weave it into classroom activities, they will instill that kind of love for it in the children."

Talking about math is important. McCray and Chen said research

shows students are more inclined to acquire math concepts when the adults around them use math-related verbalizations, so the project will help teachers develop "math talk." Participants will also learn how they can integrate math in other areas of learning. Measuring and graphing activities, for example, naturally link math and science with young children's understanding of their surroundings.

To boost teachers' skills in all those areas, Chen and McCray partnered with CPS on a proposal and were awarded \$408,000 for the program from the McCormick Tribune Foundation, a major supporter of education and of Erikson's work. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange Trust, in its first grant to Erikson, also pledged \$500,000.

Each year, the three-year program will train 90 prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers in key math concepts and demonstrate how to bring these concepts to the class-





Jay Rubinic photo

Kindergartner Xavier Gomez learns about addition by counting blocks he linked.

room in engaging ways. Through onsite classroom consultation, the program will target teachers' individual areas of need and help them hone their skills to meet standards set by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Teachers will also be videotaped applying the new methods of math instruction with children and will view an edited clip highlighting their best practices. "We'll be asking teachers explicitly to look at what they have done in the classroom, and, more important, to see the children's response," Chen said. Jeanine O'Nan Brownell, '01, coordinator of the project, is spearheading this video component.

With a full academic year of professional development focused on math, participants will explore the whole spectrum of fundamental math knowledge and ways to teach it. Over the course of the project, nearly 300 teachers will filter back into the school system better equipped to introduce mathematics to an estimated 3,000 pre-K and kindergarten students each year from diverse backgrounds.

By drawing teachers from these two levels, the program aims to create continuity of learning, Chen said. Pre-K teachers will understand

kindergarten expectations and better prepare their students for them, while kindergarten teachers will have a better sense of what children have been exposed to math-wise the year before.

The benefits don't end with kindergarten, she added. With quality teaching and early exposure to math concepts, children will be able to digest more math in elementary school and beyond.

To maximize impact, the program is two-tiered. Project staff—including Erikson senior instructors Mary Hynes-Berry and Rebeca Itzkowich and doctoral student and research fellow Emma Whitman—will work not only with teachers but also with teacher coaches. Building coaches' skills will allow them to better support and enhance classroom teaching long after the project has ended, Chen said. She will collect data to evaluate the impact of the project.

CPS has embraced the project because it dovetails with ongoing efforts to improve math literacy at all levels. "After spending the last several years focusing on the topic of literacy, we're making professional development related to mathematics available to teachers," said Deborah Jobst, professional development manager for the Preschool for All Program. "Teach-

ers will benefit from the guidance of the Erikson Institute staff and CPS coaches. Students will benefit from the resulting math talk and activities teachers bring to their classrooms as a result of participation in the project."

Paula Cottone, deputy chief early childhood education officer at CPS, added, "The genuine partnership we have developed with the Erikson team reflects the high level of commitment of all involved to provide a high-quality mathematics professional development program. The project will insure that children are prepared for the Information Age." ■

—John Counts

## The Erikson Impact

9,000

children will benefit from improved early math instruction through Erikson's coaching over the next three years.



# Fulfilling the Promise

## The Campaign for Erikson Institute



*The Campaign for Erikson will give the Institute a permanent new home in a 75,000-square-foot facility designed for education, research, and child assessment.*

**I**N ITS FIRST FOUR DECADES, Erikson Institute has changed the lives and futures of hundreds of thousands of children.

As it enters its fifth decade of achievement, it is time to do even more.

That's why Erikson has launched Fulfilling the Promise: The Campaign for Erikson Institute, a \$30 million fundraising campaign that will take our work in child development and early childhood education to a new level. The campaign will:

- build a permanent home for the Institute—the first in Erikson's 40 year history;
- expand resources for academic programs that have been the centerpiece of Erikson's mission;
- increase available funds for student scholarships and fellowships;
- provide funding for community engagement and clinical programs;
- advance research and social policy efforts;
- support distinguished faculty chairs; and
- enhance faculty development and innovation.

Chaired by Erikson alumna Virginia Bobins, '90, and her husband, Norman, the campaign is well underway. A campaign steering committee made up of Erikson trustees and their spouses has been working throughout the past year to secure early major commitments from all 42 members of the Board of Trustees as well as other long-time partners who support Erikson's mission.

Collectively, the Erikson Institute Board of Trustees has made gifts and pledges totaling more than \$12.1 million. The Irving Harris Foundation pledged \$2 million and matched that with an additional \$2 million after all of the trustees made campaign commitments. The State of Illinois has made a \$1 million pledge. LaSalle Bank contributed \$250,000 and the Polk Bros. Foundation pledged \$750,000 (see p. 9).

One of the primary goals of the campaign is to give Erikson a permanent home. The new facility, now under construction at the corner of LaSalle Boulevard and Illinois Street, gives Erikson an easily accessible and highly visible presence in downtown Chicago. After years of renting—and adapting—space, we will own three floors in a

## The campaign will support richer academic inquiry, scholarships that make education available to more students, expanded programs, and Erikson's new campus.

10-story high-rise building with our own dedicated lobby.

At 75,000 square feet, the facility almost doubles the current space. For the first time, Erikson will operate an environment specifically designed for our educational purposes, with light-filled classrooms, a specialized library, spacious seminar rooms, state-of-the-art instructional technology, and areas for students to gather and interact. The facility also provides clinical areas for working directly with children and families—and room to grow as new initiatives emerge.

The Campaign for Erikson Institute will also endow professorships

that support deeper, richer academic inquiry and scholarships that make education available to more students who will serve more children and families. The campaign will create new programs and expand existing ones, helping the Institute meet demand from school districts, social service agencies, medical centers, and the courts.

Campaign funding will also support the development of clinical services and expand our existing research programs. It will enable us to build on successes in such areas as early intervention, literacy, assessment, and bilingual and English as a Second Language educa-

tion, making it possible to integrate isolated projects, launch multisite partnerships, and develop regional and national initiatives.

To grow in all these directions, the Campaign for Erikson Institute must press beyond the circle of those who know us well and engage more supporters who share our passion for giving children the best start in life.

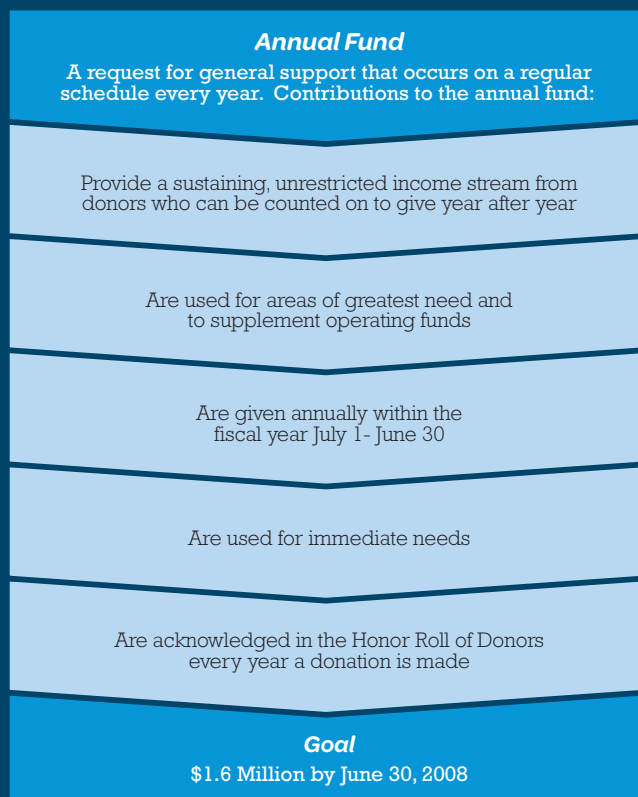
Supporting the campaign helps fulfill the promises made by our founders more than 40 years ago. We hope you will join us. ■

**For more information and campaign updates, see [www.erikson.edu/campaign](http://www.erikson.edu/campaign). To receive a campaign booklet, please contact campaign manager Debborah Harp at (312) 893-7114.**

### Campaign Explained

You might be wondering, why launch a campaign when Erikson raises money every year?

The answer is, both sources of funding are important because they meet different needs and goals. The differences between the Erikson Fund (our annual fund) and the capital campaign are outlined below.



**Example:** Recognizing the value of Erikson's work, a donor includes the Institute on the list of organizations she supports and sends a \$500 check each year.



**Example:** To support Erikson's long-term growth and expansion, a donor decides to supplement annual giving with a \$250,000 pledge over 3 years.

# Polk Bros. Pledge Continues a Legacy of Giving



*Polk Bros. Foundation president Sandra Guthman supports Erikson because "if you're going to invest in early education, you might as well go with the best in the city."*

## **W**ITH A PLEDGE OF \$750,000 OVER FOUR YEARS,

Chicago's Polk Bros. Foundation has become one of the first to join Fulfilling the Promise: The Campaign for Erikson. The gift is the foundation's largest to date to the school.

Polk Bros. president Sandra Guthman said the foundation is making the campaign gift for the same reasons it has supported Erikson's work in past: "If you are going to invest in early childhood education, you might as well go with the best in the city."

"Erikson continues to shine as a place that combines scholarship and practicality. It combines rigorous scholarship with the application of knowledge," she said. "Its work is both theory- and action-based. I think those two things reinforce each other."

"I also like that Erikson researchers are not afraid to go into the field and prove that they know what they are talking about by getting out and implementing programs in the schools."

Guthman said the foundation is the legacy of an immigrant family that came to the U.S. and was able to get an education, start a business, and succeed. The Polk Bros. chain of furniture and appliance stores was a fixture in Chicago for more than a half a century. The foundation it established in 1988 has become one of the city's most important philanthropic forces, giving back to the community in ways that offer others the same chance to succeed.

Guthman acknowledges that the barriers to that kind of immigrant experience are much higher today, so the foundation tries to lower them by supporting educational opportunities.

"Improving the quality of education is important to helping children

achieve full potential. Obviously, starting at age six is way too late," she said, voicing the view that launched Erikson. "It's critical to get children off to the right start from birth."

The foundation supports teacher education and professional development as the best way to reach the greatest number of children. "There was a moment of truth for us," Guthman said. "We realized there is a new crop of third-graders every year. Unless you want to keep on funding the same programs over and over, it's better to invest in the teachers' knowledge. The children still get the benefit, but the teachers carry the flame."

The foundation's long history of giving to Erikson underscores its commitment to fueling that flame. In 1989, just a year after its founding, Polk Bros. gave \$10,000 to launch Erikson's Bridge to Professional Leadership Program—an initiative that prepared minority child care professionals to seek graduate level training in early education.

Over the past two decades, the foundation has funded many Erikson successes: family literacy centers; computer training and projects to enhance the use of technology in classrooms; and Bridging, the early childhood learning and teaching program that has just been published in book form. The foundation also supported Erikson's 40th anniversary symposium, Children and Social Justice. ■



# Connecting East and West

Alumna directs multicultural preschool in Beijing

**H**ow do you prepare children to thrive in a world where cultures increasingly collide?

Kristen Armbruster, '06, wrestled with that question everyday as she spent a year in Beijing establishing and directing a new nursery school program at the 3e International Kindergarten. The two-year-old experimental school aims to meld the best of eastern and western educational approaches in a bilingual, multicultural learning environment that nurtures the whole child.

As nursery director, Armbruster developed curriculum for three classrooms with a total of 32 children, and implemented professional development activities for the whole nursery staff. She also was head teacher for one classroom.

"I was faced with figuring out what part of my professional and inherently western beliefs I let go of and which ones I held on to while trying to connect eastern and western pedagogies of education for one-, two-, and three-year-olds," she reflected.

"I started by developing relationships with the eastern staff and beginning to gain a basic understanding of their beliefs and ideals about early childhood education. Those are largely based on their personal experiences growing up in China," she said. "It was equally important that I convey my experiences and values of early childhood education as well, so that we all achieve an understanding of what we are trying to merge."

All the while, she was working across significant language barriers. In each classroom, the head teacher



Erikson required unyielding exploration of the cultural implications of my own beliefs of early childhood development.

speaks English; two Chinese teachers speak Mandarin. "In my classroom, we had fourteen children from nine different countries. Some two-year-olds were learning up to four different languages simultaneously. It was incredible," she said. "The language barrier was my biggest challenge. It is quite a feat to develop relationships with people you can't communicate with in the same ways you are use to."

The school itself has multicultural roots; it is a project of the U.S.-China Center for Research on Education Excellence, founded by the Hong Kong-based Sun Wah Foundation and Michigan State University. Drawing on

the expertise of partners ranging from Beijing Normal University to the Sesame Workshop, the 3e approach (which stands for explore, experiment, express) is designed to prepare children for a shrinking

world where differing values and traditions come into close contact.

Armbruster said her Erikson education prepared her well for the challenges of melding eastern and western cultures and educational traditions. "Erikson laid the foundation for this by requiring unyielding exploration of myself and of the cultural implications of my own beliefs of early childhood development," she noted.

"Erikson also gave me a safe resting place to process my past eight years of hands-on experience" as Head Start teacher, early childhood consultant, and parent educator, she added. "I am convinced that it is one of

the greatest places in the world to challenge yourself and grow both personally and professionally.”

In particular, her internship served her well in China. Working in an infant-toddler room at the Chicago Public Schools’ National Teachers Academy “gave me invaluable experience understanding early childhood development and education in terms of how it applies to a specific cultural community,” she said.

Her internship—in a program developed by Barbara Abel, ’99, with support of Patricia Husband, both adjunct faculty members—also gave her a model for leadership.

“It was a perfect situation for me to process all of the child development theories that we had been soaking up and grasp the meanings for myself and for real live children, families, and staff. I was fortunate to have one of the best teams of professionals anywhere to ‘hold’ me during the process. Probably that will be the most supported I will ever be during my early childhood career. I learned how it *should* feel,” she said.

Now back in the U.S. working at Michigan State University’s laboratory school, she said she’ll always take the extra effort to provide the same environment for others—in any country or any language. “Because of this incredible experience, I will continually strive to create a place for early childhood professionals to feel safe and supported enough to learn and grow and develop. I learned from the best—in this business it is definitely all about the relationships.” ■

—John Counts



**Fans of Fran:** Nearly 40 alumni turned out for an open house in honor of Frances Stott, celebrating her lasting influence and contributions in 28 years on the faculty and 14 years as dean. Retired professor Joan Brooks McLane, ’69, hosted the event in her home. Stott, the Barbara T. Bowman Professor of Child Development, continues to teach part time.

# Why AEI?

**G**etting involved in the Alumni of Erikson Institute is

- A)** a great way to network with colleagues from all corners of the early childhood world;
- B)** a chance to learn and discuss issues with people who share your passion to serve children;
- C)** a connection to the next generation of professionals in the field;
- D)** an opportunity to remain connected to Erikson and give something back;
- E)** a lot of fun.



**Sue Markko**  
*Early Head Start program specialist, Office of Head Start-Region V*



**Frank London Gettridge**  
*Administrator, Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education Community Partnership Program*

The answer is all of the above—just ask dedicated members and officers of AEI, Erikson's alumni organization.

"I see tremendous value in AEI as a networking opportunity," said Sue Markko, '88, first member at large of the group's executive board. "It has given me a chance to collaborate on new projects, join workgroups, and find out what is happening in early childhood locally and beyond. It's a diverse group that shares a common perspective and still knows how to have fun."

All graduates are automatically members of AEI. The group sponsors a variety of events that blend learning, networking, and socializing. Many are known as 4Cs: Conversations, Cocktails, and Connecting with Colleagues. Events at major conferences or at the home of a member may feature an Erikson faculty presentation on a new project or recent research.

AEI also helps organize an alumni presence at Erikson events and at professional conferences, where graduates serve as ambassadors and help raise the Institute's visibility. Other events like the Venetian Night picnics are focused on fun.

Frank London Gettridge, '05, got involved in AEI immediately after graduation because he wanted to be of service to Erikson. "The professors and staff took extra time to work with me as a student. It's only right for me to take my extra time to reciprocate," said Gettridge, an administrator with the Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Education Community Partnership Program. As a member at large of the executive board, he advises other alumni that "getting involved gives you more of hands-on awareness and a voice regarding changes within the Institute."

The opportunity for professional growth and support attracts members as well. Ellen Chavez, '85, noted, "The changes in early childhood are happening at warp-speed, making program operations and management quite complex and challenging. AEI offers a place to share experiences, perspectives, and practices with others experiencing the same challenges."

For Alexandra Foley Altman, '03, AEI is her link to early childhood practice. As a senior program officer with the McCormick Tribune Foundation, she doesn't work directly with children. AEI "is a great way for me to stay connected to the field of early childhood and the amazing work that faculty, staff, and alumni are doing to advance the quality of programs serving children and families.

"I believe that an active and engaged alumni network



can be a huge asset not just to each other but also to the institution," added Altman, first vice president for the group. "We play an important role in helping Erikson with special events, fundraising, and student recruitment."

All the personal and professional benefits of AEI are great reasons to remain connected to Erikson, but there are even more advantages to doing so. Erikson offers other alumni benefits: namely, access to services and online resources of the Edward Neisser Library and Learning Center, discounts to professional development courses, and career services.

Alumni can use Erikson's online job board, resume writing tutorials, articles on informational interviewing and networking, and links to additional job resources, all through [inside.erikson.edu](http://inside.erikson.edu). (These resources will soon be moving to Erikson's new portal; watch for more information.) All Erikson career workshops are open to alumni as well as students, and director of career services Stephanie Bynum, '02, provides career planning support by e-mail, by phone, or in person by appointment.

So, how do alumni get involved? Make sure Erikson has your current address and e-mail, and watch your e-mail or check the web site for upcoming events. Contact Magda Slowik at [mslowik@erikson.edu](mailto:mslowik@erikson.edu) or (312) 893-7113 for more information. ■

To learn about more ways to get involved at Erikson, go to [www.erikson.edu/support](http://www.erikson.edu/support).



**Ellen Chavez**  
*Deputy director, children's services, Casa Central Social Services, Inc.*



**Alexandra Foley Altman**  
*Senior program officer, special initiatives, McCormick Tribune Foundation*

## Send Us Your News

To share our pride in our accomplished alumni and showcase their good work, Erikson is about to resume the tradition of publishing alumni news. Please send us word of your new jobs or promotions, awards, appointments to professional groups, volunteer work, adventures abroad, or anything you'd like to share with your fellow graduates.

Your news will be published in a class notes column in this newsletter and online. Please submit your news using our online form at [www.erikson.edu/classnotes](http://www.erikson.edu/classnotes) or mail information to Toni Shears, *In the Service of Children*, 420 North Wabash, Chicago, Illinois, 60611. Please tell us if you do not wish to have your information posted online.

## The Erikson Impact

29<sup>th</sup> out of 34

America's ranking on an international math test given to teens in Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development nations.

---

9,000

Chicago preschoolers and kindergarteners will gain stronger math skills through Erikson's three-year Early Mathematics Education Project.

**erikson**  
graduate school in child development

Erikson Institute  
420 North Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage

**paid**

Permit No. 2963  
Chicago, Illinois