



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gesell LEAD Press Conference: Mayor's Proclamation, Releasing Study Findings
and learn how to Raise Test Scores the Right Way**

New Haven, CT (October 7, 2010) – In just one week from today, Gesell Institute of Human Development, a non-profit organization on Yale University's campus, will be hosting a press conference at the **Omni Hotel in New Haven, CT on Thursday October 14, 2010 at 9am**. You are invited to this monumental event where **video and photo opportunities will be available**. **John DeStefano, the Mayor of New Haven, will open the press conference** with his proclamation that October 14th will be Gesell Institute Leadership and Discovery Day. The press conference is to honor the Institute's 60th anniversary involvement in the study and education of early childhood development, and to announce the honorary award they will be giving to Edward Zigler, the Founder of Head Start, later that night. Staff of the Institute will also be releasing their long-awaited results from a three-year study, recognized as the Gesell Development Observation – Revised, 2010 (GDO-R) at this press conference. The GDO-R will generate the discussion of education reform for New Haven Public Schools. It is the Institute's goal to implement new policies and change to make New Haven Public Schools' curriculum and practices a model for the nation to follow in the near future.

The following morning on October 15, 2010 at the Omni Hotel, Gesell Institute will be hosting their national **LEAD (Learn, Educate, Advocate, Do!) Conference**. It will involve world-renowned figures in child development and leaders in education reform from Yale, the New Haven community, the U.S. Department of Education and around the country. This important event is in response to the current education crisis our nation currently faces. The conference will address the important issues of early childhood education leadership in a way no other leadership conference has by reintroducing and highlighting the important role of child development in education, learning, and long-term school success. "Ultimately," says Gesell Executive Director Marcy Guddemi, "we will be discussing how to use sound theory and practice to help raise test scores the right way."

"We know that there is a crisis in education in the United States," continues Guddemi. "What is not as widely understood is that many leaders in education have not had the opportunity to learn about child development. These leaders are at a disadvantage—one that has led in part to an over-reliance on test scores at the expense of other, more meaningful measures of success for children, as well as a lack of understanding that children age 3 to grade 3 learn differently than older children. This is a dangerous trend that is often overlooked – child development plays a vital role in education, and a focus on developmentally appropriate practices will actually lead to increased test scores." The national conference is expected to draw 200-500 participants, such as educators,

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psychologists, researchers, policy makers, medical professionals, and other important community stakeholders from around the country. There will be prominent keynote speakers and sessions featuring top-level panelists focusing on Practice, Play, Research, and Policy. Confirmed speakers include **T. Berry Brazelton, MD** and **Joshua D. Sparrow, MD** of Brazelton Touchpoints Center; Joan Almon, Executive Director, U.S. Alliance for Childhood; **the Honorable Rosa DeLauro**, US Representative; Sharon Lynn Kagan, EdD, Associate Dean for Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University; **Edward Zigler, PhD**, the founder of Head Start; and **Dr. Jacqueline Jones**, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning from the Department of Education in Washington, D.C.

The conference is designed to make a significant contribution to the conversation about early childhood education among superintendents, legislators, and other key decision-makers. Conference goals include discussing the critical importance of the early years in later education and life-long human development; contributing to the national conversation about early childhood and leadership in educational policy; generating ideas for publication and dissemination to the media; and finally, to inspire and motivate leaders toward change. Conference panels are expected to generate hands-on ideas for policy, and the Institute's real goal is long-term change—recognition that child development is critical to a successful educational system. A publication of the proceedings is expected to become required reading for policy makers across the country. 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 of 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. The Institute's community programs help create collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers to support school success.

For more information about the conference and to watch Marcy Guddemi's introductory invitation to our anniversary event, please visit. www.gesellinstitute.org/events Follow Gesell Institute on Twitter and Facebook.

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