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**FPG Partners with State to Implement Innovative FirstSchool Program**

*The Department of Public Instruction Will Use Coordinated Approach for Education and Care of Young Children*

**CHAPEL HILL, N.C., Feb. 4, 2010** – FPG Child Development Institute has entered into a partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to use the FirstSchool framework for Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade education to guide the reorganization of the Department. This engagement is part of DPI's new focus on early elementary classrooms and its plan to build a new unit that brings together the Office of School Readiness and early elementary specialists, linking the relevant content specialists throughout the Department.

FirstSchool is a Pre-K through third grade initiative led by FPG and the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It is a systems-based change process: the FirstSchool team works with schools, districts, communities, states, and institutions of higher education to move toward a seamless approach for children ages 3 to 8.

"FPG Child Development Institute has been working with DPI to rethink public education experiences for young children," said Sharon Ritchie, FPG Senior Scientist and co-director of FirstSchool. "DPI's adoption of FirstSchool brings to fruition four years of collaboration to reconceptualize Pre-K through 3 education utilizing the best of what is known about early childhood, elementary and special education."

FPG's FirstSchool staff collaborated with the NC Partnership for Children on their Ready Schools initiative, and with DPI on a number of related efforts, including the "Power of K" project, a dropout prevention grant, and pilots of FirstSchool elements in Lexington City Schools and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

To learn more about FirstSchool, visit <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~firstschool/>.

### **About FPG Child Development Institute**

For more than 40 years, FPG Child Development Institute research, outreach and service have shaped how the nation cares for and educates young children. More than 200 researchers, outreach specialists, staff, and students work on more than 50 projects that collectively aim to advance knowledge and enhance the lives of young children and their families. Broadly, FPG focuses its work on young children birth through age eight with particular attention to those with disabilities or who are at risk for school failure. FPG is based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For more information, please visit [www.fpg.unc.edu](http://www.fpg.unc.edu).

### **About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

Established in 1930, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society. Grants are concentrated in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and southern Africa.

For further information, please visit the Foundation's website at [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).