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AMERICA’S PROMISE ALLIANCE SELECTS DUKE’S CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY POLICY TO EVALUATE ITS $50 MILLION NATIONAL INITIATIVE

Note to editors: Media interested in interviewing Center for Child and Family Policy staff or faculty should contact Jana Alexander.

DURHAM, N.C. — America’s Promise Alliance has selected Duke University’s Center for Child and Family Policy to evaluate the first phase of its new five-year nationwide effort to deliver developmental resources to 15 million young people.

The first phase focuses on improving high school graduation rates through a series of school dropout summits. The Alliance has planned 50 state-level and 50 community-level summits as the catalyst for implementing national strategies to keep youth in school.

As evaluator, the center will assess the scope and potential impact of the school dropout summits. In addition, the evaluation team will work collaboratively with the Alliance to finalize and plan for implementing its National Action Strategy.

The Alliance is the largest multi-sector collaborative dedicated to the well-being of children and youth in the United States. A basic tenet for the organization’s work is that if young people are going to have a chance at academic success and social and civic competence, they need five critical developmental resources, or “promises”: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education and opportunities to help others.

These five promises are the foundation for the Alliance’s three national strategies that are designed to reach 15 million young people between 2008 and 2012. The first strategy, “All Kids Covered,” will see that the six million children who do not have health insurance are participating in publicly funded programs for which they are eligible. The second, “Where the Kids Are,” will use schools as hubs for ensuring that children in low-income communities have access to the support and opportunities necessary for success. “Ready for the Real World,” the third strategy, will provide middle school-aged youth with service-learning and career exploration experiences to help them connect what they learn in school to a positive future.

“When 30 percent of our teen-agers fail to graduate high school on time, we don’t just have a problem, we have a national crisis,” said Marguerite W. Kondracke, president and CEO of America’s Promise Alliance. “The Alliance understands this and that’s why we’re thrilled to be partnering with Duke University’s Center for Child and Family Policy. The expertise of Kenneth Dodge and his team will be invaluable to us as we seek to develop those policies and improve the lives of 15 million of the nation’s most at-risk young people over the next five years.”

Dodge, the William McDougall Professor of Public Policy and director of the Center for Child and Family Policy, serves on the Alliance’s Research Council. He has pulled together an evaluation team from Duke that is led by Elizabeth Gifford, Ph.D., a research scientist, who is principal investigator. The team also includes Shari Miller-Johnson, Ph.D., a senior research scientist, who serves as co-principal investigator;
Joel Rosch, Ph.D., a senior research scientist, who serves as an investigator; David Rabiner, Ph.D., a senior research scholar with the center, where he serves as director of Program Evaluation Services; and Jenni Owen, director of policy initiatives for the center who will focus on the policy impact components of the evaluation. The team also includes two senior consultants: Philip Costanzo, professor of psychology and neuroscience, and Rick Hoyle, research professor of psychology and neuroscience.

By awarding the contract to the Center for Child and Family Policy, the Alliance recognizes that the center has earned a strong reputation in both the scientific and evaluation communities, Dodge said.

“We are honored to be selected for this evaluation, and we look forward to working with one of the preeminent national organizations addressing child well-being in America,” Dodge said.

America’s Promise Alliance grew out of The Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future. President Bill Clinton and former presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan (represented by Nancy Reagan) and George H.W. Bush held the 1997 summit to challenge the U.S. to make children and youth a national priority. Founded by Colin Powell that same year, the Alliance aligns more than 140 partnering organizations.

The Center for Child and Family Policy, which is affiliated with the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy and the Social Science Research Institute at Duke University, bridges the gap between research and public policy to improve the lives of children and families. For more information on the Center for Child and Family Policy: http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/

For more information on America’s Promise Alliance: http://www.americaspromise.org/

For more information on The Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future: http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/New/Summit/

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