

**Department of Family and Child Ecology  
Child Development Laboratory's  
Research Plan to Reduce Disparities in Young Children's  
Social Competence and Language/Emerging Literacy  
Fiscal Years 2005-2008**

**February 4, 2005  
Michigan State University**

**Department of Family and Child Ecology Child Development Laboratory’s Research Plan to Reduce Disparities in Young Children’s Social Competence and Language/Emerging Literacy**

**Table of Contents**

Executive Summary ..... 3

Introduction..... 5

The FCE/CDL Signature Research Program ..... 9

    Scope of the Problem ..... 9

    Planned FCE/CDL Research..... 10

    Research Objective 1 ..... 11  
        Advance understanding of disparities in preschool children’s social competence and language/emerging literacy skills and abilities that may be influenced by socioeconomic and socio-cultural factors

    Research Objective 2 ..... 13  
        Test FCE/CDL’s curricular model for reducing disparities in young children’s social competence and language/emerging literacy

    Research Objective 3 ..... 17  
        Study the longitudinal effects of inclusion of Head Start and Michigan School Readiness Children, English language learners and special needs children into typical settings

    Research Objective 4 ..... 19  
        Increase the self-efficacy of parents to advocate for their children where there are disparities in developing social competence and language/emerging literacy

Federal and State Efforts to Reduce Disparities in Social Competence and Language/Emerging Literacy..... 20

Department of Family and Child Ecology and Child Development Laboratories’ Research Infrastructure ..... 23

Faculty Publications on Child Development ..... 24

Monitoring Implementation of the Research Plan ..... 28

References..... 29

**Department of Family and Child Ecology Child Development Laboratories’  
Research Plan to Reduce Disparities in Young Children’s Social Competence  
and Language/Emerging Literacy**

**Executive Summary**

Despite the fact that greater attention is being placed on the importance of the early years prior to formal schooling in the development of children’s social competence, language, and literacy, there continue to be significant disparities in school readiness in those coming from low-income populations, children with English as a second language, and those who have special needs. There is compelling evidence that children who enter school behind their peers are more vulnerable to school failure and bleaker futures.

Programs in the U. S. that are available for preschoolers are very different for middle-class and poorer children in terms of teacher training, effective curricular and instructional approaches, and home-school interaction in support of children’s development. When poor-quality early education is combined with less than optimal biological, socioeconomic, cultural and familial factors, children are far less likely to envision themselves as lifelong learners or to function successfully as contributing citizens in the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century.

The mission of the Department of Family and Child Ecology (FCE) is to enhance the ability of individuals and families to function effectively within and across changing environments and to influence those environments in ways that enhance the quality of life for all persons. Being ever mindful of that mission, FCE and its Child Development Laboratories (CDLs) are committed to making a unique contribution to the field of knowledge relative to preschool children’s developing social competence and language/emerging literacy. Documentation of disparities that may be influenced by socioeconomic or sociocultural factors will be a central research objective. In addition, the study will test the longitudinal effects of the FCE/CDL curricular model and approach to teacher training relative to disparity reduction. A model of full inclusion of children who begin with greater numbers of risks will be compared against the more popular approach of housing children from low socioeconomic populations only with similar peers. In addition, because parenting and family functioning are critical factors in the optimal development of a child, FCE/CDL research will include the identification of strategies to enhance parent efficacy.

To date, federal and state efforts to reduce disparities in children’s social competence and language/emerging literacy have focused largely on school-aged children. Head Start, the longest standing and most comprehensive effort by the federal government to support early development, has

been unable to serve all children requiring services. Too, Head Start teachers are not yet universally well trained in early childhood development or best practice in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The Department of Family and Child Ecology Child Development Laboratories will build a strong and large database for its intended longitudinal study and will make the data and findings available to other researchers and scholars interested in studying factors related to developing social competence and language/emerging literacy. The data set will be expanded significantly with the addition of the CDL sites in Haslett and Jenison in 2005. The ability to follow the children into kindergarten, first grade, and beyond because of linkages to these school systems and to Lansing Schools will provide useful data and analyses to the partner schools in predicting which children and families may need additional support. For FCE, the longitudinal research focus will become a vehicle for attracting undergraduate and graduate students from a strong national pool, hiring prominent faculty to work at MSU, and markedly increasing its extramural funding and endowments. Dissemination efforts will be intensified so that solid, useful research-based information is shared with policy makers, educators, and other professionals who support children and families coming primarily from higher-risk populations.

## **Introduction**

The mission of the Department of Family and Child Ecology (FCE) is to enhance the ability of individuals and families to function effectively within and across changing environments and to influence those environments in ways that enhance the quality of life for all persons. That mission is carried forward by FCE's Child Development Laboratory (CDL), which has been ranked as one of the top two training programs in the country in child development and learning practices by the U. S. Department of Education's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education. Its curriculum of best practices, based on principles of developmentally-appropriate programming, has been replicated across the state of Michigan and in the nation in many early childhood settings. It is now in its third decade of dissemination through textbooks published by FCE faculty and invited presentations in a number of local, national, and international venues.

As is typical of many university-sponsored laboratory preschools, the CDL has primarily served children from middle-class homes and the children of students. However, recent, intentional inclusion into the laboratories of 36 children and families participating in Michigan School Readiness Programs (MSRP) has added to the diversity of the approximately 280 families serviced annually by the CDL, enhancing researchers' ability to attract external funding that requires greater socioeconomic and socio-cultural diversity. In addition, of the 291 children currently enrolled, many have special needs, including those with physical impairments, autism, giftedness, and speech and language delays. In 2005/06, additional MSRP children will be added to the lab population, and Head Start children will be included at both the on-campus and Haslett sites for the first time in CDL history. The Jenison site fosters inclusion of children with autism, and children with special needs who have been attending Haslett's Preprimary Impaired Program in a resource room will be integrated among typical peers in the MSU/Haslett site.

At the current time, research in the CDL has been conducted by independent investigators, both within the Department of Family and Child Ecology as well as in other units at Michigan State University. The goal of the current research plan is to continue accommodating the research needs of

MSU students and faculty members following their own research agendas, as well as to detail an agenda for a signature FCE/CDL study.

FCE's faculty have been meeting for the past year to discuss selected instrumentation for the collection of data in the CDL and to discuss the possibility of a signature study that would focus on social competence and language/emerging literacy in the children attending the laboratories. More specifically, the longitudinal investigation is designed to examine whether disparities in Head Start and MSRP children's social competence and language/emerging literacy can be reduced when they are integrated with more typical peers in high-quality early education. The hypothesis is that when they are educated in contexts made up wholly of peers who may also have significant lags (e.g., behavior problems, sparse vocabularies, speech and language difficulties), their development progresses more slowly than in mixed settings. Of research interest will be: differences in the prevalence of effective early childhood contexts to support children's developing social competence and language/emerging literacy; differences in the incidence of school readiness among young children; and variations in families' abilities to advocate for their children's welfare. The ongoing collection of data is intended to complement the research efforts of other investigators across campus as secondary data or combined with newly collected information for additional analyses.

FCE faculty are positioned well in terms of expertise to undertake such a study. As can be seen in Table I, many are currently involved in research that is relevant to the described signature study. As early childhood education and human development faculty retire, the longitudinal study will be a factor in future hires. Joint appointments with units across campus who share FCE's research interests in child/human development will be fully explored prior to position postings. In addition, FCE has requested immediate consideration of an endowed chair related to the signature study, using the dollars in the Mary Lewis Child Development Endowment.

Described in the following plan will be the scope of the problem; planned FCE/CDL research directed at reducing disparities in developing social competence and language/emerging literacy abilities

in the early years; state and national efforts to decrease disparities; and the infrastructure that will allow FCE and its CDL to undertake a signature study to reduce those disparities.

**Table I. Current Research among FCE Human Development Faculty**

<b>Faculty Member</b>	<b>Research Conducted</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>
Bennett-Armistead, Susan Supervisor, CDL	Parents' Perception of Factors Influencing Kindergarten Readiness	Unfunded PhD Dissertation
Brophy-Herb, Holly Associate Professor	Early Prevention of Overweight: Development of an Intervention to Improve Feeding Practices with Infants of Medicaid Mothers	Michigan Dept. of Community Health/Medicaid
Brophy-Herb, Holly	Measuring Toddler-Parent Feeding Behaviors in Diverse Population	U.S. Dept. of PHS - Health and Human Services
Brophy-Herb, Holly	Pathways Project II: Research into Directions for Family Health	U.S. Dept. of PHS – Health and Human Services
Brophy-Herb, Holly	Quality Improvement in Early Head Start	Jackson Community Action Agency
Carolan, Marsha Associate Professor; MFT Program Supervisor	Healthy Kids, Healthy Families (2 projects)	Michigan Dept. of Community Health/Medicaid <b>and</b> MSU Fact Grant
Griffore, Robert, Professor and Phenice, Lillian, Professor	Early Childhood Literacy Program - Evaluation Services	Detroit Public Schools
Johnson, Deborah, Professor	Excavating Culture in Parenting and Socialization Processes Among Diverse Families	National Science Foundation
Johnson, Deborah	NICHD Study of Early Childhood Care and Youth Development	National Institute of Children's Health and Human Development
Meece, Darrell, Assistant Professor and Silvey, Le Anne, Assistant Professor	Projecto Empuje: Michigan Initiative for Migrant Latino Early Childhood Education	U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
Onaga, Esther, Associate Professor and Acting Director, ICYF	Projecto Empuje: Michigan Initiative for Migrant/Latino Early Childhood Education	U. S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
Onaga, Esther	Early Childhood Inclusion	Michigan Dept. of Community Health
Poindexter, Erica, Head Teacher, CDL	Leap Frog Project-MA Thesis	MSU Outreach (Subcontract from Kellogg Foundation)
Shirer, Karen, .25 FCE, Assistant Professor; .75 MSUE	Better Kid Care	Michigan Family Independence Agency

Shirer, Karen	Building Strong Families	Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
Soderman, Anne Professor and Acting Chair	Leap Frog Project on Preschool Literacy	MSU Outreach (Subcontract from Kellogg Foundation)
Soderman, Anne	Primary Literacy and Assessment	MSU Outreach (Subcontract from Kellogg Foundation)
Soderman, Anne	Even Start CAPS Evaluation	Michigan Dept. of Education and Child Abuse and Protective Services
Soderman, Anne	Even Start Bay-Arenac Evaluation	Michigan Dept. of Education and Bay-Arenac Intermediate School District
Soderman, Anne	Even Start Port Huron Evaluation	Michigan Dept. of Education and Port Huron Area School District
Whiren, Alice, Professor	The Effects of Verbal Scaffolding on the Complexity of Children's Block Construction	Self-funded by Dr. Whiren
Whiren, Alice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year of Above Project in Head Start with Additional Assessment of Children's Drawings	Self-funded by Dr. Whiren

## **The CDL Signature Research Program**

### **Scope of the Problem**

Because of increased labor force participation of women with young children, many more children are in early care and education programs than in previous decades. Despite growing awareness of the importance of early development of social competence and language/emerging literacy in the young child, there continue to be disparate systems of care and education available to children in the United States during the preschool and early elementary years. These programs vary dramatically in terms of quality, particularly with respect to teacher training and knowledge of effective curricular approaches and instructional strategies to support children's development in every developmental domain. There are also striking differences in the quality and amount of teacher-parent interaction in working as a team to support children's early development (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2004).

As some children move from less advantaged preschool experiences into formal educational settings, there is a corresponding and resulting disparity in social and intellectual competence, or readiness and motivation to learn, which in turn predicts school failure. In addition, there is compelling evidence that functional disparities in readiness are represented more heavily in children coming from low-income minority populations, in boys, in children whose first language is not English, in children with acute or chronic health problems, and among children coming from single parent homes with young, poorly educated mothers. Contributing to this are biological, socioeconomic, cultural, and familial factors that must be taken into consideration when designing optimal contexts for learning. Researchers generally agree that to function successfully in the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century, people will have to demonstrate the following core abilities (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, Resnick, 1996):

*Possess a solid education and be able to apply what they know and can do in relevant situations:*  
Demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of literacy, numeracy, science, social studies, music and the visual arts, physical education, and health.

*Work well with others:* Communicate well, respect others, engage with colleagues to resolve differences of opinion, and function well as members of a team.

*Act as problem solvers:* Analyze situations, make reasoned judgments, and solve new problems.

*Utilize skills broadly and engage in flexible thinking:* Apply knowledge and skills across multiple areas, generalize knowledge and skills from one situation to another and regroup and try alternative approaches when standard solutions fail.

*Function as information seekers:* Gain access to information through various modes, including spoken and written languages, and intelligently use complex new tools and technologies.

*Envision themselves as lifelong learners:* Continue to learn new approaches, skills, and knowledge as conditions and needs change.

The public is becoming increasingly aware that not all children have access to the same kinds of early learning contexts to provide the development of these core abilities. Regardless of background or income level, many parents are concerned about the quality of their children's early education and care, and the resulting readiness to learn as they enter school and continue moving through the educational system. This is especially worrisome to parents who have children with special needs. There is a need to further advance the understanding of disparities in preschool children's social skills and language/emerging literacy skills that affect the transition to elementary school and later school performance.

### **Planned FCE/CDL Research**

Certainly, FCE is not entering into an entirely new field of research. However, it intends to make a unique contribution to the knowledge base that exists relative to disparities in the preschool child's social competence and language/emerging literacy as they later affect school readiness and learning success. It will do this by better documenting disparities that may be influenced by socioeconomic or sociocultural factors, examining the longitudinal effects of the FCE/CDL curricular model and inclusion of children with special needs into typical settings, and working to increase self efficacy of parents. With this in mind, FCE/CDL has identified four research initiatives (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. FCE/CDL Strategic Research Plan to Reduce Disparities in Social Competence and Language/Emerging Literacy**

**Goal: To Reduce Disparities in Social Competence and Language/Emerging Literacy Among Preschool Children**

**Research Objectives**

- 1. Advance understanding of disparities in preschool children’s social competence and language/emerging literacy skills and abilities that may be influenced by socioeconomic and sociocultural factors.**
- 2. Test the FCE/CDL curricular and teacher training model for reducing disparities in young children’s social competence and language/emerging literacy**
- 3. Study the longitudinal effects of inclusion of Head Start and Michigan School Readiness children, English language learners, and special needs children into typical settings.**
- 4. Increase the self efficacy of parents to advocate for their children where there are disparities in developing social competence and language/emerging literacy**

**Research Objective 1. Advance understanding of disparities in preschool children’s social competence and language/emerging literacy skills and abilities that may be influenced by socioeconomic and sociocultural factors.**

**Background**

**Socioeconomic Variations among Children**

Although normal individual development is complex and all children are vulnerable to some degree, researchers have documented that children are at increased risk when they enter school from low-income populations. Correlations between socioeconomic and demographic risk factors and subsequent learning difficulties in school have been well documented (see Stipek, 1999, for a review). More than half of all U. S. children are now reported to have one or more risk factors for school failure, and 15 % have three or more. Children from lowest SES settings have limited exposure to books, language, storybook reading,

and other literacy-related activity known to provide a critical foundation for learning achievement (Neuman, 2003). This lack of exposure and resulting vulnerability can be seen in Table II.

**Table II. Disparities in Beginning Kindergartners’ School-Readiness Skills by Socioeconomic Status (Neuman, 2003:287)**

<b>Emerging Literacy Skill</b>	<b>Lowest SES</b>	<b>Highest SES</b>
<b>Identifies beginning sounds of words</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Recognizes letters of alphabet</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Counts to 20</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Writes own name</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Identifies primary colors</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Amount of time having been read to prior to kindergarten</b>	<b>25 hours</b>	<b>1,000hours</b>
<b>Accumulated experience with words</b>	<b>13million</b>	<b>45 million</b>
<b>Source: Lee &amp; Burkam, 2002; Adams, 1990; West, Denton; &amp; Germino-Hausken, 2000).</b>		

Children who are living in circumstances that place them at greater risk of school failure (e.g., poverty, low level of maternal education, maternal depression, and other factors) are more likely to succeed if they attend high-quality programs staffed by well-trained teachers. Research conducted over the past several decades has demonstrated that children who participate in early child care programs targeted at low-income families show both short- and long-term gains in children’s cognitive, language, and social development (see Burchinal, 1999, for a review).

Culture provides the context for children’s developing cognition and socio-emotional development in the objects and ideas that children encounter (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001). Aspects of culture are associated with the type of problem solving children do, interpersonal interactions, amounts and kinds of language children learn, quality and amount of vocabulary (Hart & Risley, 1995), and how much talking on the part of young children is acceptable to adults caring for them (Schieffelin & Eisenberg, 1984). It also influences what expectations parents have of their children at particular ages, as well as expectations about how important it is for children to be in early educational contexts and about what they should be learning.

To address research Objective 1, the following specific hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Upon entry at the CDL, children from lower-SES homes will demonstrate lower receptive vocabulary, receptive and expressive language scores, and concepts of print than will children from higher SES homes. Measures used will include the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (Dunn & Dunn, 1981), Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4) (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2002), and PK/K-L (Soderman, 2003).

H2: Upon entry at the CDL, children from lower-SES homes will be rated by teachers as displaying fewer positive social skills, greater negative social behavior, and less positive peer relations than children from higher-SES homes. Measures will include teacher ratings, using the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation (SCBE) (LaFreniere, Dumas, Capuano & Dubeau, 1993) and peer rating using sociometric interviews (Asher, Singleton, Tinsley & Hymel, 1979).

**Research Objective 2. Test FCE/CDL's curricular model and teacher training approach for reducing disparities in young children's social competence and language/emerging literacy**

**Background**

Differences in Early Education and Care

Quality of early developmental contexts for children varies dramatically. Some children are in high-quality early childhood programs, while many others have poor-quality experiences which are detrimental to them with respect to long-term development and learning (Whitebook, Sakai & Howes, 1997). High-quality early childhood programs have the following characteristics (Biddle & Berliner, 2002; Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 2001; Stronge, 2002; Whitebook et al., 1997):

Practitioners are well prepared and well compensated.

Staffing is stable.

Group sizes are small, and a small number of children are assigned to each practitioner.

Warm, attentive relationships are established between adults and children.

Environments are safe and healthy.

Environments are stimulating.

Family Involvement is evident.

Links to comprehensive community services are made.

When these conditions are not met or only marginally met for children, resulting poor-quality experiences lead to increased behavioral problems and poorer academic progress in children.

Consequently, such children are also more likely to have poor social skills (Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 1999; Vandell & Corasanti, 1990). Locally-funded and federally-funded programs often provide too little instruction, at too slow a pace, and with teachers who are only marginally trained. These negative effects appear to be long lasting: Evidence of the impact of poor care quality is apparent as long as 5 years later. To make matters worse, families may not be able to compensate for the negative impact of poor-quality programs, at least for children who spend 20 or more hours a week in such circumstances (Doherty-Derkowski, 1998). Because high-quality care and education may be more expensive or federal programs such as Head Start may be unavailable, children in low-income families are the most likely to be enrolled in poor-quality programs at both the preprimary and primary levels, compounding the challenges these children will face.

Conversely, children whose education and care are described as high quality enjoy a variety of benefits. Such children demonstrate higher levels of language development, greater social competence, a better ability to regulate their behavior, and better academic performance than do their peers in poor-quality programs (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001). Additional evidence indicates that children who have high-quality early childhood program experiences out-perform peers who have no such experiences prior to entering school. These results hold true in the short term and across time (Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2004: 8-9).

In high-quality programs for preprimary children, adults have specific training in child development, early childhood education, and subject matter content such as literacy, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, aesthetic development, math and science. They have learned to vary their teaching strategies and expectations on the basis of what they believe is age appropriate, individually appropriate, and socially and culturally appropriate for each child. They understand that teaching and

learning are most effective when they engage children in useful, meaningful activity that builds on their existing knowledge in a context of play and structured activity. They organize the learning community and environment in ways to provide optimal opportunities for children to learn from one another, from adults, and through guided investigation of their physical environment (Soderman, Gregory, & McCarty, 2005)..

Such well-trained teachers are usually paid reasonable wages and receive satisfactory benefits, resulting in less turn over. When staffing is stabilized, teachers remain with programs and the same group of children long enough for children to develop trusting relationships with an adult outside the home.

In 2001, the National Research Council acknowledged the widespread differences in teacher training for early childhood settings and stark variations in America's programs for preschoolers in terms of quality, content, organization, sponsorship, source of funding, relationship to the public schools, government regulation, and teacher training. In order to support the full range and optimal development of all children, they recommended a substantial investment in the education and training of those who work with young children as follows (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001: 13-15):

Recommendation 1: Each group of children in an early childhood education and care program should be assigned to a teacher who has a bachelor's degree with specialized education related to early childhood. Achieving this goal will require a significant public investment in the professional development of current and new teachers.

Recommendation 2: Education programs for teachers should provide them with a stronger and more specific foundational knowledge of the development of children's social and affective behavior, thinking, and language.

Recommendation 3: Teacher education programs should require mastery of education on the pedagogy of teaching preschool-aged children, including the following:

Knowledge of teaching and learning and child development and how  
to integrate them into practice.

Information about how to provide rich conceptual experiences that

promote growth in specific content areas, as well as particular areas of development, such as language (vocabulary) and cognition (reasoning).

Knowledge of effective teaching strategies, including organizing the environment and routines so as to promote activities that build social-emotional relationships in the classroom.

Knowledge of subject-matter content appropriate for preschool children and knowledge of professional standards in specific content areas.

Knowledge of assessment procedures (observation/performance records, work sampling, interview methods) that can be used to inform instruction.

Knowledge of variability among children, in terms of teaching methods and strategies that may be required, including teaching children who do not speak English, children from various economic and regional contexts, and children with identified disabilities.

Ability to work with teams of professionals.

Appreciation of the parents' role and knowledge of methods of collaboration with parents and families.

Appreciation for the need for appropriate strategies for accountability.

Recommendation 4: A critical component of pre-service preparation should be supervised, relevant student teaching or internship experience in which new teachers receive ongoing guidance and feedback from a qualified supervisor.

Recommendation 5: All early childhood education and child care programs should have access to a qualified supervisor of early childhood education.

Recommendation 6: Federal and state departments of education, human services, and other agencies interested in young children and their families should initiate programs of research and development aimed at learning more about effective preparation of early childhood teachers.

Recommendation 7: The committee recommends the development of demonstration schools for professional development.

To address research objective 2, the following specific hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Children who participate in early childhood programs following the FCE/CDL curricular model and approach to teacher training will be rated by kindergarten teachers as more socially competent than will other children. Kindergarten teachers will complete the SCBE Profile – Short Form (LaFreniere et al., 1993) on all children in the classroom.

H2: Children who participate in early childhood programs following the FCE/CDL curricular model and approach to teacher training will be rated by kindergarten teachers as more skilled in language, vocabulary, and emergent literacy skills than will other children. Measure to be adapted.

In addition to these main hypotheses, we anticipate that many complementary hypotheses that are aimed at “fine tuning” the curricular approach and teacher training program will arise over time. For example, an effort is currently under way to evaluate student perceptions of two models of student teacher placement, one in which student teachers are assigned to the same head teacher across semesters and a second in which student teachers are assigned to different head teachers.

**Research Objective 3. Study the longitudinal effects of inclusion of Head Start and Michigan School Readiness Program children, English language learners and special needs children into typical settings**

**Background**

Integration versus Contained Programs for Children from Low Socioeconomic Status and High-Risk

Populations

There have been many efforts to target low-income children for early intervention programs aimed at better preparing young children for school entry by enhancing social and language growth in the early years. Compelling evidence exists for the cognitive, language, and social gains associated with

participation in the programs by low-income children (Burchinal, 1999). However, one aspect that many of these programs share is that participation is limited to only low-income children; therefore, young children who participate in these programs only experience peer groups comprised of other children also facing many risk factors in their lives. The third research objective aims to examine the impact that inclusion into typical programs might have for children from low-income homes or with multiple risk factors.

### English Language Learners

For young children who are English language learners, learning to speak English is more complicated for some than for others, depending on their primary language, particularly when great differences in inflection, verb morphology, and irregularities exist. Also making a difference is whether or not English is spoken in the home by the primary caregiver and how much time the child spends with English-speaking or non-English-speaking peers. Children who interact often with English-speaking peers and tend to learn language in chunks (e.g. “Stop doing that.”), rather than one word at a time and in a more analytical fashion, learn English faster (Bates, Bretherton, & Snyder, 1988). Personality of children also affects their English language acquisition, and talkative risk-takers, rather than those who would rather just listen, will acquire larger expressive vocabularies and more sophisticated syntax (Landon & Somers, 1979).

### Special Needs of Young Children

Any number of developmental delays and disabilities can be found in all populations of children, no matter what ethnic, racial, cultural, familial, or economic situation. These range from speech and language impairment and limited proficiency in English to developmental disabilities (e.g., mental retardation, Down Syndrome) resulting from birth defects, poor nutrition, and brain and nervous system abnormalities. In addition, there are pervasive developmental disorders, attention deficits and hyperactivity, specific learning disabilities, and chronic health problems (Batshaw, 2002).

Young children with special needs often need special coaching from adults if they are to establish positive relationships and friendships with their peers. Observations indicate that they are less likely to

engage in social interaction without interventions that include modeling and observational learning, coaching, prompting, rehearsal, direct teaching of social strategies, and reinforcement procedures (Bowman et al., 2001: 172).

To address Research Objective 3, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Head Start and Michigan School Readiness children, and those who are English language learners or have special needs who are integrated into the CDL program along with typical peers will score more highly on tests of social competence than will control groups of children who have not attended. Measures to be used will be the SCBE Profile – Short Form (LaFreniere et al., 1993).

H2: Head Start and Michigan School Readiness children, and those who are English language learners or have special needs who are integrated into the CDL program along with typical peers will score more highly on tests of language/emerging literacy than will a control group of children who have not attended. Measures will include the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III) (Dunn & Dunn, 1981), Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4) (Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2002), and PK/K-L (Soderman, 2003).

#### **Research Objective 4 – Increase the Self-Efficacy of Parents to Advocate for their Children Where There are Disparities in Developing Social Competence and Language/Emerging Literacy**

##### **Background**

###### Parents' Ability to Serve as Advocates for Their Children

Though parents are expected to be advocates for their children, to protect them, and to provide for their optimal development, families differ significantly in their priorities for their children's future and ability to act on those needs. There are wide variations in financial resources, knowledge of child development, family stability, and knowledge of formal and informal supports to mobilize when attempting to cope with parenting and family difficulties.

Though the literature is rich with definitions of family strengths, this study will be geared toward enhancing strengths in those families who have children attending the CDL in three primary areas earlier

identified by Bowman: interpersonal and intrafamily strengths; cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral characteristics; family functioning (e.g., health and well-being).

There are also variations in terms of what professionals expect of and believe about parents, depending on social class. Middle-class parents are viewed very differently than are parents coming from low-income populations. The latter tend to be perceived as less capable in their parenting, more distressed, and less able to contribute in the classroom and less open to having teachers visit them at home. Bowman et al. (2001) suggest that the theoretical basis for parent efficacy is still unclear and that rigorous research needs to document how current efforts to work with parents may or may not affect their aims and hopes for their child – and, ultimately, their child’s development.

The following hypotheses will be tested:

H1: The parents who have children attending the CDL will score higher on a measure designed to assess whether or not the family perceives it has adequate resources to meet the needs of the family as a whole as well as the needs of individual members than will parents of children selected to participate in control groups. The measure used will be the Family Resource Scale (Leet & Dunst, 1988).

H2: The parents who have children attending the CDL will score higher on a measure designed to assess parenting style expectations, nurturing, and discipline than will parents of children selected to participate in control groups. The measure used will be the Parent Behavior Checklist (PBC) (Fox, 1994).

### **Federal and State Efforts to Reduce Disparities in Social Competence and Language/Emerging Literacy**

Head Start is one of the most long-standing and comprehensive efforts by the federal government to rectify disparities in children because of economically disabling conditions. Begun in 1964 when it was funded to extend preschool services to about half a million children, it now serves many times that number nationally. While it has a breadth of commendable guiding objectives and principles designed to improve the pre-kindergarten experiences of low income and special needs children, critical issues continue to surface. These include whether or not services begin early enough for children coming from

lower socioeconomic backgrounds, the quality and implementation of the curriculum, appropriateness and effectiveness of current assessment and evaluation strategies, and the quality of the teaching staff. The goal of the program is to have all Head Start teachers with a completed 4-year degree; however, many programs are still operating with teachers who do not yet have a 2-year degree. In addition, it is assumed that Head Start and other programs targeted at children in poverty effectively enroll intended children. According to U. S. Newswire (May 13, 2004), large numbers of eligible children are left out because of difficulties in identification, frequent changes in eligibility, geographic mobility of the target population and other reasons.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires schools to meet absolute targets for growth in scores on mandatory state tests measuring achievement in reading and math, so that all children will reach proficiency by 2013-14. Results must be achieved in all demographic categories, including those of economic disadvantage, ethnicity/minority status, limited proficiency in English, and special education. Sanctions will be put in place if any of the subgroups fails to show adequate progress for two years. This law, while acknowledging the importance of highly qualified teachers, makes the assumptions that all children are equally prepared for formal instruction in kindergarten and first grade and that all children enter school ready to learn, in other words, a level playing field (Neuman, 2003).

While the funding of this program has now extended on down to preschool programs, it continues to assume that all children come with equal capacities and motivations to learn and that all children are in attendance after enrollment. In addition, the classrooms are mandated to be populated with at least 78 percent of low income children. In other words, the children served are not likely to be in classrooms where their peers have any higher level social competency and language/literacy skills than they possess.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was passed in 1975 (PL 94-142), mandating special education programs for school-age children. This left out the majority of young preschool-aged children with disabilities. This was corrected in the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 (PL 99-457), which extended the mandate for special education services to infants and preschoolers. It also required the development of an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for infants and toddlers in

early intervention programs. In 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (PL 101-476) included a mandate for greater emphasis on meeting the needs of ethnically and culturally diverse children with disabilities and the development of early intervention programs to address the needs of children exposed prenatally to maternal substance abuse. IDEA '97 (PL 105-17) maximized children's inclusion into typical settings, strengthened the role of parents, gave additional focus to racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity to prevent inappropriate mislabeling or identification, ensured that schools were safe and conducive to learning, and encouraged less adversarial interaction between parents and educators (Batshaw, 2002).

Michigan has complemented the numbers of Head Start programs with the Michigan School Readiness Programs (MSRP), serving four-year-olds who do not qualify for Head Start but have conditions in their lives expected to interfere with school success. High/Scope Educational Research Foundation's evaluation of these programs indicated that children attending these programs were more likely to succeed in school later on than children who came from similar circumstances but without attending an MSRP program. Children with special needs, ages 3-5, are eligible for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs and services. These are usually self-contained programs offered by local school systems and ISD special education departments.

Most of the efforts to reduce disparities at the state level are focused on public elementary schools. There are good programs in both the development of social competence (such as Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative supported by Kalamazoo, Ottawa and Macomb ISDs) and early language/literacy; however, they tend to be sporadic, locally funded, and for short periods of time. There is recognition by the Governor's office in launching her Off to a Great Start project that early literacy support is critical for later school success; however, the state's universities and foundations will have to contribute heavily, if it is to have any significant effect. By the time children enter formal schooling in Michigan and other states where preschool education continues to be poorly funded, of questionable quality, and unavailable for numbers of children who need it, many will have already developed a number of learning deficits that will be difficult to erase.

**Department of Family and Child Ecology and Child Development Laboratory's  
Research Infrastructure**

Integrating children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those with language deficits, and others who have special needs with more typically-developing peers in the on-campus and off-campus CDL sites will become a central research effort on the part of FCE/CDL for the next several years and beyond. The curriculum that has been developed over the past 25 years will be formally tested in terms of its longitudinal effects on children's school success. Partnerships with the Haslett School System, Jenison School System, and others who may become CDL satellites in Michigan are expected to expand FCE/CDL's potential for strong federal or foundation funding. A summary of sources for extramural funding is provided in Figure 2. Specified early childhood education faculty in the Department will begin an aggressive campaign in Spring, 2005 to find funding for its signature study.

**Figure 2. Potential sources for extramural funding.**

<b>Federal Sources</b>	<b>Foundation Sources</b>
Child Care Development Fund: The Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program Children's Research Initiative (CRI) Interagency Early Childhood Research Initiative: Effectiveness of Interventions, Programs, Curricula through Age Five National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD): Early Literacy and Learning National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Integrative Early Childhood Interventions National Institute of Health: Pathways Linking Education to Health National Science Foundation (NSF) No Child Left Behind Early Reading First Program U. S. Department of Education: Interagency Education Grant U. S. Department of Education: National Center of Early Development and Learning U. S. Department of Education: Pre-school Curriculum Evaluation Research Grant U. S. Department of Health & Human Services: ACF (Head Start)	Annenberg Foundation Barbara Bush Foundation of Family Literacy For All Kids Foundation, Inc. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Foundation for Child Development Gerber Foundation International Reading Assn. JC Downing Foundation Mazda Foundation Oxford Foundation Russell Sage Foundation Verizon Foundation

In addition to the partners external to MSU who have been identified in this plan, it is expected that a major professional goal for each faculty member in the Department is to develop partnerships with

faculty in other University units. A number of colleges and schools have been identified as potential partners with a shared interest in young children and families. For example, faculty members in the former Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition (which is now in two separate Colleges) are very likely potential partners due to their focus on nutrition, child obesity, and healthy development. FCE and FSHN will put out two RFPs for \$50,000 each this month for collaborative research on child development and nutrition. Other units include units within the College of Social Science, such as Criminal Justice, Social Work, and Sociology, and the Colleges of Agriculture, Education, and Nursing. As a first step this spring toward research collaboration with a variety of these university partners, 11 FACT proposals were submitted by 9 FCE faculty members. While FACT cannot support all of them, those that are not funded will be submitted elsewhere to a relevant funding source. The Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, directed by Dr. Esther Onaga, has been organizing symposia to bring together diverse groups of university faculty sharing interests in children and families, as well as professionals in the community. It has also been providing help to FCE faculty in preparing forms and budgets for proposals.

As faculty in FCE retire, positions will be filled with scholars who can support the research thrust of the department and the CDLs in terms of children's developing social competence and language/literacy, preservice/post BA teacher training, and outreach. Strategies will be enacted to make recruiting offers available for attracting out-of-state, high quality graduate students for doctoral study in the department. The Department and CDL will market use of the data base for secondary analysis to other scholars and intends to build a national reputation as a center for the study of disparity reduction in early social competence and language/emerging literacy.

### **FCE Faculty Publications on Child Development**

Future research will build on FCE/CDL's well known and highly reputable approach for teaching about best practice in adult-child interaction, designed to model and foster theory-to-practice strategies for guiding children's optimal social development. Numerous faculty publications are well respected in the field of human development, early childhood education, parenting, and human ecology.

1. **Dr. Harriette Pipes McAdoo** has written widely about the experiences of African American children and families. *Black Children: Social, Educational & Parental Environments* is now in its second edition, and she has also edited *Black Families*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.
2. Faculty members **J. R. Miller** and **L. B. Schiamberg** co-edited a text, *Human Ecology: An Encyclopedia of Children, Families, Communities and Environments*.
3. **R. Griffore** and **L. Phenice** have also contributed to the understanding of ecological perspectives in their *Language of Human Ecology: A General Systems Perspective*.
4. **F. Villarruel** has centered on social justice for Latino/a youth, co-editing *Lost Opportunities*.
5. **A. Soderman**, M. Kostelnik (former FCE Chair; now Dean at University of Nebraska), and **A. Whiren** have collaborated on many nationally and internationally prominent textbooks: *Guiding Children's Social Development* (Kostelnik, Whiren, Soderman, Stein & Gregory, 2002), is used in many teacher-training institutions, has now been translated into Korean, and is now in print for its 5<sup>th</sup> edition. The CDL Comprehensive Curriculum, developed over the past 25 years, has been expanded on in the text, *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education* (Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 1994; 1999; 2004) and is now moving into a fourth edition. Another text, *Children with Special Needs: Lessons for Early Childhood Professionals* (Kostelnik, Onaga, Rohde, and Whiren, 2001) is a faculty contribution to the understanding of special needs children and their families. *Scaffolding Emergent Literacy: A Child-Centered Approach for Preschool through Grade 5* (Soderman, Gregory, and McCarty, 2005) is now in its second edition.
6. The newly-hired CDL supervisor, **Susan Bennett-Armistead**, has authored or co-authored several publications that focus on literacy and involving parents (*Literacy and the Youngest Learner: Best Practices for Early Childhood Educators* (in press); *Helping families help us: Using parent collaboration to promote comprehension* (2004); and *Reading and Writing Informational Text: Research Based Practices*.

7. **H. Brophy-Herb** has co-edited *Infancy in America: An Encyclopedia* and *Talking with Your Baby: Family as the First School*. She also has another co-authored text under review, *Preschoolers' Social Competence: Relations to Family Characteristics and the Classroom Environment*.
8. **T.Luster** has co-edited two publications, *Infant Development: Ecological Perspectives* and *Parenting: An Ecological Perspective, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*
9. CDL Head Teacher, **Grace Spalding**, has contributed to a popular texts in early childhood education, *Themes Teachers Use (Kostelnik, 1996)*.
10. **A. Soderman** and P. Farrell (MSU Office of Outreach and Engagement) have a new contract with Allyn & Bacon for a preschool literacy text, *Off to a Great Start: Best Practices in Emerging Literacy*, which is due to be published in Fall, 2005. This ethnically diverse faculty in the Department and CDL is highly active at state, national, and international conferences on an annual basis.

For over 75 years, the CDL has provided outstanding programs for children and families from the greater Lansing, E. Lansing, Haslett, Okemos, and Williamston communities. Over 350 children from the ages of 3 months to 6 years and their families are served each year, and that number will be expanded dramatically as FCE implements its partnerships with Haslett and Jenison School Systems.

The CDL fosters a community of scholars for the integration of teaching, learning, outreach, and research. Students and faculty take pride in the “MSU approach” for which the Department and CDL are noted and have worked closely together to maintain the integrity of the program and its usefulness in providing the very best context for learning – both for young children and for early childhood educators. It is primed well to enter its next developmental phase – that of becoming a center of excellence for research related to social competence and language/emerging literacy.

The impending expansion of the CDLs, bringing in the future Haslett and Jenison campuses, is intended to provide FCE and other units at Michigan State University with nationally recognized, exemplary centers for studying child development and best-practice, early learning contexts. The current

program serves over 900 undergraduate students majoring in Child Development and Teaching or Community Services each year. Competent teachers who are produced by FCE, in conjunction with the practice site at the CDL, consistently score at 100% accuracy on state teacher competency tests, as compared with 82-92 percent accuracy by all other state institutions. They are sought by Michigan principals because of their earned reputation as professionals who are knowledgeable about child development and instructional content and can effectively manage the classroom. Undergraduate and graduate students in the Department and the University have an opportunity to participate in practical and research experiences that complement their course learning.

The CDL database has been an excellent vehicle for encouraging participation in research by graduate and undergraduate research assistants, who have been active in collecting, entering, and analyzing the data. The database has been a source for undergraduate students to prepare their own research projects for presentation at both the university and college levels. FCE anticipates that the further development of this resource to fit the needs of the signature research projects will continue to involve students in every phase of the research effort and offer a much richer source of secondary data to university scholars. Strategies to develop financial incentives in terms of recruitment packages to attract high level students have been discussed in the CDL business plan, and work must be done to build endowments to support both students and new faculty positions.

In the next year, the inclusion of additional children from Head Start and Michigan School readiness programs, as well as the partnerships with satellite programs, will result in a more diverse population for researchers to draw on and should result in funding agencies viewing the CDLs more favorably with respect to external funding. The database will be available to university researchers to complement their own data collection efforts, making for economically efficient proposals and studies.

Dissemination efforts will be intensified so that FCE/CDL's reputation as a place to study the social competency and language/emerging literacy development of young children is enhanced, opportunities for extramural funding are increased, and solid, useful research-based information is shared with the public. The ultimate goal of the Department of Family and Child Ecology is to increase the

numbers of scholars and prominent faculty from across the nation and the world to want to study and work at Michigan State University.

### **Monitoring Implementation of the Research Plan**

An outcome monitoring evaluation will be implemented to answer key questions about the efficacy of this plan. An annual report will be produced in Spring, 2006, to document progress that has been made in terms of external funding gained to support the research objectives outlined here, all dissemination efforts, and success in connecting with MSU partners and others outside the MSU community. Barriers and challenges to achieving a greater research presence for FCE/CDL will be included, as will factors facilitating success. Internal and external sources of data will be elicited, with survey results from FCE undergraduate and graduate students, parents, FCE/CDL faculty, MSU partners, and community outreach partners. Evaluation results will be reported to the Dean of Social Science, Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Education, and to the Provost.

## References

- Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Asher, S. R., Singleton, L. C., Tinsley, B. R. & Hymel, S. (1979). A reliable sociometric measure for preschool children. *Developmental Psychology*, 15, 443-444.
- Bates, E., Bretherton, I., and Snyder, L. (1988). *From first words to grammar: Individual differences and dissociable mechanisms*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Batshaw, M. L., M.D. (2002). *Children with disabilities, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed*. Baltimore: Brooks.
- Bennett-Armistead, V.S. (2004). Helping families help us: using parent collaboration to promote comprehension. In *Spotlight on Comprehension: Building a Literacy of Thoughtfulness*. Linda Hoyt, ed., Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Bennett-Armistead, V. S., Duke, N. K. & Moses, A. M. (in press). *Literacy and the Youngest Learner: Best practices for early childhood educators*. NY: Scholastic.
- Biddle, B. J. & Berliner, D. C. (2002, February). Small class size and its effects. *Educational Leadership*, 59 (5), 12-23.
- Bowman, B. T., Donovan, M. S. and Burns, M. S. (Eds.) (2001). *Eager to learn: Educating our preschoolers*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Bredenkamp, S. & Copple, C. (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Burchinal, M. R. (1999). Child care experiences and developmental outcomes. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 563, 73-97.
- Doherty-Derkowski, G. (1998). *Quality matters: Excellence in early childhood programs (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Duke, N. K. & Bennett-Armistead. *Reading and writing informational text: Research-based practices*. NY: Scholastic.
- Dunn, L. M. & Dunn, L. M. (1981). *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.
- Fitzgerald, H. E., Honig, A. S. & Brophy-Herb, H. (Eds.) (2001). *Infancy in America: An encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio.
- Fitzgerald, H., Karraker, K. & Luster, T. (Eds.) (2002). *Infant development: Ecological perspectives*. NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Fox, R. (1994). *Parent Behavior Checklist*. Austin, Texas: Pro Ed.

- French, L. and Song, M. (1998). Developmentally appropriate teacher-director approaches: Images from Korean kindergartens. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 30: 409-430.
- Griffore, R. & Phenice, L. (2001). *The language of human ecology: A general systems perspective*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt.
- Guralnick, M. J. and Paul-Brown, D. (1986). Communicative interactions of mildly delayed and normally developing preschool children: Effects of listener's developmental level. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research*, 29 (1), 2-10.
- Hart, B. & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Honig, A. S. & Brophy, H. E. (1996). *Talking with your baby: Family and the first school*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Jambunathan, S., Burts, D. C., & Pierce, S. H. (1999). Developmentally appropriate practices as predictors of self-competence among preschoolers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 13 (2), 167-174.
- Kontos, S. & Wilcox-Herzog, A. (1997). Teacher's interactions with children: Why are they so important? *Young Children*, 52 (2), 4-12.
- Kostelnik, M. J. (Ed.) (1996). *Themes teachers use*. Glenview, IL: Good Year Books.
- Kostelnik, M. J., Onaga, E., Rohde, B., & Whiren, A. (2001). *Children with special needs: Lessons for early childhood professionals*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kostelnik, M. J., Soderman, A. K., & Whiren, A. P. (2004). *Developmentally appropriate curriculum: Best practices in early childhood education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Kostelnik, M. J., Whiren, A. P., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L., & Gregory, K. S. (2002). *Guiding children's social development: Theory to practice, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.* New York: Delmar.
- Landon, S. J. & Sommers, R. K. (1979). Talkativeness and children's linguistic abilities. *Language and Speech*, 22 (3), 269-275.
- Lee, V. E. & Burkam, D. T. (2002). *Inequality at the starting gate*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- Leet, H. E. & Dunst, C. J. (1988). Family Resource Scale. In C. J. Dunst and C. M. Trivette. *Enabling and Empowering Families*, pp 139-141. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.
- Lefreniere, P. J., Dumas, J., Capuano, F. & Dubeau, D. (1993). The development and validation of the preschool socio-affective profile. *Psychological Assessment: Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 4, 442-450.
- Luster, T. & Okagaki, L., 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (In Press). *Parenting: An Ecological Perspective*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

- McAdoo, H. P. (Ed.) (2001). *Black children: Social, educational and parental environments*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McAdoo, H. P. (1997). *Black families, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, J. R., Lerner, R. M. & Schiamberg, L. B. (2003). *Human ecology: An encyclopedia of children, families, communities, and environments*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clío.
- Neuman, S. B. (December 2003). From rhetoric to reality: The case for high-quality compensatory prekindergarten programs. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85 (4), 286-293.
- Neuman, S. B., and Dickinson, D. K. (2001). *Handbook of early literacy research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Resnick, L. (1996). Schooling and the workplace: What relationship? In *Preparing youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (21-27). Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.
- Schieffelin, B. B. & Eisenberg, A. R. (1984). Cultural variations in children's conversations. In R. L. Schiefelbusch and J. Pikar (Eds.) *The Acquisition of Communicative Competence*. Baltimore: University Park Press.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S. and Griffin, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Soderman, A. K. (2003). PK/K-Literacy checklist. In Soderman, A. K. and Farrell, P. *Off to a Great Start: Best Practices in Emerging Literacy*. E. Lansing, MI: MSU Office of Outreach and Engagement.
- Soderman, A. K. & Farrell, P. (In Press). *Off to a Great Start: Best Practices in Emerging Literacy*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Soderman, A. K., Gregory, K. M. and McCarty, L. (2005). *Scaffolding Emergent Literacy: A Child-Centered Approach for Preschool through Grade 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Stipek, D. J. (1999). Pathways to constructive lives: The importance of early school success. In D. Stipek, A. C. Bohart (Eds.). *Constructive and destructive behavior: Implications for family, school, and society*, 291-315. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Stronge, J. H. (2002). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- U. S. Newswire (May 13, 2004). HHS Issues – Head Start Management.
- Vandell, D. L. & Corasanti, M. A. (1990). Variations in early childcare: Do they predict subsequent social, emotional and cognitive differences? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 5, 555-572.
- Walker, N., Senger, J. M., F. Villarruel, and Arboleda, A. (2004). *Lost Opportunities: The reality of Latinos in the U. S. criminal justice system*. Washington, DC: National Council La Raza.
- West, J., Denton, K., & Germino-Hausken, E. (2000). *America's kindergartners*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., & Howes, C. (1997). *NAEYC accreditation as a strategy for improving child care quality*. Washington, DC: National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force.

Zimmerman, I. L., Steiner, V. G. & Pond, R. E. (2002). *Preschool Language Scale, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (PLS-4) English Edition*. San Antonio, Texas: Harcourt Assessment, Inc.