

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark hair, smiling broadly with their mouth open. The child is wearing a brown zip-up jacket over a light blue t-shirt with a graphic. They are being held by an adult whose face is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a room.

# erikson

children

fall 2009

04

Bringing up bebé

10

Provider networks—  
and Erikson training—  
improve quality of  
home-based child care

15

Minding the gap in early  
childhood mental  
health awareness

16

It's Erikson, and it's online

# About Erikson

Erikson Institute, a graduate school in child development, is a hub of complex, creative thinking that brings the newest scientific knowledge and theories of children's development and learning into graduate education, professional training, community programs, and policy making. Our goal: to improve the lives of children and families.

---

## In this issue

### **Bringing up bebé**

The social isolation of immigrant families can make child rearing unusually stressful. Fussy Baby Latina is easing the strain and reconnecting young mothers with the joy of bringing up baby.

**04**

### **Provider networks— and Erikson training— improve quality of home-based child care**

Home child care is a popular option, particularly for low income families. It provides flexibility and value. Too often, however, it provides little else.

A new study points to one way to improve the care children get at their home away from home.

**10**

### **Minding the gap in early childhood mental health awareness**

Now there's help for agencies unprepared to meet the mental health needs of the populations they serve.

**15**

### **It's Erikson, and it's online**

The day we never thought would come is nearly here. Erikson's first online cohort begins January 2010 in a master of science in early childhood education program that's Erikson through and through.

**16**

### **Erikson ongoing**

**18**

### **Investing in our future**

**26**

## From the President

A new school year always brings change and excitement, and this year one of the greatest sources of excitement is the number of talented new faculty and staff we have been fortunate enough to attract.

On the faculty side, we've added two new assistant professors and the nation's leading expert in online education in early childhood. Pam Epley, Ph.D., whose expertise is in early childhood special education, is a welcome addition to our teaching programs and will help us expand the special education area of our work. Tracy Moran, Ph.D., whose field is infancy and infant mental health, increases our already strong presence in this growing discipline.

We've also added the nation's leading expert in online education in early childhood to our staff. Chip Donohue, Ph.D., an internationally known innovator in the field, heads up the launch of our first online master's program.

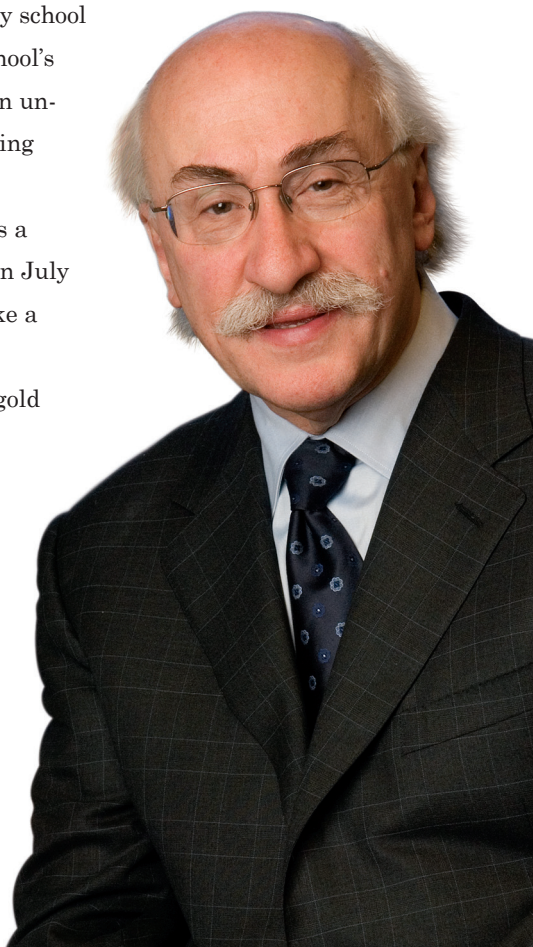
In addition, we've filled several important positions within the areas of research and community engagement. At the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy, Jana Fleming, J.D., Ph.D., takes up the post of interim director. Fleming's experience in the field of early childhood runs the gamut from higher education and research to policy and grant making. Christine Maxwell, Ph.D., who has studied early education from the vantage point of university professor and elementary school principal, is interim director of the New School's Project, which strengthens CPS programs in underserved communities and improves learning from pre-kindergarten through grade 3.

Finally, the Edward Neisser Library has a new director, Karen Janke, who joined us in July and is already knee deep in projects to make a great resource even better.

Erikson has always been known as the gold standard in the field. It's because of such stellar additions to our community that I think it's safe to say we won't be losing that title any time soon.



Samuel J. Meisels  
President





*Inset: Occupational therapist Marsha Baker, '96, works at child level to connect with tots.*

## Bringing up bebé

---

Every year, an estimated 20,000 Latino families immigrate to the Chicago area in search of a better life. Ironically, their new lives are often circumscribed by all they lack: money, safe housing, clothing, food, health care, English language skills, and education. They are cut off from their support system of family and community. All those challenges pose risks to the healthy development of their infants. The Fussy Baby Latina program aims to reduce those risks.

---

*Note: To protect the privacy of Fussy Baby Latina's group members, the characters are composite sketches, created from their collective stories.*

Lysette, a pigtailed toddler, stands in a plastic sandbox, mesmerized by a cascade of white grains she pours from one cup into another like a chemist. On the other side of the room, her mother, Beatrice, sits on the floor in a circle with eight mothers and their infants, chatting with each other as their children wiggle through tummy time.

This is a typical Thursday morning in Pribyl Hall at St. Agnes of Bohemia, where Fussy Baby Latina hosts a weekly drop-in group for families in the Little Village community. But it's remarkable Thursday morning for Beatrice and Lysette, whose first visit to St. Agnes was only four months ago.

They arrived showing little affect—one very pregnant mother and her very still toddler, propped up in metal folding chairs, eyes blank. Neither one engaged with or acknowledged the other mothers and children. They just sat quietly and stared.

“They were obviously stressed,” explains Marsha Baker, '96, an occupational therapist for Fussy Baby Network and a child development expert for the drop-in group.

Three months earlier, Beatrice had been living in Mexico with her husband Alejandro and Lysette, the three of them sharing a home with her parents. Beatrice's father had earned a large percentage of the family's income, and when he unexpectedly died, she was pregnant with her second child. With a baby on the way and significantly less money coming in, husband Alejandro decided their best chance was in the U.S.

Four days later, the family was in Chicago, in November, the three of them sharing a mattress on the floor of a one-bedroom apartment in Little Village. While Alejandro worked, Beatrice, abruptly uprooted from a life spent working outdoors alongside close family and friends, found herself alone in a cold, damp, and crowded city where she knew no one and didn't speak the language.



Staff at St. Agnes, the family's parish, recognized her social isolation and introduced her to Fussy Baby Latina, a program specifically designed to provide social support to parents and safe environments in which their children can play and interact with others.

"The stress and isolation many immigrant families face are serious risk factors to their infants' healthy development," says Baker. "We knew there was a big need to provide services to the Latino community, so that meant being

able to hire people who were bilingual and bicultural, and it meant doing a different kind of outreach, because in the Latino community we found people don't just respond to ads and make calls to the Fussy Baby warm line."

That's why Baker and program coordinator Sinane Goulet decided to go where young mothers already feel at home. After consulting with an advisory board and conducting parent focus groups, they started drop-in groups and parent support classes in churches and community centers that already had close and trusted relationships within the Latino community.

This outreach—funded by Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education's Community Partnership Program—is changing lives all over Chicago. In its second year Fussy Baby Latina helped 220 families at Infant Welfare Society, Advocate Ravenswood Family Practice Center, Programas Comunitarios de St. Anthony, Chicago Childcare Society, Farragut High School and Alivio Medical Center. The bar was raised in 2009 with an expected outreach to 300 more families, plus training to 230 social service professionals who in turn will reach another 3,400 families. Citing the quality of the work as well as the innovative model, CPS has funded the project, through their Prevention Initiative, for two more years at an increased rate.

At drop-in sessions, parents can ask questions, offer advice, or simply vent frustrations. Issues range from the mundane to the medical. Baker and Goulet talk with mothers, listen and observe carefully, and look for ways to guide them to services that can enhance a child's development. Building a relationship with parents is a critical first step, they say.



*Top left: Fussy Baby Latina program coordinator Sinane Goulet, M.S.W., talks with a new mom and baby about tummy time, which gives babies a chance to develop their neck muscles and prepares them to crawl, sit, and stand.*

### Building blocks

At first, Beatrice and Lysette kept to the edges of the room, avoiding and ignoring most attempts at conversation. Others in the group began to spend time with them, but it was Baker who made the most progress in winning over Beatrice, and she did it with the help of Lysette.

Despite the lure of toys in the room, Lysette stayed close to her mother, but it was difficult to ignore the woman sitting next to her, building a small house out of blocks. Whenever Baker caught Lysette stealing a curious glance, she offered the girl a block. At first, the toddler refused and clung tighter to Beatrice, but after a couple weeks, she shyly accepted the block. At three weeks, she was willing to reach over her mother to add to the developing structure, and after a month Lysette and Baker were side by side, working together. Soon the toddler was able to engage her mother in play.



*The deliberately casual atmosphere of the sessions—inviting moms to join their babies on the floor, for example—helps everyone relax and feel a closer connection to their babies and each other.*

“Marsha wasn’t pulling Lysette away; she was pulling Beatrice along,” says Goulet. “Seeing Lysette safe and comfortable also helped Beatrice to let down her guard with the group.” After about seven weeks, she was on the floor, in the circle with the other mothers. From that point on, the growth and gains were exponential.

Once Beatrice opened up, Baker and Goulet worked with the church to direct her to necessary social services: food pantries, ESL classes, and Early Head Start for Lysette. At each step, they made sure Beatrice was ready and willing to seek such help, respecting both her privacy and her skills and strengths as a parent.

**Working this way takes time, but the results are worth it.**

Beatrice and Lysette are a case in point. The young mother began to care more about her appearance and started wearing make-up; she shared even more of her life, her celebrations as well as her troubles. One Thursday morning, after



a doctor's visit the day before, Beatrice came in ecstatic to announce she was having a girl and she and Alejandro had decided to name her Marisol. She was even able to share the news with her mother, having reestablished contact with her, using calling cards to talk once a week.

A testament to the program's success, Beatrice still comes every Thursday. Now, she is not only there for herself and her daughter but for newer immigrant mothers, eager to share with *them* what she herself has received.



### Crossing the cultural divide

Latina immigrant women accustomed to turning to family for child-raising advice aren't likely to turn to a group of strangers for help if they sense a problem with their child. Language barriers, fear of deportation, and unfamiliarity with American social services also keep them from seeking help. Awareness of and respect for the role of family and culture is especially important when supporting parents with differing values and approaches to child rearing.

"Even translating the concept of a fussy baby into Spanish is tricky because it's different from one country to another," Goulet says. For Latina mothers, frequent crying might be seen as a personality trait, not a potential problem. "My baby's stubborn," she might say with pride.

One family, for example, showed up early to talk to Goulet. "Casually, the father got around to telling me that someone at a weekend cookout had commented that their two-year-old wasn't talking as much as the other toddlers." When Goulet asked if they were concerned, they were ambivalent, attributing the delay to his shy personality. "He'll talk when he's ready," they assured her.

Even though Goulet knew that a child that age typically has greater language and communication skills, she waited until the couple specifically asked if their son should be speaking more before giving her opinion.

While the Fussy Baby Latina team addresses regulatory issues like crying, sleeping, and eating problems in special parenting classes, the real key to the program's success among immigrant parents is that it empowers and encourages them.

"We never undermine their parenting abilities by telling them what they should do," says Goulet. **ii**

Editor's note: Fussy Baby Latina is a component of Erikson's Fussy Baby Network, a program offering support to any family in Cook County with concerns about their baby's crying, sleeping or feeding during the first year of life. Please call 888-431-BABY or contact us at [www.fussybabynetwork.erikson.edu](http://www.fussybabynetwork.erikson.edu) to find out more.

## Provider networks—and Erikson training—improve quality of home-based child care

---

It started nearly 10 years ago with a couple of deceptively simple questions. Do family child care provider networks—which provide a variety of services and administer child care subsidy money for home-based child care providers—improve the quality of care that children receive? And if they do, how do they do it?

The answer, as it turns out, is yes, with Erikson’s help.

---

This spring, policy people from across the country listened in as Juliet Bromer, of Erikson’s Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy, presented the findings of the Family Child Care Network Impact Study.

The study is the first to take a detailed look at the entire population of networks in a large urban community and to examine the particular characteristics of networks that are associated with quality child care.

What Bromer found has the potential to improve a child care option—home-based care—that is as popular as it is poorly monitored, particularly in those communities whose young children have the most to gain from quality child care. Bromer also uncovered an Erikson connection to that improvement that no one had guessed or expected to find.

We spoke about the research and its significance with Bromer and Ricki Lowitz, of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which commissioned the study with funding from the MacArthur Foundation.



**In a nutshell, what are your findings?**

**Juliet Bromer:** There is a significant relationship between quality and affiliation with a staffed support network. But not just any support network. The networks that were associated with the highest quality of care in network provider homes offered a particular kind of relationship-based support to providers. Relationship-based support means the network coordinator interacts directly with providers through training, through one-on-one home visiting, and through personal communication. And, it turned out, the coordinators who gave that kind of support had participated in a specialized infant studies certificate program at Erikson for family child care network coordinators.

**So, this research was done to determine whether Erikson's program had an impact?**

**Ricki Lowitz:** Absolutely not. We wanted to see if we could learn through a formal research effort what characterizes an effective network. LISC-Chicago supports comprehensive community development, and high-quality child care is an integral part of any healthy community. Because family child care is one of the most utilized child care options and because LISC was supporting networks in several Chicago communities, it was logical for us to commission the study.

**Bromer:** We had no idea when we began that we would find this relationship between one specific educational program for coordinators—Erikson's—and improved care for children.

**Family child care networks provide all kinds of services, including referrals, home visits, training, and promotion and business assistance. Were there any other correlations between services and quality?**

**Bromer:** Yes, we found three service areas that made a difference: First, visits to provider homes when the coordinator uses that time to help a provider work with a child or parent; second, direct training for providers at the network (vs. referrals to outside training); and third, supportive staff-provider communication. These services were related to higher quality care and were even more effective when delivered by a specially-trained coordinator. On the other hand, neither material resources nor business services, even when combined with a coordinator, had an impact on quality.

Incidentally, at the time of the study (2002–04), some networks did nothing more than recruit providers and administer the subsidies. There are surprisingly few guidelines or standards for the type or quality of services the networks provide.

How did we get a system where all networks aren't equal? And why would any child care provider want to be in a network that didn't do anything for them?

**Lowitz:** With the introduction of the federally-initiated Early Head Start (EHS) program in 1998, we ended up with a two-tiered system of child care subsidies in Illinois. Providers earned \$21 per child per day for children who got regular state child care subsidies and \$32 per child per day for infants and toddlers enrolled in EHS. Networks were compensated on a two-tier scale, as well; they received \$5 per day per child for the state subsidy program and \$7 per day per child for the EHS program. And the higher EHS subsidies were only available through networks.

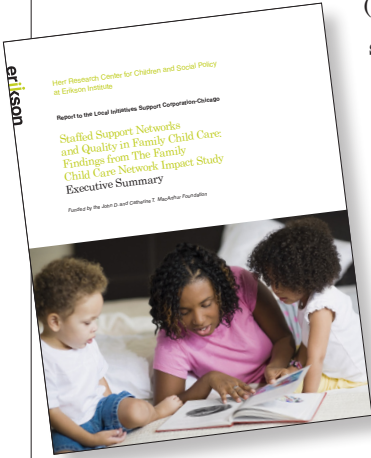
**Bromer:** When EHS was introduced, the number of networks in Chicago nearly doubled. Many of the already existing networks had been formed by organizations that had a real history of service and a stake in the community; they spent more money providing services than they earned from the subsidy. All of the new networks, on the other hand, were Head Start agencies created almost overnight and mandated by CDHS to establish networks and administer EHS subsidies. These groups had little if any experience with family child care, and struggled just to get their networks up and running.

The new networks had only EHS slots—that's what they were created to administer—so every one of their providers got the higher reimbursement rate. Networks that were already established got EHS slots, too, but obviously not all of their slots were EHS slots, so they had lots of talented providers receiving \$21 vs. \$32 a day for giving the same quality of care. (The study, in fact, looked at differences in quality of care based on the type of subsidy provided and did not find significant differences in quality between EHS and non-EHS providers.) So many of those providers left their network to join those that had the higher paying EHS slots.

**But didn't EHS have standards?**

**Lowitz:** Of course. But most of those standards related to the provider and her practices with children (training and adult/child ratio requirements), and not the network.

**Bromer:** There were and still are few guidelines for the types and quality of support services delivered to EHS family child care providers beyond numbers of home visits and training. There has been so little research in this area to guide



## How do you measure quality of care?

The study used two instruments.

- The **Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS)** measures global quality—relationships, materials, environment, health and safety
- The **Arnett Scale of Caregiver Sensitivity** describes the relationship between the provider and the child in care by measuring the sensitivity or harshness of the provider's interactions with the child.

initiatives working with home-based caregivers. Our findings about the types of services and staff qualifications that make a difference to quality are particularly important given that Head Start has recently expanded their family child care option so that Head Start as well as Early Head Start services may now be delivered through family child care programs.

*A lot of child development experts are critical of childcare in private homes, particularly in low-income communities. Instead of focusing attention on family child care, shouldn't we be encouraging parents to use center-based care?*

**Lowitz:** We are all concerned about the quality of family child care, but that's where children are going. So we think it makes sense to look at any strategy for improving it.

**Bromer:** A majority of young children from low-income families are cared for in home-based child care. Even children in center-based care are likely to spend some of their day in home-based care, since most children—especially low income children—spend their day in multiple arrangements.

Home-based care has the potential to support low income families. It often offers greater flexibility for parents whose work days are long or irregular, or who rely on public transportation for pick up and drop off. Siblings can stay together instead of being funneled into separate classes based on age. It frequently costs less, as well.

*If the goal is to improve home-based care, why not focus on accrediting the providers themselves?*

**Lowitz:** Well, accreditation is great, but providers get accredited one at a time. How many children does that affect? And what about when an accredited provider decides to get out of the business? Pursuing quality through networks means you're reaching multiple providers and you're creating an infrastructure for ongoing, in-person support.

This research was local, but it's been getting national attention.

Why the interest?

**Lowitz:** A number of states have similar programs, though they're not necessarily called networks, and a lot of money is being spent on them. I think state administrators are showing an interest in the study because they want and need their investments to lead to quality improvements.


Going back to the results, Juliet: your research shows that the effect on quality is significant but modest. So, is it really worth it?

**Bromer:** If you think about the fact that most family child care is rated as low quality, then the finding here that effective networks have the potential to lead to good quality care takes on greater significance. We know so little about how to improve or impact quality of care in this sector, so if we're thinking about what initiatives might have the potential to improve quality in the home-based sector, we know that networks may be a successful strategy, something to invest in.

**Lowitz:** It's absolutely worth it. Juliet's study is the first to answer the question "What do we know? Does a toy lending library improve child care? Well, no, you won't get any improvement. It's not a bad thing, but you won't have any impact on children."

As a funder, I am finally able to say, "Here are the kinds of things that make a difference. If you do these things, please come talk to us." That's phenomenal.

What happens next?

**Bromer:** We have a correlation between participation in a particular program of education for staff who support providers—the specially modified infant studies certificate program that Erikson offered—and higher quality care. That particular certificate program for family child care network coordinators is no longer offered. We're taking steps to refine the program, implement it and carry out a process evaluation to find out what it is about the program that makes a difference. Several states have expressed some interest in this kind of training for their support staff, so understanding how to replicate it is an important next step 

Editor's note: To download a copy of the full report or the executive summary, go to [www.erikson.edu/default/news/news.aspx?c=2636](http://www.erikson.edu/default/news/news.aspx?c=2636)

# Minding the gap in early childhood mental health awareness

---

Children stressed by poverty, language and cultural barriers, domestic and community violence, and more need people who recognize their need and can help them cope.

---

Erikson’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project helps train those people. Funded by the Illinois State Board of Education, the project helps Prevention Initiative (PI) programs better meet the mental health needs of high-risk families by developing their staff’s capacity to see and understand children’s social-emotional needs.

Twenty-six consultants currently work with fifty PI sites across the state. Consultation takes different forms depending each site’s needs, but at the core are reflective supervision sessions that guide staff to think through different approaches and responses to the challenges they face in their case load.

“It’s not an expert model; the goal is not to go in and tell them what to do in a particular case or do it for them,” says project director Samantha Wulfsohn, Ph.D. “The idea is to raise capacity for addressing infant mental health across staff at the program level. We reach more people that way, and it’s sustainable.”

## What’s the Prevention Initiative?

The Illinois Early Childhood Prevention Initiative (PI) Program coordinates services to at-risk infants, toddlers to age 3, and their families through child and family service providers.

Demand outstrips resources. In 2007 there were 2,641 parents on the waiting list, and half the projects were unable to meet all their clients’ needs. Projects offer

- home visits
- workshops/classes or training sessions on parenting skills, child growth and development, etc.
- health, vision, and hearing screenings
- developmental screenings
- case management services to coordinate regional and/or local services
- advocacy services
- services such food pantries

The project also is exploring workforce development to train more consultants. “There are infant mental health experts, but there is no program out there training people to provide this kind of intensive support and reflective supervision,” Wulfsohn says.

Erikson’s Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy is currently evaluating the effectiveness of consultation and measuring the project’s success in creating a strong workforce development process. [ii](#)

## It's Erikson, and it's online

---

Getting an Erikson master's program online wasn't easy. It took two years, a dedicated faculty, a determined president, an online innovator, and a visionary funder. But in January, the online master's in early childhood education becomes a reality.

---

“Taking Erikson's brand of education online, building real communities of learners using technology and making Erikson available to early childhood people wherever they are, that was an opportunity I didn't want to miss.”

Chip Donohue, Ph.D., has an enthusiasm and a determination that are contagious. Since moving from University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, the new director of distance learning has been working at a frantic pace, creating and piloting the online classroom that will bring Erikson pedagogy into the 21st century.

For more than 40 years, the school has been known as the nation's premier graduate school in child development with a reputation based on its interdisciplinary approach and insistence that students develop deep knowledge of child development in context; an emphasis on the role of family, culture, and community in young children's lives; and the expectation that students master what's called “reflective practice,” that is, using self-reflection and the feedback of colleagues and faculty to understand their part in the dynamic of relationships that form the core of working with children and families.

It's a complex package that some were afraid would never translate online.

“At first we couldn't imagine how it would work, to tell you the truth,” says Luisiana Meléndez, Ph.D., clinical associate professor and director of the new online master's program. “And until we could guarantee that it *would* work—that everything that makes an Erikson education so excellent would be there online the way it is in our classrooms—we just weren't willing to do it.”

Still, faculty and staff kept returning to the notion of an online degree program. “Everywhere I went, every NAEYC conference, every recruiting fair, I always got the question: ‘Does Erikson have an online program?’” says Michel Frenadian, dean of enrollment management. “It always seemed ironic that an Erikson education is valued across the country, but those who wanted that education had to live here to get it. And in many ways, our ideal prospective student is someone who can't just pull up stakes and move to Chicago. We



like students to come to us with experience, which means they're already working in the field and tied to where they live."

Distance learning had been a priority for Erikson president Sam Meisels from day one. "Our experience creating courses for the Bounce Learning Network convinced me. People shouldn't forget that we have a tradition of being innovators. We helped develop the model of relationship-based education, so who better to recreate it online?"

In December 2007 Meisels charged then-dean Frances Rust and Professor Gillian McNamee, long-time director of Erikson's teacher education programs, with getting the project on its feet. The two began assembling resources for the job.

Some were home grown. A faculty committee began discussing where to begin, including curriculum revisions and enhancements. Meléndez, having earned her own master's and doctoral degrees at Erikson, was able to speak to the user's perspective and needs. Jeanne Lockridge, vice president for administration, began securing accreditation and lining up the technical resources necessary.

To fill the director's job, Erikson went outside its own community and struck gold. Donohue is a world-renowned expert in online education for early childhood educators, widely acknowledged as the best in the field.

All this talent and effort would have come to nothing, however, had it not been for a commitment from the Boeing Company, which has a long history of philanthropy and community support, particularly in the field of education. First the company agreed to fund a cohort of 15 students in Chicago. Then Boeing's Global Corporate Citizenship office agreed to fund the development of the program itself. Joyce Walters, director of education and workforce initiatives at the company and an Erikson trustee, worked tirelessly to shepherd the proposal through channels. The president of Erikson's Board of Trustees, Dick Kiphart, made a matching pledge that completed the funding.

The end result has been worth waiting for—a program that combines academic strength with an innovative, yearlong seminar in an online environment tailor made for early childhood educators. The first cohort begins in January 2010. [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.

---

## How good is preschool in Chicago?

With almost 28,000 children enrolled in a variety of school and center-based programs in the city, Mayor Daley asked a question. “How do we know kids in Chicago’s preschools are learning?”

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services (CYS) turned to the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy at Erikson to find out.

The result—the Chicago Program Evaluation Project (C-PEP for short)—was a year-long, system-level evaluation of the largest CPS and CYS early care and education programs.

The research was complex, but the findings, released late last year, were clear. Chicago’s early childhood education programs *are* improving children’s readiness for kindergarten. And they’re making the biggest gains with at-risk children. Better than a third (40 percent, to be precise) of these preschoolers are considered to be at *high risk*, with three or more risk factors. Nearly half are English language learners. The students come from families with an average

income just over \$16,000. The official federal poverty level for a family of four is \$20,000.

“No other city has undertaken such sweeping research to examine the type of complex, multi-program system that exists in Chicago and other urban centers across the country,”

said Erikson Institute president Samuel J. Meisels. “In considering Head Start, state pre-K, and community collaboration programs simultaneously, the study breaks new ground by shifting the primary research focus from the level of a particular program to that of a larger system.”

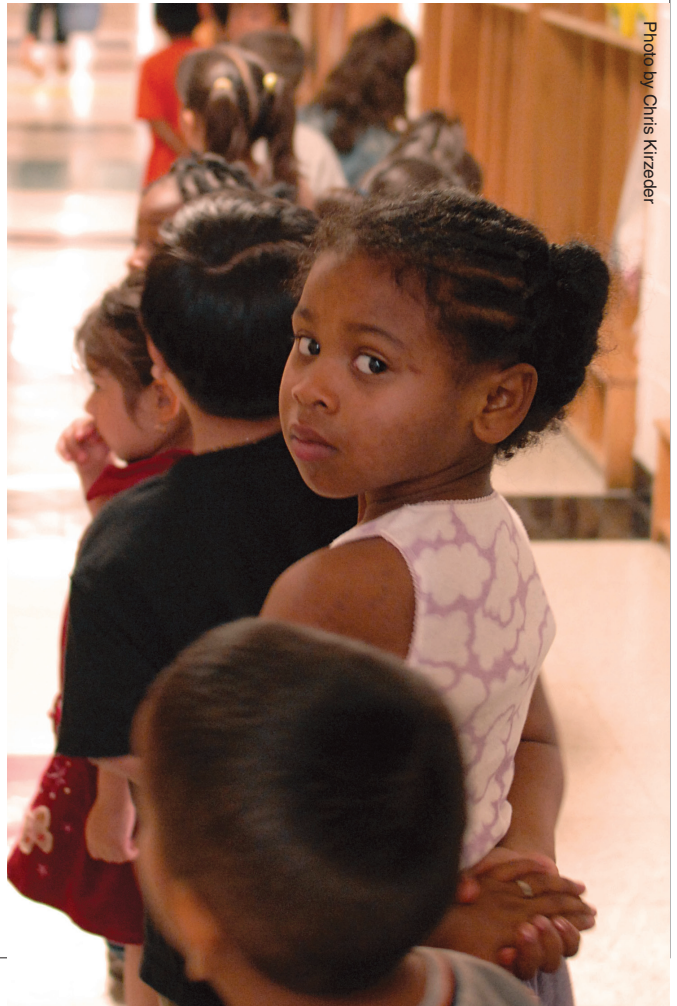


Photo by Chris Kirzeder

### At risk?

The U.S. Census Bureau divides “at risk conditions” into two categories: personal and familial.

#### Personal

- presence of a disability
- ever retained in school
- speaking English less than ‘very well’

#### Familial

- either or both parents absent from the household
- at least one foreign-born parent of recent immigration
- low family income
- no employed parent

Overall, Meisels noted, Chicago classrooms provide a good foundation for children. They were found to provide a positive environment, ranking in the middle-high range for emotional support and provisions for learning. They are productive and well-managed, as well, ranking in the middle range for classroom organization.

Erikson cofounder and Chicago Public Schools’ Chief Officer of Early Childhood Education Barbara Bowman cited a few specific findings that will help Chicago set goals and an early childhood agenda to reach them. “Now we know that we should target an emphasis on mathematics in our programs. We also documented the benefits of a smaller child-staff ratio, and confirmed that the more education and experience a teacher brings to the classroom, the better the result for children.”

The study raises several areas for further analysis, including a finding that classroom quality and teacher characteristics are only inconsistently related to cognitive gains, while high levels of instructional support are more directly related to improvements

in social-emotional development. This and other findings are being reviewed by an advisory team of experts in the field, who will make recommendations in the areas of program improvement, research, and policy. This review is generously funded by the Joyce Foundation.

Chicago Children and Youth Services Commissioner Mary Ellen Caron said an important way to start building on these results would be with earlier interventions. “Planning for our children’s future should begin at the earliest age,” she said. “While children are making important progress when they start preschool at three and four years old, we need to work with them earlier, in a comprehensive way, to bring them up to national norms—and beyond.”

### Erikson Board add expertise

Erikson’s Board of Trustees has four new members.

**Joyce A. Walters** is director of education and workforce initiatives on the global corporate citizenship team at Boeing Company, with overall responsibility for building the company’s community investment programs in the education. Joyce divides her time between offices in Seattle and Chicago.

**Edward Loeb**, partner at the investment management firm of Harris Associates in Chicago, is a portfolio manager and vice president in charge of the firm’s investment advisory department. He also holds the position of director of institutional portfolios at Harris.

**Martin Cabrera, Jr.**, is president and CEO of Cabrera Capital Markets, Inc., the investment firm he launched in 2001. Cabrera Capital Markets currently has offices in eight states and is one of the country’s biggest sponsors of the Stock Market Game, a simulation that gives students an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of economics and investing.

**Adrienne White**, vice president for health initiatives and advocacy for the American Cancer Society—Illinois Division, oversees cancer research activities, educational outreach initiatives, government relations, and patient services in Illinois. She is also responsible for the integration of Illinois cancer control initiatives that seek to reduce cancer incidence and mortality and improve quality of life for cancer patients.

## Better teachers for diverse classrooms

Almost 70 percent of children in Head Start and the majority of children in the 25 largest U. S. school districts are from culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Yet the early childhood teaching workforce remains predominantly white and monolingual. Research shows these teachers may have little knowledge of the cultures, communities, and families of the children in their classrooms. Teachers report that they feel unprepared to teach effectively in multicultural and multilingual classrooms.

Backed by a \$480,000, two-year grant from the McCormick Foundation, Professor **Barbara T. Bowman** and **Dean Aisha Ray** will lead a statewide initiative to target the developmental and educational needs of culturally, racially, and linguistically marginalized children, including children in poverty. Their research will be used to improve Illinois teacher standards, certification, and preparation programs so that they explicitly address those needs.



Photo by Chris Kirzeder

Children bring to the classroom values, language, identity, and behavioral norms shaped by everyday cultural practices in their homes and communities. Research suggests that the cultural repertoires of racially, culturally, and economically marginalized children are often misunderstood. They may even be punished by teachers and schools expecting children to conform to a mainstream cultural model. Children struggling to overcome a “culture gap” may also struggle to learn—or

disengage from school at a very early age.

“In order to address the rapidly changing landscape of our country now reflected in the demographics of our schools, higher education must re-examine the way it prepares teachers. They must be ready to teach in global classrooms, where they will need to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students and neighborhoods,” said Erica Okezie-Phillips, program officer at the McCormick Foundation. “This project will take an important step in fostering this dialogue at the state, district, and policy levels.”

In its first two years, the project will focus specifically on the needs of African American children, who represent one of the largest groups of children of color in early childhood programs and are seriously affected by the educational achievement gap. In future work the project will explore the needs of other groups such as Mexican American, Mexican immigrant, and Chinese immigrant children.

### Targeting the Developmental and Educational Needs of Culturally Marginalized Children (DENCMC) Project

**Explores** the extent to which associate’s and bachelor’s degree programs in early childhood teacher education in Illinois address the educational and developmental needs of children marginalized by race, culture, language, or poverty;

**Builds** consensus about the knowledge, practical skills, dispositions, and reflective capacities teachers must master to work effectively with culturally diverse children and their families; and

**Works** with stakeholders to develop recommendations for amending Illinois state early childhood teacher standards and certification requirements.

## From student to professor to dean

On July 1, Erikson came full circle as one its own—1972 alumna **Aisha Ray, Ph.D.**—became senior vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty.

An active research and member of the Erikson faculty, Dean Ray has helped shape Erikson's mission and culture for 17 years. That history is unique and invaluable preparation for the dual position, which has responsibilities that range from overseeing and developing academic programs to providing critical perspective and sharing decision-making on policies, procedures, budget, and strategic direction.

"I am very excited about Aisha assuming this new role," said President Samuel J. Meisels. "Her intelligence, creativity, commitment, knowledge, and experience will help us take steps forward that we've never attempted while keeping our eye on what has made us so successful in the past."

Ray leads the all-institute Diversity Committee and has previously served as director of the Bilingual/ESL Certificate Program and acting director of the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy. Her current research focuses on preparing early childhood teachers to effectively educate low-income, culturally, and linguistically diverse children. Other research interests include the role of culture in child development; families in urban communities; fatherhood and parenting roles; and early childhood services to immigrant families. For several years she has also been an adviser to the early childhood faculty initiative at Chicago City Colleges.

A former research scientist at the University of Chicago and faculty member of the DePaul University School of Education, she has also been a consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Illinois Fatherhood Initiative, National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership, and Child Trends. Ray holds a doctorate in developmental psychology from the University of Michigan.

## Alumna heads Baltimore social services

Fixing a foster-care system that's been under court order to improve since the '80s isn't what you'd call a piece of cake. But with little more than a year under her belt as director of Baltimore's Department of Social Services, **Molly McGrath, M.S. '97**, has made enough progress to land a front page story in Baltimore's *City Paper* in June. More important, she shows no signs of stopping.

A long-time social services professional, McGrath heads a department that serves 500,000 people a year and has the state's fourth largest annual budget. She began her career in Illinois' child welfare agency—it was McGrath who established the process of infant assessment that Erikson continues to this day—and later served Mayor Richard M. Daley's Plan for Transformation of Public Housing. Additionally, she was deputy director for Special Programs Washington, D.C., Child and Family Services Agency.



Dean Aisha Ray, right, with doctoral student Tonya Bibbs.



### Birth-to-Five Evaluation Project, Phase 2

For the last year, a team of researchers at the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy has been focused on an ambitious task: find out what works in four of the state's key early childhood programs that are funded by the Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant.

The Illinois State Board of Education contracted with the center in March 2008 to evaluate four programs: Preschool for All; Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure; Prevention Initiative; and Parental Training.

The first step was to define the exact scope and nature of the services the programs offered.

"Before you can ask how something is working, you have to know what that something is," said former Herr Center director Eboni Howard, Ph.D. To that end, the first year of the evaluation was devoted to mapping the landscape of services offered.

The second phase of the program, beginning July 2009 and concluding June 2011, is using data collected about children, staff, programs, and communities to assess program qualities and outcomes.

### Keeping Young Children on Track in the Race to the Top

A half-day policy forum in June, presented by the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy, looked at goals and guidelines for funding opportunities in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Stephen Raudenbush, Lewis-Sebring Distinguished Service Professor in Sociology and chair of the Committee on Education at the University of Chicago, asked, Can School Improvement Reduce Racial Inequality? Northwestern University professor Carol D. Lee described cultural challenges to reform. Charter schools were covered by Elliot Regenstein of EducationCouncil LLC, while the director of research and accountability for the Chicago Public Schools division of Early Childhood Education, Karen Carradine, Ed.D., discussed improvements to the system's high-risk classrooms. Erikson president Samuel J. Meisels delivered the closing remarks.

### Legacy Society—giving today for tomorrow

Erikson Institute's Legacy Society honors and recognizes the generosity and vision of those who have chosen to leave a legacy to Erikson through their estate or a deferred gift.

Members of the society may choose to make unrestricted gifts to Erikson or direct their gifts to ongoing programs.

In January, Erikson received a bequest from former faculty member and alumna Gertrude J. ("Jay") Freedman, '69, who died May 5, 2008, at the age of 84. Her estate gift was directed to scholarships.

Membership in this honorary society is simply a matter of advising us of your intention of a legacy gift through providing documentation of a bequest in a will or living trust; a charitable remainder trust; or designation as beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy.

For more information, please contact Debborah Harp at (312) 893-7114 or [dharp@erikson.edu](mailto:dharp@erikson.edu).

## Thank You!

Erikson gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their generous contributions, grants, and pledges of \$25,000 or more in the period January 1, 2009, to August 31, 2009.

With this vital support, we are improving the lives of children and families.

### **Anonymous**

\$250,000 Center for Children and Families

### **The Boeing Company**

\$330,000 Online Master's Program Development

### **CME Group Foundation**

\$125,000 Early Mathematics Education Project

### **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**

\$1,384,812 Fussy Baby Network

### **The Educational Foundation of America**

\$30,000 Unrestricted

### **The Joseph and Bessie Feinberg Foundation**

\$25,000 Capital Campaign  
\$25,000 Unrestricted

### **The Field Foundation of Illinois, Inc.**

\$30,000 Edward Neisser Library

### **Lloyd A. Fry Foundation**

\$25,000 Capital Campaign

### **Wilbur and Linda Gantz**

\$25,000 Center for Children and Families

### **Gustafson Family Charitable Foundation**

\$30,000 Professional Development Program

### **The Harris Family Foundation**

\$55,000 Unrestricted

### **The Irving Harris Foundation**

\$160,000 Illinois Child-Parent Psychotherapy Learning Collaborative

### **Istock Family Foundation**

\$25,000 Capital Campaign

### **The Joyce Foundation**

\$150,000 New Schools Project

### **Susan and Richard Kiphart**

\$80,000 Unrestricted

### **McCormick Foundation**

\$500,000 Early Mathematics Education Project

### **Motorola Foundation**

\$50,200 Early Mathematics Education Project

### **Nellie Mae Education Foundation**

\$69,000 Non-School Learning Settings and Experiences: Points of Intersection with the High School Reform Agenda

### **Perkins Malo Hunter Foundation**

\$30,000 New Schools Project

### **Polk Bros. Foundation**

\$80,000 New Schools Project

### **The Walden W. and Jean Young Shaw Foundation**

\$70,000 Unrestricted

### **W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation**

\$100,000 New Schools Project

## Campaign update— we're almost home!

As of August 31, 2009, the total raised for Fulfilling the Promise: The Campaign for Erikson Institute stands at \$25.6 million.

Campaign contributions support scholarships and fellowships, New Schools, the Center for Children and Families, the Neisser Library—a resource for early childhood professionals everywhere, professional development to sharpen the skills of those already working with children, critical research in literacy and infant mental health, and more.

You can make a donation online at [www.erikson.edu/campaign](http://www.erikson.edu/campaign) or contact Deborah Harp at (312) 893-7114 or [dharp@erikson.edu](mailto:dharp@erikson.edu)



*Gifts to the 2009 Prism Ball were recognized in a special publication.*

## New faces



**Karen Janke** has joined Erikson as director of the Edward Neisser Library. A former librarian at University Library, Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis, Janke has extensive experience in collection development, reference, acquisitions, and instruction in library research skills for both novice and experienced researchers. In addition, she brings considerable knowledge on how libraries can support distance learning and in electronic modalities that develop and extend library services to users. Janke holds an M.S. in library and information science from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Joining the New Schools Project as interim director is **Christine B. Maxwell, Ph.D.** Maxwell comes to Erikson from Milwaukee's Frances Starns Centers, where she was acting principal. The centers are a three-site, urban public school serving 760 students ages 3 through 14 and their families with a nongraded, full inclusion program that is based on a collaborative, social constructivist model. Maxwell received her master's in early childhood education and her doctorate in childhood education from Florida State University.



Two new assistant professors join the Erikson faculty this fall.

**Pam Epley** earned her doctorate at the University of Kansas; at Erikson, she brings expertise in early childhood special education to the teaching program. **Tracy Moran**, who earned her doctorate at the University of Iowa and did post-doc work at Tulane, brings a focus on infancy and infant mental health.



**Chip Donohue, Ph.D.**, an internationally recognized leader in the innovative use of technology and distance learning, is managing the development of Erikson's first online master's degree. The program debuts in January 2010. Donohue came to Erikson from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he directed the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development & Leadership, teaching face-to-face

and online courses leading to a certificate and state credentialing in child care administration. At Erikson, Donohue has responsibility for making sure that online degree, certificate, and professional development programs are of the same caliber as campus-based programs and reflect Erikson's uniquely relationship-based educational model.



**Jana Fleming, J.D., Ph.D.**, has joined Erikson as interim director of the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy, replacing Eboni Howard, Ph.D. Fleming previously served as executive director of child development studies at City Colleges of Chicago and was a consultant to the Joyce Foundation, directing grant making in early childhood education. Prior to joining City Colleges, Fleming was a research investigator at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She codirected the Early Childhood Leadership Development Program at UNC, providing graduate-level education and training for early childhood professionals in health services, education, social welfare, child care, and family protective services. She was also actively involved in research and leadership development projects in support of North Carolina's Smart Start initiative. She holds a law degree from Duke University and a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



## Good work

### **Professor Jie-Qi Chen**

has received the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE) Merrill-Pearson Outstanding Educator Award. She will receive the award at the November 2009 meeting of NAECTE in Washington, D.C.

**Chen** and Early Mathematics Education Project director

**Jennifer McCray, Ph.D. '08**, recently participated in Motorola's "Innovation Generation Network Conference," where they were part of a panel entitled *Class Beyond the Classroom* along with representatives from the Field Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, and Thirteen, the PBS station in New York that produces "Sid the Science Kid."

**McCray** is receiving growing recognition in the scholarly community for her dissertation. In *Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Preschool Mathematics: Relationships to Teaching Practices and Child Outcomes* McCray examined teachers' knowledge of preschool mathematics and how that knowledge related to what they did in the classroom and what children achieved. She found that teachers' level of knowledge significantly and positively predicts their use of math-related language in classrooms. And she showed that the more math-related language children hear, the greater their achievement.

First, McCray's dissertation won the 2009 Outstanding Dissertation Award from the Teacher and Teacher Education Division of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the country's most important educational research group. The



*Jennifer McCray*

prize recognizes work of exemplary conceptual, methodological, and literary quality as well as the importance of the topic. McCray received the honor in April at the AERA annual meeting in San Diego.

Recently, McCray was informed that her work had earned another award, the Merrill Pearson Outstanding Dissertation Award from the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE). She'll receive the award at NAECTE's national convention in Washington, D.C., in November.

Maybe the biggest reward for a job well done, however, is the knowledge that her dissertation helped spark a project that helps improve CPS early childhood teachers' knowledge of the "big ideas" in mathematics.

### **Candace N. Williams, M.S./**

**M.S.W. '08**, has received not one but two awards. The first, Loyola University's Fuerst Award, is for writing on complex policy issues. The award is open to all students, including doctoral students. Williams won by unanimous faculty vote. Her second award is one of four competitive Illinois Early Childhood Fellowships for emerging leaders in the field of early childhood. Fellows will spend two years with an organization working at the intersection of social justice and children. Williams will work with Positive Parenting DuPage, founded by Erikson alumna Jeanna Capito.

In May, M.S./M.S.W. student

**Craig Fitzgerald** won Loyola's annual Student Writing Award for his paper "In Need of More than a Chill Pill: The Complicated Lives of Children Diagnosed with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder."

### **Patty Horsch, Ph.D. '99**, clinical

assistant professor and founding director of the New Schools Project, has retired. Horsch played a central role in shaping and directing Erikson's interventions in Chicago Public School early childhood classrooms. From her leadership Erikson's long-running Schools Project, through her pivotal role in the revival of Williams School and her directorship of the New Schools Project, she demonstrated an unwavering commitment to making quality early childhood education available to every child.

# Investing in our future

---

Every dollar invested in strengthening early childhood education saves from \$10 to \$17 in child welfare costs, remediation and special education costs, emergency room visits, public health costs, criminal justice costs, and decreased tax revenue. Market up or market down, investing in early childhood gives us all a guaranteed return.

---



## Passing it on Steven Solomon Exelon

### What does Erikson do best?

We believe Erikson teaches early childhood professionals to take a one-on-one approach with kids, recognizing that all children learn differently. Erikson has been a leader in understanding those differences and equipping professionals with the right skills to figure out what methods work best for each child.

### Why donate to Erikson?

Erikson is a good fit within Exelon's overall educational giving strategy for several reasons. First, Erikson has a strong commitment and dedication to improving education. We share common core values—specifically diversity. Erikson works to improve teaching quality in the education system, and it is a leader in this field. And Erikson is never complacent—the Institute is always looking for ways to improve what it does and do it better. Finally, when it comes to education, Exelon focuses primarily on math and science

education and helping at-risk students improve performance in those subjects. You cannot do that without partnering with an institution like Erikson.

### What do you see as the return on your investment?

For one thing, it is gratifying to see just how many early childhood professionals Erikson produces and the number of children and schools it successfully reaches. Thanks to Exelon senior vice president and Erikson board member Kathy Combs, we have provided a corporate challenge grant to match new or increased donations to the Erikson Fund. As a result, we have been able to increase the amount of funding achieved between 2006 and 2008 and increase the number of companies willing to support Erikson's mission and work—that is a real testament to the quality of the Institute.

---

## Board of Trustees

### Executive Officers

Richard P. Kiphart, Chair  
Gery J. Chico, Vice Chair  
Bruce E. Huey, Treasurer  
John L. Hines, Jr., Secretary

### Life Trustees

T. Berry Brazelton, M.D.  
Natalie Heineman  
Lorraine B. Wallach  
Bernice Weissbourd

### President

Samuel J. Meisels

### Members of the Board

Catherine M. Adduci  
Eric Adelstein  
Virginia Bobins  
Barbara T. Bowman  
Martin Cabrera, Jr.  
Jeanna M. Capito  
Michelle L. Collins  
Katherine K. Combs  
Susan G. Gallagher  
Sabrina Gracias  
Lee E. Harkleroad III  
Toby Herr  
Lewis S. Ingall  
Ira Korman  
Mary A. Laraia  
Mitchell J. Lederer  
Edward S. Loeb

Shirley R. Madigan  
Judith K. McCaskey  
John W. McNulty  
Kate Neisser  
Scott Newberger  
Kathy Richland Pick  
James J. Roche  
Royal Kennedy Rodgers  
David W. Rutenberg  
Cari Sacks  
Gene Saffold  
Richard Schuham  
Joy Segal  
Sara Crown Star  
Eve M. Tyree  
Patricia R. Walsh  
Joyce A. Walters  
Adrienne E. White  
Susan J. Wislow  
Sheri B. Zuckerman

---

Erikson on Children  
Fall 2009

*Erikson on Children* is published for the donors, alumni, and friends of Erikson Institute. Send comments, suggestions, or changes of address to [pnedeau@erikson.edu](mailto:pnedeau@erikson.edu) or to Office of Communications, Erikson Institute, 451 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60654.

Writers: Jeffrey Brennan, Toni Shears, Patricia Nedeau  
Editor: Patricia Nedeau  
Design: Gerta Sorensen London, Sorensen London Design  
Photography: Chris Kirzeder, Loren Santow, Lisa Meehan Williams  
Illustration: Pablo Bernasconi

Calling all alumni!

**Alumni of Erikson Institute Annual Meeting and Founders Award presentation**

Friday, October 23, 2009  
5–8 p.m.

Look for your invitation in the mail!

**Erikson reception at NAEYC**

Plan to join us for a reception at the 2009 NAEYC conference in Washington, D.C., November 18–21. Check your e-mail. Events at [www.erikson.edu](http://www.erikson.edu), or conference materials for details.

Erikson Institute

451 North LaSalle Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60654  
Tel: (312) 755-2250  
[www.erikson.edu](http://www.erikson.edu)

Nonprofit  
organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 2963  
Chicago, Illinois

graduate school in child development

**erikson institute**