



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gesell Institute Urges Withdrawal and Rewrite of K-3 Common Core Standards

New Haven, CT, March 18, 2010 – Gesell Institute of Human Development, a national non-profit organization located on the Yale campus, issued a statement today that the core standards proposed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers are off the mark for young learners. The Institute is calling for a new set of standards for Kindergarten through Grade 3 that adhere to solid principles of child development based on what research says about how and what young children learn during the early years, birth to age eight.

“The proposed standards for Kindergarten through grade 3 are unrealistic and will lead to inappropriate ‘rote drill and kill’ teaching practices in the classroom,” says Dr. Marcy Guddemi, Gesell Institute Executive Director. “Policy and standards should be set or based on hard data and not on unrealistic and simplistic goals in the hopes of raising test scores.”

According to the Institute’s statement, “If the achievement gap is to be closed, then child development must be respected and scientific research surrounding how children learn must be taken into account. Research clearly shows that early readers do not have an advantage over later readers at the end of third grade, and attempts at closing the achievement gap should not be measured in Kindergarten based on inappropriate standards. Gesell Institute staff has long been focused on research and best practice in child development and education – our legacy is based on the ground-breaking work of Dr. Arnold Gesell, a pioneer in the field of child development who observed and documented stages of development with normative data reflecting what children typically do at each age and stage.

“Currently, our national study collecting developmental information on over 1400 children across the country is in its final stages of data collection. This data, to be released in Fall 2010, is expected to further support what we know about how children develop and what they know at various ages, as well as the importance of focusing on appropriate methods for teaching young children.

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“We urge the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to respect the individual developmental differences of children and revise the K-3 standards based on research and the advice of experts in the field of early childhood. Having endorsed The Alliance for Childhood’s *Joint Statement of Early Childhood Health and Education Professionals on the Common Core Standards Initiative*, we support the call to withdraw the early childhood standards and create a consortium of experts “to develop comprehensive guidelines for effective early care and teaching that recognize the right of every child to a healthy start in life and a developmentally appropriate education.”

Says Dr. Guddemi, “The younger the child, the greater the variance in development. Early readers are not better than later readers. Regardless, expecting all Kindergarten children, who range in age from 4 to 6 years, to be fluent readers by the end of their first year in elementary school is ludicrous.”

Gesell Institute of Human Development is an independent non-profit organization that has been associated with how children grow and learn since 1950. The work of Arnold Gesell, PhD, MD, (1888-1961), founding Director of the Yale Child Study Center in 1911 and the Institute’s namesake, had a profound influence on the field child development. Based on Gesell’s pioneering work documenting infant and child growth and development during the first half of the century, Gesell programs and publications help parents and educators understand the ages and stages of childhood. Professional development and parent workshops cover a broad range of topics regarding child behavior, healthy growth and development, and positive learning outcomes. Community programs help create collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers to support school success. For additional information about Gesell Institute, visit www.gesellinstitute.org. To view the full statement in response to the core standards, visit www.gesellinstitute.org/statements.html.

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