

HDC Agency Report

Faculty and staff of the LSU Human Development Center (Louisiana's UCEDD) have been busy this past quarter. In the past month or so, we submitted proposals for continued funding for a number of important projects. We are awaiting official approval but are optimistic that the Louisiana Department of Education will continue funding the Louisiana School Psychology Internship Consortium (LASPIC) and the Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) project. In addition, we are awaiting word from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services on our proposal for continued funding of the Supported Employment Continuous Improvement Project (SECIP). We are currently in discussion with EarlySteps regarding a possible pilot project designed to deliver team-based services to families with young children who screen positive for an autism spectrum disorder. We continue to work with the administration of the School of Allied Health Professions and the Health Sciences Center toward the goal of establishing a Master of Health Sciences degree program that would enable graduates to sit for the Board Certification in Behavior Analysis credential.

On April 22-23, HDC will host the third annual HDC Institute. This year's theme is, "Response to Intervention". For more information, or to register, please visit the HDC Institute website at: <http://www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/hdcinstitute/>.

On June 22-25 we are hosting the Autism Summer Institute at the Hampton Inn, across the street from the Ernest M. Morial Convention Center, in New Orleans. This 4-day institute should be of interest to special and general teachers and paraprofessionals, therapists, family members, self-advocates, and school administrators. One day will be devoted to each of the following topics: Social Support, Communication, Systematic Instruction, and Transition. National and Regional speakers will deliver keynotes in the morning. Participants will select from afternoon strands designed to key in on either early intervention/elementary or adolescent/adult issues. Go to <http://www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/LASARD/Index.htm> for more information or to register, go to <http://www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/ASI2009/>.

HDC received a subcontract from the University of New Orleans (via the Louisiana Department of Education) to, among other things, develop and provide two courses on teaching students with ASD. These courses are taught via the internet. For more information please go to <http://www.lalidc.org/>. In addition, HDC recently began developing and posting web-based modules on topics included in the Louisiana Autism Quality Indicators (i.e., Collaboration, Inclusive Practices, Environment, Curriculum & Instruction, Communication, Behavior, Social Development, and Transition). If you are interested in completing these modules please go to <http://www.laqitm.org/> and follow the instructions.

Brief summaries of activities related to the three projects the DD Council has provided partial funding for (i.e., Employment Consortium, Employment Study, and Early Intensive Treatment for Young Children with ASD project) follow.

Employment Consortium Update

We now have job coaches from four providers (Arc of GNO, Exceeds Their Needs, Lighthouse for the Blind, and Magnolia School) and three job seekers (Judge (pseudonym) from Arc of GNO, Oliver (pseudonym) from Magnolia School, and Nancy (pseudonym) from Exceeds their Needs). Each job seeker is introduced to the consortium by way of a power point presentation which is developed using assessment materials, previous evaluations, family/advocate input, etc. Oliver's, Judge's and Nancy's presentations have been completed and presented. A summary of activities by participant follows:

Judge (pseudonym):

- From Arc of GNO
- Has been deemed eligible by LRS
- Is in the job development phase of his process
- Consortium members have sought out and researched potential employment positions for Judge.
- Judge's job coach left her job at Arc of GNO and was replaced which was a minor setback.
- Project staff (Sam Slavich) met with the new job coach outside of the Employment Consortium to bring her up to speed with the project.
- Job coach's task for next meeting includes researching application process for potential employment positions, and start submitting applications.

Oliver (pseudonym):

- From Magnolia School
- LRS process has started, however his first actual meeting (to determine eligibility) with LRS is scheduled for April 7th
- Assessment will be written by Wesley (job coach) and Jennifer (SE director of Magnolia)
- Consortium members have already been discussing Oliver's interests and have been brainstorming potential employment positions. Some research has been done regarding these potential employment positions.
- Job coach has also been charged with the responsibility of collecting all necessary information for LRS eligibility determination and assessment.

Nancy (pseudonym):

- From Exceeds Their Needs
- The newest member of the consortium
- Has been deemed eligible by LRS and an assessment has been written

- Power point presentation has been completed and Nancy will be formally introduced to the consortium in March 20th meeting.
- Nancy did attend the March 6th meeting and was informally introduced to all members of the consortium. In this meeting her interests and potential employment positions were discussed.

Each meeting consists of:

- Sign in
- Revisit assigned tasks from previous meeting
- Updates on each job seeker's case
- Develop a new action plan with assigned tasks to be completed for the following meeting
- Presentation of training or best practice materials
- Complete evaluations
- Adjourn

Various training topics, best practices and materials have been presented to the group to assist job coaches in the provision of services. Topics include:

- SSA benefits Info
- Job development through social networking
- Job development materials (business survey, job dev. activities log, employer presentation form, social network contact log, etc.)
- Assessment training
- Disclosure issues and how each job seeker would like to be represented to employers

We have had seven meetings (12/19/08, 1/09/09, 1/23/09, 2/13/09, 2/26/09, 3/6/09, and 3/20/09)

- Meetings are recorded with a digital audio recorder, various types of information to be used in each job seeker's "story" is being collected and recorded, and pictures have been taken both in the community and at meetings (with appropriate permissions, releases on file). To protect the privacy of our consortium members all materials are being stored either on a password protected computer or in a locked file cabinet (both are accessible only to project staff). The password protected computer is also stored in the locked file cabinet.

Summary of Progress on Employment Study

1. Application in process for IRB exemption of Employment Study using policy analysis.
2. Worked with APSE/Employment Consortium on developing an Employer Provider survey that identifies barriers to helping people access & maintain employment.

Obtaining IRB approval for the survey. The survey should go out in April. Results will be available for us with the Employment Study.

3. Gave feedback on the Community Living Ombudsman Program (CLOP) interview protocol being developed by the Jeff Rowe and the Advocacy Center. The purpose of this interview is to have clients identify barriers to their employment process. Data will be aggregated. We will have access to the aggregated data for use in the Employment Study.
4. Continuing to review literature in employment barriers and other reports (i.e., State Data: The national report on employment services and outcomes 2008).
5. CAC meeting on February 5th. Met and presented study to HDC Advisory Board Committee. Answered questions about the study. Asked for volunteers that would be interested in being part of a subcommittee to work on the Employment Study. Two individuals volunteered.

Summary of progress on Early Intensive Treatment for Young Children with ASD (EIT) project

This project has been extremely difficult to launch for a variety of reasons. In this summary, we will detail the progress made on the negotiated deliverables, provide an explanation for deliverables that are behind schedule, and outline deliverables that we now believe are either not doable, and/or which we would like to re-negotiate based on activities of the project to date.

First the good news. Project staff and collaborators from EarlySteps (Ms. Brenda Sharp) and OCDD (Dr. Jay Sevin) achieved the first four outcomes identified in our contract, including:

1. Establish criteria for (*Centers and) Families to participate in the pilot program.
2. Complete draft of methodology for an early intensive behavior intervention and support program.
3. Identify an Advisory Board and *solicit input and feedback from this board on the participation criteria and methodology of the model.
4. Develop a research design to evaluate the pilot.

In the case of # 1, we have scaled back the initial phase of this pilot to focus just on home-based services. This was done based on issues raised by the LSUHSC Institutional Review Board (IRB) and logistics around recruiting Centers and ensuring high fidelity implementation of proposed procedures. Our plan now is to work with a cohort of families first while we continue to work through the challenges of working with Centers. We still desire to work with Centers and will when IRB and logistics issues can adequately be addressed.

Item #2 was completed as part of the proposal submitted to the LSUHSC IRB.

In the case of #3, we recruited a subset of members of the HDC Advisory Board who are either parents and/or service providers. We presented a brief summary of the progress of the project and asked for feedback and suggestions at the February HDC Advisory Board meeting. We intend to re-convene this group to seek additional input once the IRB proposal is approved.

Item #4 was completed as part of the proposal submitted to the LSUHSC IRB.

Item # 5 (recruit, screen, select) participants can not proceed until we receive IRB approval. We are fully prepared to move ahead quickly with recruiting families when we receive IRB approval. See item #1 comments re Centers.

Item #6 will not be pursued at this time as we have decided to work with families in home-based service model initially. We intend to develop a second phase of the pilot designed to target Center-based services in the future.

The remaining seven deliverables have not been addressed and can not be addressed until we receive approval for our IRB proposal from LSU Health Sciences Center.

While acknowledging that we are behind schedule, we feel that we have made significant progress, particularly in light of the complexity of attempting to plan and implement this project using multiple sources of funds and with staff from three different agencies. With the exception of implementing the pilot within Centers, we believe that we will be on schedule for achieving the other deliverables by the end of the first year of funding (September 30, 2009). We believe that we will learn a great deal from completing this first phase of the pilot that we assist us to be more effective in future years.