LSUHSC Human Development Center
Activities Report, 4th Quarter, July - September 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 (July - September 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.

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) has secured contracts with over 30 school districts for the 2022-2023 school year to school systems across the state. Some school districts have multiple contracts for both PreK and K-12 services.
  - HDC LASARD facilitated action planning meetings with each school district partner to determine goals for the year. Examples of goals this year include:
    - Teachers will increase the use of visual supports in the classroom by developing their knowledge and skills through attending make-and-take professional development sessions, Communities of Practice series regarding essential classroom supports, and in-classroom coaching supports.
    - Create co-teaching sustainability of both diverse learner teachers and general education teachers by professional development and coaching
    - General education teachers will understand how to work with diverse learners by implementing evidence-based strategies that support learning and behavior by attending professional development on evidence-based practices, essential supports, and co-teaching; and, by participating in in-classroom coaching.
  - HDC LA DBP has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the St. Bernard Parish School Board (SBPSB) to facilitate the participation of a SBPSB employee in the LA DBP's DeafBlind Intervener Pilot project.

- **Increase Access to Quality Services**
  - HDC LASARD provided professional development sessions for school districts on topics such as creating a positive and engaging classroom environment, co-planning and co-teaching, implementing evidence-based practices for paraeducators, and understanding and supporting autism spectrum disorder. HDC LASARD staff also provided make-and-take professional development sessions in which educators had an opportunity to create sensory supports for the classroom.
  - HDC LASARD staff provided coaching to schools and districts around topics such as incorporating visual supports to help students learn routines and procedures, using communication supports, such as core boards, at different grade levels, and supporting social interaction in inclusive settings.

- HDC LA DBP participated in seven late effects clinics and 3 ENT/Hearing clinics in coordination with Children's Hospital of New Orleans.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
  - HDC LASARD staff were selected to present at the LDOE Powering Up Early Childhood Conference in July. The presentation topic was Building a Communicative Environment.
  - HDC LASARD has shared timely evidence-based practices across social media. Examples include:
    - Back to school transition tips
    - Visual schedules for school and home, including activity schedules, first/then schedules, classwide and individual schedules
    - Visual expectations for school and home.
  - HDC LA DBP provided 7 hours of community training, 64 hours of technical assistance, 35 hours of clinical service and 17 hours of technical assistance to community/professional boards, families, school districts, and other agencies, regarding students with deafblindness, IDEA and ADA accessibility compliance.

Early Childhood Initiatives

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

- **Enhance Collaboration**
  - HDC continues their collaboration with the New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) to increase capacity of the City Seats program to effectively serve children with disabilities in inclusive childcare settings. IPEC staff are collaborating with Tulane TIKES and NOEEN to support over 50 children with IFSPs/IEPs or in evaluation, including children with special health care needs and children with autism.
  - HDC is working with the New Orleans Early Education Workforce Task Force to develop a plan to build system capacity using new early childhood millage funds becoming available in January.
  - HDC's EHS-CCP is working with the Office of Head Start to create an enhanced wage structure for early childhood teachers that will get to parity with K-12 teachers in Louisiana.

- **Increase Access to Quality Services**
  - HDC's EHS-CCP is serving 150 children, 13 of whom currently have IFSPs, in eight childcare centers. All children have received developmental screening and are currently getting sensory screens (hearing and vision). Seven children are currently in referral for evaluation.
  - HDC's IPEC program is processing over 400 developmental screeners for children in the NOEEN City Seats program, and scheduling rescreening and referrals for children who may need additional services.
  - IPEC staff and Dr. Michael Norman (HDC, LA Deafblind Project) are supporting family and staff to effectively include our first toddler with Visual Impairments in the HDC Early Learning Center.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
  - HDC is taking developmental screening in early learning centers to the next level. This school year, the program is piloting an on-line system to screen and monitor over 600 infants and toddlers across 25 childcare sites.
  - HDC's EHS-CCP program is taking care of teachers! EHS-CCP has developed a 3-pronged approach to retention and recruitment. Financial Stability – providing a living wage and creating a career ladder for upward mobility. Mental Wellness – teaching evidence-based practices that promote individual capabilities

including self-awareness, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. Physical Health – providing education and incentives for teachers to improve their health. Teachers participate in monthly professional development that addresses all three areas. Here is a picture from our professional development session on incorporating mindfulness in an EC classroom taught by Project Peaceful Warriors.

- HDC hosted a week of professional development for 60 early childhood educators the first week of August.
- HDC's Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood (IPEC) is providing training about disability in early childhood. For more information see our postcard and click on the QR code here: https://www.hdc.lsuhsc.edu/news/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/IPEC-Postcard.pdf.

Transition, Employment, and Careers (TEC) Initiatives

HDC's TEC initiatives support agencies, programs, service providers and 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), Computing for Youth with Autism CYA – FHF NOLA, Employment First Core Training, Customized Employment Training 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. Other schools systems are referring exiting students for PAY Check services through their LRS counselor.
  - Computing for Youth with Autism (C YA) - HDC TEC works in partnership with FHF NOLA, LRS, Delgado and Operation SPARK to expand and refine the talent pipeline to technology careers. HDC TEC works with the new Program Director and Transition Specialist. The Coding Pathway Collaborative has received myriad funding to continue to support the expansion of the program and for an industry and employer convening advisory. HDC is receiving some limited funding to assist and support the C YA pathway.
  - HDC TEC staff is active on the national APSE Public Policy committee and is also working with the SSA policy updates, national ethical guidelines and the national job coach certification council for Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP).
  - HDC TEC continues to collaborate with St. Paul's Catholic High School to provide PAY Check services on the north shore. The north shore program is expected to expand to St. Tammany Parish School System in 2023. HDC is working with LRS and St Tammany Schools to provide this pre-ETS program to more students in St. Tammany.
  - St. Bernard Schools are in the process of exploring the PAY Check program with HDC. St. Bernard Schools has a small contract with HDC for 2022-2023.
  - HDC TEC Project Search initiative with Ochsner Administration and LRS at Ochsner Main Campus is expected to start in Fall of 2023. HDC is now working with Jefferson Parish and Orleans Parish Schools to inform administration of the Project SEARCH criteria and responsibilities to provide staff and students who meet the program criteria.

- **Increase Access to Quality Services**
  - Currently there are 29 students in HDC's PAY Check programs in PAY Check NOLA and PAY Check North Shore from various school systems and direct referrals from LRS.

- HDC's PAY Check program continues to focus on providing participants with in-person, one-on-one pre-ETS units/sessions, two paid internships, Job Shadowing (2) and Work Site Visits (2), and Job Placement as the individual progresses along their 12-month career pathway.
- HDC West South Central Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WSC-WIPA) continues to receive between 35-40 referrals each month. Lighthouse for the Blind provides WIPA services for the other half of the state. HDC WIPA includes twenty-one Texas counties and thirty-three Louisiana parishes. HDC will provide separate fee-for-service benefits planning to Texas Workforce Commission VR transition clients and has submitted proposal to Texas Workforce Commission.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
  - HDC PAY Check is hoping to expand the PAY Check transition model to three new parishes and engaged in planning for the expansion. These will launch Spring 2023. HDC's plans to work directly with schools using a mentor approach where HDC would provide the transition services for the first year but would begin mentoring school personnel to assume the transition instructor roles in year two. HDC would use this approach to expand the model to interested school districts across the state so schools and their communities would have their own best-practice transition program locally. HDC would maintain a mentoring and TA role with the school.
  - HDC WSC-WIPA is submitting presentation proposals for the LRA/APSE and the AUCD conferences in late Fall of 2022.

Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives

HDC's Interdisciplinary Training Initiatives provides training opportunities to graduate students, professionals, families and self-advocates. HDC's Interdisciplinary Training programs include **Leadership Education in Neurodevelomental and related Disabilities (Louisiana LEND)** (funded by US Department of Health and Human Services- Maternal Child Health Bureau) and **Interprofessional Preparation for Related Services Personnel Serving Children with Disabilities Who Have High Intensity Needs** (funded by US Office of Special Education Programs) grants. These programs provide training as well as clinical and field experiences to graduate students and professionals working in a variety of disciplines (e.g., Occupational and Speech Therapy, Psychology, Audiology), as well as self-advocates and parents. 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.

- **Promote Use of Evidence Based Practice**
  - 10 new Long-term trainees were admitted to the 2022-2023 Louisiana LEND cohort. Orientation was July 13 and the Louisiana LEND year began the second week of August with biweekly seminars. Graduate students in the program represented the professions dentistry, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, and psychology. The cohort also includes a Self-Advocate and a Disability Education Advocate.
  - Cohort 3 of the IPP participated in three biweekly seminars regarding Child Health & Healthcare including presentations by personnel from EXCELth, Inc. Multispecialty Clinic, St. Bernard Parish School Board, and Plaquemines Parish School Board.