Report to the Community
University of Minnesota
Center for Early Education and Development

Improving the developmental outcomes of children for more than 40 years through applied research, policy, and professional development
CEED has been a state and international leader for more than four decades in promoting research, educational opportunity, and best practices on behalf of young children. It has much to celebrate in the proud achievements of one of the University’s most outstanding centers of discovery and public contribution.

—Robert Bruininks, Professor Emeritus, Humphrey School of Public Affairs and former University of Minnesota President

CEED is the Early Childhood Program Area for the Institute on Community Integration and a federally designated University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. Photos in this report are from istockphotos.com, the University of Minnesota Child Development Center (Karen Anderson, photographer) and the Shirley G. Moore Laboratory School, University of Minnesota.
Improving the lives of young children through collaborative research and evaluation, professional development, community engagement, and public policy advocacy has been at the heart of the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota since its inception.

Today, after 40 years as one of the nation’s leading centers for early education and development, CEED continues to be guided by a fundamental belief that if children are to achieve their full potential, we must support all people and environments touching their lives. This holistic approach toward child development is reflected in CEED’s work addressing:

- Improving and sustaining quality in early education and care
- Deepening community engagement in the lives of children
- Fostering early literacy and math literacy
- Influencing training and policy for healthy infants and toddlers
- Promoting critically needed collaboration across all disciplines in early education and care

Dr. Mary McEvoy, one of CEED’s most dynamic leaders, was known to ask this probing question: “What would you do for young children if you knew you would not fail?” We posed this question to people from across the spectrum of early childhood: early childhood teachers, child care providers, University academics, state and county administrators, child care trainers, home visitors, parent educators, policy makers and advocates. While several common themes emerged, all pointed to this same overarching idea: Invest. Invest in young children and the adults who care for them. Invest in improvements in their early education. Invest in the communities in which they live.

We are listening, and that is exactly what we intend to do. Turn the page to read about the exciting work that is driving CEED to improve the lives of young children.

— Amy Susman-Stillman & Christopher Watson, Co-Directors
Fostering Early Math Literacy

The Mathematics and Numeracy Lab at CEED, in partnership with the Institute of Child Development, is focusing on enhancing STEM education—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics—in early childhood. Research into how and when children’s numeracy and mathematical thinking develop is driving design of related professional development. Numeracy skills are linked to children’s later mathematics achievement levels, ability to manage personal finances, and long-term occupational successes. More information is available at www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/research/mnl.

Improving and Sustaining Quality in Early Care and Education

In response to the growing need for quality assessments in early care and education, CEED established the Assessment and Training Center (ATC) in 2007. The center develops curriculum and trainings, and helps early care and education programs and providers conduct program assessments properly and use the data to effectively improve caregiving, teaching and overall program quality. In addition, the ATC is introducing innovative and effective strategies for delivering professional development, using online, in-person and hybrid approaches. More information is available at www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/projects/atc/default.html.

Deepening Community Engagement in the Lives of Children

CEED programs located at the Urban Research Outreach-Engagement Center supports families and urban communities in raising happy, healthy, and successful children through several projects, including a validation study of Family Academy’s “College Bound Babies,” a program offered through the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) in North Minneapolis to address the educational opportunity gap; an internal evaluation of NAZ to evaluate the degree to which programs are resulting in better outcomes for children and families, and; an evaluation of the Spanish Individual Growth and Development Indicators, a new approach to early literacy and language for Spanish-English bilingual students. More information is available at www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/projects/uroc.html.
Influencing Policy for Healthy Infants and Toddlers
The Irving Harris Programs and Project for Babies at CEED have focused on disseminating a research-based, developmental and trauma-informed framework to support integrative, multi-generational approaches for very young children and their families living in high-risk circumstances. CEED’s activities have resulted in passage of significant legislation, bi-partisan discussions, strengthened relationships between state agencies and the University, creation of a statewide system of training in early development and trauma-informed practice, community-wide awareness of the effects of early adversity on health and mental health, and the development of diverse leadership across disciplines. More information about the Irving Harris programs is available at www.cehd.umn.edu/ceed/events/harrisforum/default.html and for Project for Babies at www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/projects/projectforbabies/default.html.

Promoting Critically Needed Collaboration
CEED employs a “whole child” approach, recognizing that children’s development is dependent upon the interdependence of all domains. Likewise, we believe our success in supporting healthy development rests on a holistic approach to services and on coordination of our systems to effectively serve young children and their families. Yet our systems frequently operate in isolation, with little fluidity or flexibility. CEED is addressing this critical issue by revising professional development activities to create opportunities to share knowledge and perspectives across disciplines and to provide a feedback loop for improved understanding about how to serve children and families. For example, CEED is working with the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare to bring the science of early childhood development to child welfare practice, with the Minnesota Department of Education to develop a regional professional development system focused on young children with disabilities, and with the Minnesota Department of Health on capacity-building in home visitors. More information is available at www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/projects/cdcw/default.html and www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/projects/miechv/default.html.

CEED’s goal of moving research to practice has had a large impact on the work that happens in early childhood settings in our community today. It helps many of us understand what works, and why, so that we can move that knowledge into public policy and investment.

Carol Miller, Cabinet member, Early Learning Council
The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota strives to effect positive change in early education, child care, and public policy. Through research, professional development, and community outreach, CEED supports young children, their families, and the professionals who serve them. CEED promotes ongoing coordination and expansion of academic leaders interested in early education and development and provides leadership in the University’s ongoing effort to engage the people and programs of Minnesota in ways that make real contributions to our quality of life.

CEED Co-Directors Christopher Watson and Amy Susman-Stillman (r) congratulate Lynn Haglin, recipient of CEED’s Light a Candle Award for service to the field. The Light a Candle Award is presented in honor of former CEED Director Mary McEvoy. It is presented to an individual or group that successfully promotes ties between research, policy, and practice to improve the lives of young children in Minnesota and throughout the world.
Institute for Education Sciences
Minnesota Children’s Museum
Minnesota Department of Education
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Minnesota Head Start Association
Minneapolis Public Schools
Northside Achievement Zone
MinneMinds
Saint Paul Foundation

This is a partial list of CEED’s many partners.
There are three lessons that I learned from my years with CEED. One: program development demands that we keep our fingers on the socio-political and economic pulse of our culturally diverse society. The goals of programs for children and families and for professionals who work with them must reflect the beliefs and values of their cultures. Two, programs must be cooperative ventures that are grounded in sound research and include parents and professionals, including health care providers, social service professionals and educators. And finally, we must be connected to the policy making process at local, state, and national levels.”

—Richard Weinberg, Founding Director of CEED

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