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**TO THE POINT: Rutgers—Camden announces new track for early childhood education.**

For Immediate Release

CAMDEN – During the first 1,000 days of life, the human brain undergoes an intense transformation vital to future developmental growth.

Starting this fall, a new program at Rutgers University—Camden will provide participating early childhood education professionals with the skills and concepts necessary to maximize the potential of those precious first days for infants and young children.

The Early Childhood Education track is offered in partnership between Camden County College’s Human Services/Early Childhood Education program and the Rutgers—Camden childhood studies program, which launched the nation’s first doctoral program in this burgeoning field in 2007.

The Early Childhood Education track will allow undergraduate and graduate students to focus studies on either a practitioner or administrator track. Both tracks will follow standards set by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), allowing students to earn their Rutgers degrees while also preparing them to earn NAEYC accredited credentials – a key to job placement – prior to graduation.

The Rutgers—Camden program will be the first in New Jersey to provide the New Jersey Administrator’s Credential and the New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential. The P-3 Teaching Certification is under development for spring 2009 in collaboration with the Rutgers-Camden Teacher Preparation Program.

“We’re aiming to shift the paradigm of how people think about early education. The foundation for lifelong learning is set between birth and five years of age, so we need to prepare professionals to work with young children by utilizing developmentally appropriate approaches” says Angela Connor, senior program director at the Rutgers—Camden Center for Children and Childhood Studies, where she oversees the Professional Development Pathways Initiative for Early Childhood Education Professionals.

This new Rutgers—Camden program will prepare early childhood professionals to advance (or launch) their careers by offering a rich curriculum taught by field leaders and supplemented by a specialized fieldwork and mentoring component.

By working closely with Camden County College’s Human Services Department, the Rutgers—Camden program will cross-list courses, while credits previously earned at Camden County College will transfer readily to Rutgers to encourage greater accessibility to this professional growth program.

Connor will lead this new initiative with Ingrid Campbell, an early childhood education training specialist at Rutgers, as well as Habiba Soudan and Elena Nitecki at Camden County College.

Rutgers—Camden's pioneering work in early childhood education has advanced with the support of such institutions as the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Schumann Fund for New Jersey, and the William Penn Foundation.

Additional information about the childhood studies program at Rutgers—Camden is available online at <http://childhood.camden.rutgers.edu>.