

LSU Health Sciences Center- Human Development Center
Louisiana's UCEDD
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The Louisiana School Psychology Internship Consortium (LAS*PIC) completed another successful round of recruitment. Our new class of interns of post-doctoral fellows will begin in August. In addition, for the first time we are hosting an "extern" (Ms. Megan Medley) this summer. Megan is completing a policy analysis paper on family involvement and the RtI process.

Ms. Lauren Giovingo (soon to be doctor Giovingo) will begin serving as coordinator of Interdisciplinary Training (one of the four core functions of the UCEDD) this fall after she defends her dissertation at Florida State University. Among other tasks, Lauren will be working with Drs. Hebert and Coulter to revamp the School Psychology internship program to align APA and MCH competencies and ensure that our curriculum has a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary content and field experiences.

We have designed and will be launching a program of research focused on Response to Intervention (RtI). This important educational strategy is mentioned in federal law but to date little research has been completed to document how to best implement RtI on a large scale. We have assembled a team of individuals to implement this research plan including: Ms. Holly Adkins (coordinator of RtI research), Ms. Lizette Flammer-Rivera (post-doc), Ms. Lauren Giovingo, and Drs. Coulter, Hebert and Wilson. In addition, this team is collaborating with faculty in several other universities.

The Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) project just completed its second year. The majority of the participating school teams achieved significant advances during the past school year. Solicitation for additional school teams has been sent out and we anticipate adding approximately six (6) new school teams this fall. HDC collaborated with OCDD/EarlySteps and the Louisiana Department of Education to prepare and submit an application to the National Center on Professional Development last month. If Louisiana's application is selected, we will receive technical assistance and support to plan and implement best practices for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) from some of the nation's leading experts in the area of education of students with ASD. HDC and OCDD/EarlySteps, (i.e., with support from the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council) have formed an exciting collaborative. All three agencies have committed resources and funding to plan, implement and evaluate a early intensive intervention model for young children (i.e., 19 to 36 months) with ASD. The model will include both center- and home-based services (including family implementation components). Finally, HDC contracted with Dr. Jim LeVelle to design, conduct and analyze a survey targeting individuals with ASD and family members. The survey is being distributed by the Louisiana State Autism Chapter (LSAC).

The Supported Employment Continuous Improvement Project (SECIP) also completed its second year recently. The project has been very well received by Supported Employment vendors and the funder of the project (i.e., Louisiana Rehabilitation Services). We are looking forward to another productive year in 2008-09. Dr. Jane Nell Luster and Ms. Patty Ghioffi are

developing a study of employment access, participation, and outcomes among Louisiana's citizens with significant developmental disabilities. This study is being funded by the DD Council. In addition, HDC is submitting a proposal to form an Supported Employment Consortium to the DD Council. If funded, this project will work closely with a small number of Supported Employment providers to build capacity of participating agencies to better serve job seekers with the most significant disabilities.

HDC is participating in the Louisiana Low Incidence Disability Consortium (LA-LIDC). This consortium is funded by the Louisiana Department of Education. Along with our partners at the University of New Orleans and Louisiana Tech, consortium members are working to ensure availability of professional development, as well as course work and field-experiences required for initial certification and advanced studies for teachers of students with low incidence disabilities (Blind, Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Multiple/Severe disabilities, and ASD). HDC faculty have developed, and will be offering, a course on Autism Spectrum Disorders through the University of New Orleans this fall. This course will be taught by Dr. Alisa Lowrey. Dr. Lowrey will join HDC's faculty on August 1. Dr. Lowrey is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of South Carolina.