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Gesell Institute of Human Development
Statement on the Common Core Standards Initiative
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The core standards being proposed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers are off the mark for our youngest learners. We at Gesell Institute call 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 inappropriate and unrealistic. Policy must be set based on hard data and not on unrealistic goals surrounding test scores.

If the achievement gap is to be closed, 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.

The work of Gesell Institute 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.

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." (<http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/>)