FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Children’s Finance Innovation Awards Recognize Two Iowa Early Care and Education Leaders

_Betty Zan, Regents’ Center for Early Developmental Education, and Linda Jacoby, Cedar Valley Preschool and Child Care Center to be honored_

Cedar Valley, Iowa (August 12, 2010) First Children’s Finance announced today it has selected Betty Zan, Regents’ Center for Early Developmental Education, and Linda Jacoby, Cedar Valley Preschool and Child Care Center, both of Cedar Falls, as the recipients of the 2010 First Children’s Finance Innovation Award.

The First Children’s Finance Innovation Award recognizes achievements of Cedar Valley businesses and community leaders committed to improving quality in early care and education by using innovative business practices, leadership and expertise in exciting, effective and imaginative ways.

Betty Zan is a director and associate professor for the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa. Ms. Zan has a Ph.D. in developmental psychology, an M.A. in developmental psychology, and a B.S. in human development and family studies from the University of Houston. Her area of expertise is in early childhood (EC) education. Ms. Zan’s research interests include: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education; improving instruction in EC classrooms; classroom climate and young children’s moral development; and young children’s game playing.

Linda Jacoby is the director at Cedar Valley Preschool and Child Care Center. Ms. Jacoby has a master’s degree in education, 38 years experience as an early childhood educator and 14 years experience directing support services for children with special needs. She has developed strong community collaborations and grant writing skills throughout her professional career. An interesting twist in her history is that Ms. Jacoby was also the director at Cedar Valley from 1971-75---her first “real job” after graduation!

The recipients of the award will be honored at a congratulatory ceremony in Waterloo, Iowa. Olympic gold medalist and youth advocate, Jackie Joyner-Kersee, will join First Children’s Finance in celebrating the innovative achievements of the award winners.

First Children’s Finance Iowa State Director Heidi Schlueter added, “On behalf of First Children’s Finance, I would like to express how proud we all are to honor the work of these two very unique and creative organizations. Cedar Valley Preschool and Child Care Center and the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education represent the kind of innovators needed everywhere to make the business side of early care and education work better. Innovations like these provide caregivers with more of the resources and environment they need to do what they do best—care for our young children.”

For more information about First Children’s Finance, please visit www.firstchildrensfinance.org or contact Heidi Schlueter at 866-562-6801.

About First Children’s Finance
First Children’s Finance, a nonprofit organization with an office located in Iowa, focuses on supporting quality early care and education in low-income communities. By financing child care facilities and operations and helping child care professionals manage their businesses more effectively, First Children’s Finance strives to increase the availability, affordability and quality of early child care and education throughout the United States. For more information, please visit www.firstchildrensfinance.org. For more information regarding the First Children’s Finance and the 2010 Innovation Award, please contact Heidi Schlueter at 866-562-6801.