

HDC Agency Report

It has been a busy quarter at HDC. We recently launched a new Transdisciplinary Services Pilot project, funded by EarlySteps. This project builds on, and extends the work initiated with the Early Intensive Treatment (EIT) project that is supported by the DD Council, OCDD, and HDC funds. This new project differs from the EIT project somewhat because it focuses on demonstrating how services can be delivered to families of young children with autism in a “transdisciplinary” fashion- while the EIT project is primarily a small scale research project that seeks to document that family members can be trained, coached/mentored, and supported to utilize research-based practices embedded within their family’s naturally occurring routines to enhance their child’s learning and development.

In other news, we are working hard to re-establish a model inclusive child care center in New Orleans. We have found a location and are meeting with architects now regarding modifications/remodeling needed to bring the facility up to code. If all goes as planned- we hope to open in about a year. We plan to operate a classroom for 12-24 month olds and another classroom for 24-48 month olds. This site will not only provide a valuable resource to the community (which is still in need of additional child care options) but will also provide opportunities for Allied Health, Medical, and Nursing students- as well as EC special education students to do practica and internships.

I have been meeting with facility planners at the Health Sciences Center- preparing our plans for the new HDC building. We hope that these plans will be reviewed by the State in the spring- and that construction of the new HDC building will begin in about a year. I hope to be able to share the plans with Council members at a future meeting.

HDC received a subcontract from the Institute on Educational Leadership focusing on post-secondary transitions for students at risk, or in contact with the legal system. We are advertising for a person to fill this position now. We recently hired Kris Jones to assist with administrative and clerical duties for several projects- thus freeing up some of our staff to focus more on program responsibilities. We are delighted to have Kris back. Kris worked on the SSA- BPAO grant as a benefits counselor at the time of Katrina. She and her husband (and son) moved to Atlanta temporarily- but they are back home and we are delighted to have her back. We also brought Ms. Beverly Philippi on to assist with our employment initiatives- including the DD Council funded Employment Consortium. Mr. Eric Dickson, will be joining the staff of the Data Accountability Center on February 1. He will be moving to New Orleans from Auburn, Alabama. Eric is finishing his dissertation this spring. In December, Ms. Donna Hammons of Ruston was hired on the LASARD project to serve school districts in north Louisiana. We are excited to have a veteran teacher from north Louisiana join our staff. Finally, we are advertising for Speech Pathologists and Motor Interventionists to work on the EarlySteps Transdisciplinary Services Pilot. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please have them contact Gina Easterly-Taylor at geaste@lsuhsc.edu.

The Louisiana School Psychology Internship Consortium (LASPIC) program just completed interviews for the fall 2010 class. This year we interviewed nearly 60 potential interns who are vying for 8 spots. We are currently investigating the option of creating a post-doctoral fellowship in school psychology.