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FPG Child Development Institute Receives \$4 Million Grant for FirstSchool Initiative

CHAPEL HILL, N.C., Feb. 4, 2010 – FPG Child Development Institute has been awarded a \$4 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to support FirstSchool, a systems-based change approach for educating and caring for young children. The FirstSchool team works with schools, districts, communities, states, and institutions of higher education to move toward an integrated approach for children ages 3 to 8.

For several years, FPG and its partners have been working on a new effort to improve experiences for children as they enter public schools. This new grant follows four years of planning and pilot programs in several North Carolina school districts. The FirstSchool grant will be used for work in four North Carolina schools and four Michigan schools. In addition to intensive consultation at sites, the funding will be used to work collaboratively with other state initiatives. The project will also offer institutes as part of a national technical assistance component of the initiative.

“We will be working with schools to unite the best that is known about early childhood, elementary, and special education. Our goal is to make children’s first experience in school successful and to help launch them on a productive school career,” said Sharon Ritchie, co-director of FirstSchool.

“What parents want in their child’s first school is a safe environment where they feel welcome, and a place where teachers stimulate learning and emotional development,” said Greg Taylor, vice president for programs at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. “We believe that FirstSchool will be the kind of experience that will accelerate learning and help children who are vulnerable to academic failure achieve success.”

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.