

Erikson

POSITION SPECIFICATIONS

Erikson Institute invites applications for the Director of the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy. The center will begin formal operations in 2005–06.

Position Title: Director, Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy
Erikson Institute

The Institute's Mission and Philosophy

Established in 1966, Erikson Institute is an independent, accredited graduate institution of higher education that prepares individuals for leadership in the many allied fields of child development. Through its academic programs, applied research, and community service and engagement, the Institute advances the ability of practitioners, researchers, and decision makers to improve life for children and their families. Erikson is one of only four institutions in the nation dedicated solely to the study of child development from birth to age eight.

The Institute's vision is compelling: to be a catalyst for discovery and change, to continually bring the newest scientific knowledge and theories of children's development and learning into its classrooms and out to the community so that professionals—including policy makers—who serve children and families are informed, inspired, and responsive. Five core values drive the goals, activities, and structure of the institution. These values are the centrality of relationships in all learning; an emphasis on social justice; a commitment to diversity; an appreciation for complexity; and an adherence to high standards and excellence. Erikson's success at integrating these values across the Institute is evident in all of its activities.

In the past two decades, Erikson has dramatically expanded its scope in graduate instruction, research, and community engagement. In addition to its two master's degree programs, the Institute offers an M.S./M.S.W. and a Ph.D. in child development, jointly with Loyola University Chicago. Professional and continuing education offerings enroll more than 2,000 practitioners each year; a variety of special projects and partnerships with state agencies, juvenile courts, and school districts further extend the Institute's reach. The Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy, Erikson's latest research and policy initiative, will focus critical attention on the roots of some of the most pervasive and difficult-to-solve problems facing young children and families today.

The Herr Research Center

The goal of the Herr Research Center for Children and Social Policy is to support the development of sound public policy for young children and their families in the midwestern

region of the United States (especially Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin) through comparative research and education. To do so, the center will produce original research and analysis useful to a broad range of participants in the policy process, including state and local legislators, advocates, foundation officials, and other researchers. Although the center's focus is on the Midwest, its interests are national.

Among the systemic or programmatic questions such research and analysis might address are how state early childhood systems should be organized; the optimal funding balance among federal, state, and local entities; how programs should be evaluated and made accountable for children's success; how to structure the mental health service system to better serve the needs of young children and their families; and how to identify and replicate the key elements of high quality early care and education programs.

Erikson Institute, through the Herr Center, has committed and will continue to commit significant resources to this undertaking. In 2003, the Institute's president and trustees identified the growth of research and an increased impact on public policy as primary strategic directives. Significant initial grants from foundations and a generous private endowment provide the Herr Center with a strong financial base, the means to hire 6-8 professional staff and doctoral students, and a commitment that it will remain a permanent part of the Institute.

THE POSITION

The Center Director

With the support of Erikson faculty, the center's Director will be responsible for creating and overseeing a program of research that is unique in the Great Lakes region. The director will develop a policy research agenda, hire and supervise center staff, work with policy stakeholders in different states, and develop an education and communications strategy, among other tasks. He or she will also be responsible for sustaining and strengthening the funding base of the center over time.

Applicants for this position should have an outstanding scholarly background in an area of applied research on children's or family issues; strong leadership and motivational skills; and some administrative and budgetary experience. Knowledge of funding sources and success in obtaining grants from public and private sponsors is essential, as is a strong commitment to engaging the policy process. We are seeking someone who is prepared to share a vision of how research about policy can have an impact on public policies for young children and families in the Midwest and the nation.

The Director will report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Depending on his or her background, the incumbent will be considered for tenure and professorial status at Erikson Institute or for appointment as a research scientist. We prefer applicants with a Ph.D., but will consider others with exceptional experience in policy, research, or public administration.

Please send a letter of application, resume, and the names of three references as soon as possible. We hope to fill the position and launch the center during the 2005–06 academic year. All materials should be sent to Samuel J. Meisels, President, Erikson Institute, 420 North Wabash, Suite 600, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Erikson Institute is an equal opportunity employer and educator. More information about the Institute is available at www.erikson.edu.