



## LSUHSC Human Development Center Activities Report, 2nd Quarter, January-March, 2022

The Human Development Center (HDC) is part of a nationwide network of University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and serves as a resource for Louisiana in the areas of education, research, and service relative to the needs of people with developmental disabilities. Below are highlights of the activities that took place last quarter (January - March 2022) in HDC's four initiative areas according to the three main goals for this grant cycle: Enhance Collaboration, Increase Access to Quality Services, and Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice.

### Early Childhood Initiatives

Early Childhood Initiatives target children between the ages of 1 and 5 years and include the programs Early Head Start Childcare Partnership (EHS-CCP) and Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood (IPEC). These programs provide training, technical assistance, and resources to community childcare agencies and their staff in order to better educate and support the children and their families.

#### ○ Enhance Collaboration

- HDC is collaborating with the New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN), Tulane TIKES and 22 childcare centers to implement a developmental screening program that will impact over 400 children in private childcare centers. HDC is monitoring developmental screening and referral, and providing strategies for continuous quality improvement.
- HDC is collaborating with the New Orleans Ready Start Network on their transformation grant application. One of the four main goals included in the application is to develop a strategic plan to improve the quality of special education services in early childhood settings serving children birth to 5 years.
- HDC is collaborating with the New Orleans Early Education Research Alliance (NOEERA) to conduct research with families of young children about their knowledge of, and factors influencing utilization of health and education programs that support families with young children.

#### ○ Increase Access to Quality Services

- HDC's EHS-CCP is serving 210 children; over 10% of those children have an Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) and are included in childcare programs.
- HDC is providing interdisciplinary autism evaluations to rule in or rule out ASD to children in Early Head Start, NOEEN City Seats and local LA4 programs.
- HDC's Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood (IPEC) program is providing technical assistance to 22 childcare centers in the NOEEN City Seats program to improve disability supports in inclusive classrooms. There are currently 21 children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) or Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and 20 children in referral.
- HDC's IPEC program processed over 600 developmental screeners and provided rescreen and referral support for 143 children in the NOEEN City Seats program.
- HDC's IPEC program provided ongoing classroom technical assistance to support effective inclusion in 6 childcare centers.

#### ○ Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice

- HDC’s EHS-CCP program provided 9 hours of professional development to 54 early childhood educators on topics including language modeling, documenting child progress, and effective behavior support.
- HDC’s Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood (IPEC) program is providing training for early childhood teachers in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Topics include Supporting Social Emotional Learning and Impact of Disability on Behavior.

## **K-12 Initiatives**

HDC’s K-12 Education Initiatives provide continuing education and technical assistance to families, educators, administrators, and policymakers regarding best practices for evidence-based and inclusive education. These programs include Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities project (LASARD) and the Louisiana DeafBlind Project for Children and Youth (LA DBP).

### **○ Enhance Collaboration**

- HDC Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) secured contracts with four additional school districts during this quarter, bringing the total to 35 school systems across the state for the 2021-2022 school year as an approved vendor in the Louisiana Department of Education Partnership for Success vendor guide. Additionally, HDC LASARD extended their services to two school districts that are current partners to add additional coaching and/or professional development sessions.
- HDC Louisiana DeafBlind Project (LA DBP) continues to participate in meetings of:
  - Louisiana Deafblind Collaborative Team coordinated by the Helen Keller National Center (monthly)
  - Association of University Centers on Disability, Deaf, Blind, & DeafBlind Special Interest Group
  - RSA PTI Independent Futures that Work project (quarterly)
  - Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) Deafblind Collaborative (bi-weekly)
  - Planning meetings for the Southeastern United States annual DeafBlind Transition Institute to be held June 22-26, 2022 in Gainesville, FL
- HDC LA DBP has established an ongoing relationship with LA DOH, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program. Staff members from the LA DBP are serving on the Cytomegalovirus committee.
- HDC LA DBP staff members represented the LA DBP in the screening of “The Quiet Cajuns” at the Acadiana Center of the Arts, Lafayette, LA.

### **○ Increase Access to Quality Services**

- HDC LASARD provided professional development sessions for school districts on topics such as supporting executive functioning, behavioral strategies, and scaffolding support in inclusive classrooms. HDC LASARD staff also provided a make-and-take professional development session in which educators had an opportunity to create communication supports.
- HDC LASARD staff provided coaching to schools and districts around topics such as positive behavioral support, using grade-appropriate curricular materials, and developing a peer support program to increase inclusive opportunities.
- HDC LA DBP participated in five (5) Treatment after Cancer and Late Effects Clinics within the Children’s Hospital of New Orleans.

### **○ Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**

- In order to support school districts to implement evidence-based practices, HDC LASARD hosted two informational webinar to interested districts to learn more about our services for the 2022-2023. Twenty-five individuals representing schools and districts that LASARD does not currently have contracts attended these webinars.

- LA DBP provided 20 hours of targeted Technical Assistance (TA) to clinics, allied health trainees, and Louisiana’s EHDI agency, and 19 hours of intensive TA to school districts, IEP teams, families, and Families Helping Families agencies. Agencies receiving TA include National Association of Vision Professionals, Early Steps Regional Interagency Coordinating Council Regional meetings, Family Helping Families agencies, district special education administrators, Louisiana Accessible Education Materials (LA AEM) Center within the LA Special School District and Lighthouse Louisiana.

## **Transition, Employment, and Careers (TEC) Initiatives**

HDC’s TEC initiatives support job seekers with disabilities to obtain and maintain community employment outcomes that are competitive and integrated by building knowledge and capacity of secondary and post-secondary educators, community providers, employers, and self-advocates/advocates. Programs include West South Central Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WSC-WIPA) and Postsecondary Apprenticeship for Youth (PAY Check).

### **○ Enhance Collaboration**

- Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS) continue to collaborate with HDC to implement the Postsecondary Apprenticeship for Youth (PAY Check) program. The program enrollment has returned to regular pre-pandemic status. Students in the program when COVID-19 surfaced have now finished all requirements and gone on to job placement. Other Louisiana parish schools systems are now referring students/clients for PAY Check services through their LRS counselors.
- In Coding Pathway for Youth with Autism, HDC TEC continues working in partnership with Families Helping Families – New Orleans Louisiana (FHF NOLA), LRS and Operation SPARK to expand and refine a disability/diversity talent pipeline to technology careers. During this quarter, HDC TEC assisted FHF NOLA and their newly hired Program Coordinator to initiate LRS services with a cadre of students. The Coding Pathway Collaborative has recently received over \$300,000 in GNO Foundation, Baptist Community Ministries and BCBS funding to continue to support the pathway program.
- HDC TEC collaborated with St. Paul’s Catholic High School to provide pilot PAY Check services on the north shore for five students. Services began in fall of 2021 and several of the students are now in their first paid internship.
- St. Tammany Schools and St. Bernard Schools are in the process of initiating PAY Check programs with HDC.
- HDC TEC is working with Project Search national office, Ochsner Administration and LRS to start a Project Search at Ochsner Main Campus on Jefferson Highway in Metairie. Currently Ochsner and national Project Search are working on the contract and licensing. It is expected to begin in the fall of 2022.

### **○ Increase Access to Quality Services**

- Currently there are 25 students in HDC’s PAY Check program from various school systems and direct referrals from LRS. An additional fifteen (15) students have been placed in employment and receiving follow-up support.
- PAY Check continues the focus on providing each participant with in-person, one-on-one pre-ETS units/sessions, two paid internships, Job Shadowing and Work Site Visits, and Job Placement as the individual progresses along their 12-month career pathway.
- PAY Check has been working with St. Tammany Parish School System and St. Bernard School System to initiate PAY Check services in their parishes using Northshore Technical Community College and Nunez Community College respectively. PAY Check services in these two parishes are expected to begin in Fall 2022
- HDC TEC is in the final stages of planning and implementing a Project SEARCH at Ochsner Main Campus, which is expected to start in the fall of 2022.
- HDC West South Central Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WSC-WIPA) continues to average between 35-40 referrals each month. Lighthouse for the Blind provides WIPA services for the other half of the state and now have completed their required training and certification. Many beneficiaries continue to find work

as essential employees which has increased the number of referrals. The new catchment area for the HDC WIPA includes twenty-one Texas counties and thirty-three Louisiana parishes.

- HDC TEC is beginning discussions with LRS and LA DOE for consideration to submit an application for the the U.S. Department of Education (Department) notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2022 for the **Disability Innovation Fund—Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) Innovative Model Demonstration Project**, Assistance Listing Number 84.421D.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**

- HDC TEC continues to provide online Employment First CORE trainings and hosts virtual training events. A training for 25 employment vendors was completed in March 2022.
- HDC TEC staff have completed the Customized Employment Train-the-Trainer training and are finalizing a statewide training proposal for LRS for Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) that will provide Customized Employment services. HDC is preparing to provide training to selected CRPs in the summer or fall of 2022.
- HDC TEC staff will be taking part in the DDC Working Together Webinar series and will be speaking at 4-5 sessions.

## **Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives**

HDC's Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives provides training opportunities to graduate students, professionals, families and self-advocates. HDC's two interdisciplinary training programs are Louisiana Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LA LEND) and Interprofessional Preparation for Related Services Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities with High Intensity Needs (IPP). LA LEND prepares graduate students, family members, self-advocates, and practicing professionals to become future leaders in designing and implementing services, policies, advocacy, and consuming/conducting research and evaluation addressing the needs and priorities of children with disabilities and their families. The Interprofessional Preparation (IPP) program supports graduate students who are preparing to provide special education and related services to children and youth with disabilities. HDC's Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives also include the Autism Spectrum Disorder Interdisciplinary Diagnostic Clinic (ASDID) and the Early Learning Center (ELC), which provide opportunities for interdisciplinary experiential learning.

- **Enhance Collaboration**

- **LA LEND** has initiated a number of planning activities to address the complete lack of focus on identification and treatment for children/youth with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the leading cause of developmental disabilities worldwide is FASD. Yet, the DSM V does not even include a diagnostic code for FASD. There is no registry or database to tracks children and youth with FASD in Louisiana- and research shows that most children/youth with FASD are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Medical and educational treatments for children/youth with FASD are often ineffective, and sometimes counterproductive, due to the nature of the way in which prenatal alcohol exposure (PAE) effects the brain and nervous system. Families of children with FASD often have overwhelming support needs and there are few resources to meet the unique needs of these families in Louisiana. Individuals with FASD have an average life span of 34 years and the suicide rate among persons with FASD is over 15%. LA LEND is forming a coalition of organizations, agencies and individuals to begin prioritizing and planning how to best begin to raise awareness, increase identification, ensure appropriate medical, educational and behavioral health treatment options are available, provide family support, and encourage prevention efforts to address the 100% preventable occurrence of the world's most common cause of developmental disabilities. **We encourage the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council to support these efforts.**

- **Increase Access to Quality Services**

- The HDC Early Learning Center (ELC) remains open but due to challenges related to serving families during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ELC has allowed the normal attrition that comes from children “aging out” and families moving away to occur without filling vacancies. Plans to begin recruiting families with children who have a developmental delay are underway. Suggestions from Council members for how to recruit families with children who have a developmental delay are welcome.
- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
    - HDC’s Interdisciplinary Training programs (i.e., **Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND)** and **Interprofessional Preparation for Related Services Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities Who Have High Intensity Needs** grants continue to provide training as well as clinical and field experiences to 21 graduate students, self-advocates, parents and working professionals.
    - Under the tutelage of Ms. Liz Gary, LEND scholars are preparing information to educate Louisiana’s Congressional Delegation and state elected officials about the prevalence and impact of FASD as well as the importance of identifying and serving children with FASD in Louisiana.
    - Supporting the OSEP funded personnel preparation grant (**LSU Health New Orleans’ Interprofessional Preparation for Related Services Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities with High Intensity Needs**), six (6) seminars were presented regarding Disability and Disability Laws, Regulation and Rules.
    - Recruitment of Cohort 3 for the personnel preparation grant, **LSU Health New Orleans’ Interprofessional Preparation for Related Services Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities with High Intensity Needs**, will continue through June, 2022.